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Reintegrating without changing colonial hierarchies? Ethnic and territorial inequalities in the policies to assist war-disabled men from the French colonial empire (1916-1939)

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Abstract :

This article focuses on the policies to assist war-disabled in the various territories of the Empire. Policies to assist the disabled were the result of a set of evolving actions and interactions between multiple actors with extremely unequal resources: ministries (War, Colonies, Foreign Affairs, Labour, Pensions); parliamentarians; the National Office of the Disabled; associations of war-disabled and senior colonial officials. Based on multiple archives, associative journals and the colonial press, this article aims to analyse the status granted to war-disabled in these territories. By virtue of their sacrifice for the Fatherland, did they deserve credit equal to those from Metropolitan France? The research shows the extreme heterogeneity of the assistance policies in the colonial Empire, with strong territorial and ethnic inequalities in the allocation of the various services. The Empire's war-disabled enjoyed a range of rights almost similar to those of Metropolitan France (including economic rights) a few years after those of France. The French and indigenous war-disabled in North Africa and the four municipalities of Senegal had a pension relatively similar than that of the war-disabled of France. In all other colonies, indigenous war-disabled were severely discriminated against, they only had a pension that was much lower than that of the French disabled. Throughout the Empire, indigenous war-disabled had less access to administrative jobs, agricultural land and bank loans. This social policy, which was costly for France, was a priority because of the political imperative of showing gratitude for those who sacrificed themselves for the country, but also and above all to maintain the backing of the colonized populations and the political support of the disabled and former combatants in a context of growing anti-colonial nationalism.

Keywords : imperial social policy, war disabled, colonialism, rights, disability

Introduction

As Antoine Prost showed for Metropolitan France, veterans' associations constituted an essential political and social actor during the inter-war period, combining a dense network of associations and a moral position that was difficult to publicly oppose (Prost, 1977). Indeed, politicians recognise that veterans hold sacred rights because of their sacrifices in the name of the Fatherland. Possessing indelible physical marks of their sacrifices, the war-disabled of Metropolitan France obtained considerable economic and social benefits. In addition to the right to a disability pension (established by the law of 13 March 1919), they enjoy privileged access to employment: first to "reserved jobs" in public administrations (law of 17 April 1916), to preferential access to reserved jobs in the State, public institutions and municipalities (law of 30 January 1923) (Bette, 2006), and they also benefit from the

obligation to employ a quota of 10% of disabled persons in private companies (law of 26 April 1924) (Romien, 2005). This law authorizes employers to reduce the remuneration of disabled persons in the event of a reduction in their performance, while guaranteeing the disabled person a salary of at least half of the normal salary. Other legislative provisions have been adopted to organize vocational rehabilitation and create a National Office for the War-Disabled and Discharged (law of 2 January 1918). The authorities and parliamentarians envisaged a deferred and differentiated application of these laws in the territories of the colonial empire.

In France, several studies have focused on the war disabled men of the First World War, examining either vocational rehabilitation policies (Romien, 2005; Fichou, 2014); or the functioning of a vocational rehabilitation institution in the provinces and its beneficiaries, mainly farmers, workers and small craftsmen (Collard, 2018) or on certain categories of war-disabled such as those with face injuries (Delaporte, 2001). However, these studies focused on Metropolitan France and ignored the fate of the war-disabled from the colonial empire, who were very few compared to the nearly one million disabled persons in Metropolitan France. In the absence of precise statistics, we estimate the number of war-disabled in the Empire to have been between 25,000 and 50,000, the majority of whom were in the territories of North Africa (between 10,000 and 20,000) and in French West Africa[1] (FWA) (about 11,000). This geographical distribution can be compared with the numbers sent by each colonial territory to fight on the front lines. The North African countries (Algeria primarily, Tunisia and Morocco) and the FWA territories sent nearly 275,000 and 170,000 fighters respectively to the front lines. Madagascar and the West Indies sent several tens of thousands of them.

This article aims to fill this historiographical void by examining the policies to assist war-disabled in the various territories of the Empire. In this way, it contributes to strengthening the research dynamic already underway in favour of the "Combatants of the Empire" (Fremeaux, 2006). Using Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper's definition, the French colonial empire constituted a « vast political unit, expansionist or preserving the memory of extended power in space, which maintains distinction and hierarchy as it incorporates new populations » (Burbank and Cooper, 2011). The territories of the French Empire were governed by separate administrative statuses (former and new colonies, protectorate, mandate), and resident populations were treated differently (French/foreign/indigenous), based on legally legitimized racist conceptions (*code de l'indigénat; Code of indigenous status*).

Policies to assist the disabled were the result of a "set of evolving actions, decisions, interactions and power relations" (Lagroye, François, Sawicki, 2006, p. 507) between multiple actors with extremely unequal resources: ministries (War, Colonies, Foreign Affairs, Labour, Pensions); parliamentarians; the National Office of the Disabled (then the National Office of the Disabled and Discharged, NODD); associations of war-disabled and senior colonial officials. By focusing attention on the diversity of the resident populations and territories of the Empire, this article aims to analyse the status granted to war-disabled in these territories. By virtue of their sacrifice for the Fatherland, did they deserve credit equal to those from

[1] During the 1920's, the French West African Federation, ruled by the Governor-General from Dakar, brought together eight French colonies : Senegal, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, French Sudan, French Guinea, Upper Volta, Dahomey and Niger.

Metropolitan France? Did the need to treat indigenous disabled people with dignity lead the authorities to re-examine colonial hierarchies and the distinction between French citizens and indigenous subjects?

To better understand the stakes of these assistance policies, it is necessary to take into account the intra-imperial circulation of men (soldiers, community leaders, politicians), ideas (notion of rights of the war-disabled), money (pensions), and objects (prostheses). This circulation testifies to the authorities' interest in the disabled of the Empire, and determines the nature of the services provided to them. Our study begins in 1916, when these disabled soldiers began to return massively to their countries of origin, and ends in 1939, when the Second World War began. This period was characterized by the apparent consolidation of the French Empire, despite the rise of anti-colonial nationalism in Morocco and Syria, and the multiplication of anti-colonial revolts, particularly in Kongo Wara in French Equatorial Africa (FEA) and Yen Bay in Indochina (Thomas, 2007, p. 211).

This research is based on the examination of multiple sources: the national overseas archives, diplomatic archives, the archives of the Defence department's Historical Service and the national archives in Pierrefitte, the national archives of Tunisia, associations' publications and the colonial press. Colonial archives were produced « by and for the institutions that dominate the population » (Surun et alii, 2012, p. 43) present in the colonies. The sources consulted provide more information on the rights conferred to the disabled than on their concrete experiences and life trajectories. They provide considerable information on the North African territories, but only more fragmentary information on the other territories. Although very heterogeneous, these sources generally reflect the point of view of the administration, and rarely reveal the claims of the disabled. When they do, they only give access to the discourse of the European war-disabled, and almost never to that of the disabled indigenous population, although the latter were in the majority and the most discriminated against.

We will first examine the application of legislation in the French colonial empire, then we will look at the different approaches to the problem of the vocational integration of the disabled according to the type of population (indigenous people/French citizens), and finally we will examine the inequality of financial resources and its social consequences.

1. The belated, partial and complex application of legislation in the French colonial empire.

The adoption and application of legislation to assist the war-disabled in the colonial Empire were the result of intense correspondence between local governors and French ministries (War, Colonies, Foreign Affairs, Labour, Pensions). These exchanges helped determine the nature of the services provided and the scope of the rights granted, specific to each territory.

1. 1. A belated return home? A presence long "undesirable" in Morocco.

From the end of 1914, some French and indigenous war-disabled belonging to the regular corps of the French army returned to North African countries after being discharged. But as early as January 1915, the authorities were alarmed by the fact that repatriated Muslim disabled were spreading the notion that they had been used as cannon fodder in front of the

French regiments. The inter-ministerial committee on Muslim affairs then decided to suspend the repatriation of disabled soldiers to Algeria and Morocco (Thomas, 2005, p. 22). The authorities were also concerned that disabled soldiers might find themselves without resources in their country of origin, which could give the image of a France disinterested in the fate of the indigenous people who sacrificed themselves for them[2]; and thus could contribute to anti-colonial propaganda. As a result, the Minister of War quickly approved the terms and conditions for granting provisional daily allowances to the indigenous soldiers of the regular corps (decree of 18 March 1915) and then to the indigenous soldiers of the Algerian and Moroccan auxiliary troops (decree of 28 July 1915).

However, the Minister of War was still opposed to the widespread repatriation of disabled indigenous people awaiting discharge, as the massive presence of unwell and/or destitute disabled persons in the military depots of Blida and Casablanca would constitute a "spectacle [which] would be most unfortunate for the recruits and the population"[3]. As a result, the disabled could be sent "in small groups" to these depots, but only after having been cared for and equipped, and after having obtained their discharge (allowing them to obtain the special daily allowance) and if necessary the decorations they deserved. As War Minister Alexandre Millerand pointed out, these disabled auxiliary corps must be "surrounded by all the moral and material care and grateful solicitude they deserve"[4].

In May 1915, 5 disabled Moroccan riflemen arrived in Casablanca. General Lyautey, General Resident in Rabat, refused to accept the general implementation of these repatriations, because of the major disadvantages these could have for the recruitment of Moroccan infantry battalions and for "indigenous politics"[5]. Their presence would be likely to alert local populations to the social consequences of the war. This decision was approved by the Minister of War, which forced the Moroccan disabled to stay at the Arles depot. Some disabled suffered from this situation, not hesitating to attempt suicide (Bekraoui, 1987, p. 241).

From 1916 onwards, the vast majority of discharged soldiers were sent home, with the exception of three categories: mentally ill indigenous soldiers (interned in an asylum in Aix-en-Provence); soldiers with tuberculosis (sent to the Marseille discharge centre); disabled persons wishing to undergo vocational rehabilitation as cobblers or tailors in Metropolitan France[6]. At the end of 1920, almost all disabled people from the territories of the Empire had left Metropolitan France Once back in their countries, they sometimes become vectors of communicable diseases (tuberculosis, venereal diseases, etc.) (Echenberg, 2009, p. 151).

1. 2. Political pressure exerted by associations of war-disabled to obtain equal rights, relayed by the NODD and parliamentarians.

[2] French Defence Historical Service (FR DHS), GR 7 NN9 1006. Letter, Paris, March 25, 1915, Graziani, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army to the Commander-in-Chief of the North African Land and Sea Forces.
[3] FR DHS, GR 7 NN9 1006. Letter, Paris, May 6, 1915, the Minister of War to the General commanding the 15th region.
[4] FR DHS, GR 7 NN9 1006. Letter, Paris, August 14, 1915, the Minister of War to the General Military Governor of Paris.
[5] FR DHS, GR 7 NN9 1006. Copy of a telegram, Casablanca, 19 May 1915, Resident Commissioner General to the Ministry of War.
[6] FR DHS, GR 7 NN9 1006. Letter, Paris, 13 April 1916, from the Minister of the Interior to the Minister of War.

Four actors contributed to lobbying for the development of policies to assist the war-disabled in the territories of the Empire: the Ministers of War and Pensions; associations of the disabled in the territories of the Empire and Metropolitan France, the National Office for the Disabled and Discharged (NODD) and some parliamentarians.

In the first half of 1916, the Ministers of War and Labour invited the other ministers (Colonies, Foreign Affairs) and the governors of the colonies to organize the vocational rehabilitation of war-disabled in the various territories of the Empire. The Minister of Labour and Welfare, president of the NODD, then enjoined the Minister of Colonies to promote the vocational reintegration of the war-disabled, so that they could "take their place among the other workers"[7]. He recommended that creation of mutual aid societies specific to the disabled should be avoided and that local administrative committees for the defence of the disabled should be encouraged. The Minister of Colonies quickly complied. In several territories of the Empire, mutual aid societies accepted war-disabled and offered them many services (hospitalization costs, aid, etc.). In other territories (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Madagascar), the disabled created their own mutual aid societies.

War-disabled people quickly formed associations to defend their rights in Algeria (from August 1915), Morocco (1919), Tunisia (1919), Senegal (1920), and Madagascar (1926). Some of these associations were subsidiaries of the major national federations of disabled persons and veterans of Metropolitan France. The vast majority of these associations were mutual aid associations that provided assistance to their members (birth, death, medical expenses, etc.) and fought to achieve economic and material objectives: this is the case of the *Association générale des mutilés de la Grande Guerre en Tunisie*, and the *Amicale des mutilés et réformés de la Guerre de Madagascar*. Some associations carried out other activities, such as the *Amicale des mutilés de Constantine*, which organized literacy classes. As proof of the dynamism of associations in the North African territories, a North African interfederation of groups of war victims was created in June 1922. Symbolically dominated by the disabled, it had 37,400 members in Algeria, 7200 in Morocco and 5000 in Tunisia in 1934[8].

These associations brought together French and Indigenous persons from all social classes, but those of national scope were systematically led by French people from upper cultural and economic strata. Let us take the example of the *Association générale des mutilés de la Grande Guerre de Tunisie*. It was chaired by René Soulmagnon, a former lawyer at the Tunis Bar, wounded during the Sed-ul-Bahr landing, and who joined the Tunis Government's Directorate of Agriculture and Trade in 1916. He rose through the ranks to become Director of Agriculture, Trade and Colonization in 1934. Some indigenous disabled persons (Rouidi Hadi, Mansour Ben Mohamed Ben Mansour) nevertheless held subordinate positions (indigenous assessors) on the board of directors[9]. These national associations were supported by many colonial physicians, and had cordial relations with local governors. Local

[7] French National Overseas Archives (FR NOA), 61COL 808. Letter, Tananarive, July 1, 1916, from the Governor Delegate in the office of Governor General of Madagascar to the Minister of Colonies.
[8] National archives in Pierrefitte (FR NAP), 20050299/45. ONAC, document entitled « Groupements de victimes de la guerre et d'anciens combattants de l'Afrique du Nord, mars 1934 ».
[9] *Bulletin trimestriel de l'Association générale des mutilés de la Grande Guerre en Tunisie*, n°19, avril 1923.

associations were led by Muslims, such as the *Union des mutilés et anciens combattants musulmans du Sud tunisien*, which was created in Sfax in February 1938[10].

In a repressive colonial context, these associations had a rather limited repertoire of action, based on non-violent and non-subversive actions: political and administrative negotiations, pressure on parliamentarians, public questions to political leaders at congresses. However, the use of political and administrative negotiations was hampered by the geographical distance between them and the ministries in Metropolitan France that monopolised decision-making powers. To remedy this, the association leaders of some colonial territories (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) did not hesitated to go to Paris to negotiate directly with civil servants and political leaders. They also invited parliamentarians and ministers to come to their national congresses, which gave them the opportunity for interpersonal negotiation on this occasion. During these congresses, the associations put forward arguments based on the equality of the rights of all disabled persons in view of their similar sacrifice for France, and the denunciation of the injustices linked to the partial application of Metropolitan France's legislation. In 1924, the delegate of the Moroccan disabled thus declared that "all disabled persons must be treated equally - whatever their origin, the blood shed for France always has the same value"[11]. However, criticism had to be subtle, and combined with evidence of loyalty in order to be listened to by the authorities. In 1929, the president of the North African Interfederation of War Victims Groups, Mr. Soulmagnon, declared :

> *"the work of reparation was too great for it to be carried out smoothly, without delay and without individual errors (...). The "sacred benefactors of the Nation" have suffered terribly from these vicissitudes and are still suffering from them. Among our best, loyal and unassuming minds, anger has grown many times, anger that is easy to exploit. Well, let us proclaim it today for the first time, it is the greatest honour of the groups of victims of the North African war to have never given in to this anger, to have placed national duty above all and to have, by their balanced but tireless energy, rendered justice to their fellow citizens by maintaining the love of France in their country"*[12].

The demands of the disabled persons of the colonies were also upheld by the Federal Union, one of the two largest national federations of disabled persons, quite close to the socialist radicals. Their requests were also supported by many parliamentarians – who had been disabled or were sympathetic to their cause – from several political parties, including those in favour of maintaining colonial hierarchies: the liberal and republican right (Marcel Ferraris, Maurice Kempf, etc.), the socialist radicals (Henri Queuille) and the socialists (Emile Jean Morinaud). In April 1919, the radical-Socialist MP Henri Queuille tabled a bill to make the law of 2 January 1918 applicable to Algeria, the colonies and the protectorate countries. This bill was never adopted, but it induced the ministries to conclude a draft decree on the

[10] National Archives of Tunisia (TU NA). Series E, 509, file 278. Statutes of the association "Union des mutilés et anciens combattants musulmans du sud tunisien", 1938.
[11] *France Maroc, revue mensuelle illustrée*, June-July 1924, p. 104.
[12] TU NA, Series E, 509, file 934. Article "Le VIIe congrès interfédéral des victimes de la Guerre", *La Dépêche tunisienne*, 1 April 1929.

subject. Similarly, in April 1922, MP Georges Barthelemy alerted the Governor General of the FWA to the injustices done to the disabled and the lack of acknowledgment the authorities manifested towards them[13].

As early as 1916, the NODD's leaders lobbied the various ministries (Colonies, Foreign Affairs) to enforce the laws in the Empire's territories (in particular the law of 2 January 1918). This pressure from the NODD increased in 1920, due to the participation of an Algerian representative in the NODD, and the transfer of supervision to the Ministry of Pensions. Indeed, the Minister of Pensions André Maginot, previously wounded in war, proved to be a powerful ally who supported the claims of the disabled in confronting the Ministry of Finance until 1924 (Prost, 1977). Successive pension ministers continued to support the claims of the disabled, and they increased their support for the Empire's disabled from 1929 onwards. The Minister of Pensions went to the North African Congress of War Victims held in Tunis on 30 March 1929. Disabled community representatives from the FWA (Mr. Baye and Joseph Memdy) and North Africa were invited to Metropolitan France in 1930 and 1931 respectively, for the commemorative celebrations of the First World War[14].

1. 3. Colonial and Foreign Affairs Ministries faced with complex choices: the imperative of decentralization.

The NODD, the Ministry of Labour (until September 1920) and then the Ministry of Pensions (after September 1920), as well as associations of the disabled, were in favour of the full application of the legislation in the Empire's territories. They often faced opposition from the Ministry of Finance, which wanted to minimize the costs of these measures. The Ministries of Colonies and Foreign Affairs remained very cautious about the possibilities of their application. For these ministries, the decision to apply these mechanisms was all the more complex as there was an intermingling of administrative issues (legislative mechanisms that varied according to the territories), political issues (political pressure from associations, the obligation of gratitude), incomplete statistical foundation (number of beneficiaries), economic issues (financing of rehabilitation institutions, pensions, free care) and social and cultural issues (applicability to local society). They were therefore confronted with a situation of "hyperchoice", "i.e. a choice that is based on fundamentally different logics" (Jobert and Muller, 1987, p. 41). Having noted the shortcomings caused by the centralization of policies for war-disabled in the home country, these departments wanted to avoid this pitfall in the Empire. To provide a basis for their decision, they sought the advice of governors on local needs (usefulness of vocational rehabilitation schools, equipment centres, etc.). This decentralization of decision-making was common in the administrative management of the Empire at that time, because of the distances, and "the very limited number of administrators in relation to the vastness of the territories to be administered" (Dimier, 2003, p. 86). Local governors had extensive regulatory powers. They were also free to execute metropolitan texts quickly or not, because they were not bound by any time limit in the promulgation of enforceable decrees (Dimier, 2003, p. 85).

[13] *Les Annales coloniales*, April 18, 1922.
[14] *Les Annales coloniales*, January 2, 1930.

In December 1917, the President of the Council, Minister of War, decided on the creation of prosthetics centres in the Empire[15]. The Ministry wished to concentrate these centres in the capitals of the Empire's main recruitment areas (West Indies, FWA, Indochina, Madagascar), while taking into account the number of potential beneficiaries. A few months later, after the advice and agreement of the local governors, three prosthetics centres for war-disabled people were organized in Hanoi, Fort-de-France and Dakar (chief town of FWA). In Madagascar, the governor considered it unnecessary to create a fitting centre for indigenous persons, considering it preferable that Metropolitan France continue to provide new equipment to the disabled. In 1918, a fitting centre was also created in Algiers to receive all disabled people from North Africa. Subsequently, two sub-centres were organized in Constantine and Oran. Two new centres were then set up in Casablanca (Morocco) and Salammbô (Tunisia), administratively attached to the Bordeaux fitting centre. These fitting centres provided tens of thousands of prostheses and orthotics for the war-disabled. They seemed to be working well, except in Dakar where the size of the centre appeared insufficient compared to the needs of the entire FWA. About half the prostheses distributed in the centre of Dakar came from Bordeaux, the others were manufactured on site. In April 1922, Mr. Adolphe Memdy, president of the Dakar Group of War-Disabled, called for the expansion of the fitting and vocational rehabilitation centre, as well as for "leaving the disabled person free to choose his braces and orthopaedist"[16]. FWA mutilated persons also had difficulty in having their prostheses repaired because of the distance from the centre (Echenberg, 2009, p. 254).

When considering the application of the law of 18 January 1918 to the colonies and territories under protectorate, the authorities opted for the decentralization of decision-making, leaving it to the local governors to regulate by decree the details of the implementation of the law (freedom to create or not a local committee linked to the NODD and a vocational rehabilitation centre). After having given some consideration to organizing rehabilitation schools in Hanoi and Fort-de-France, the Ministry of Colonies abandoned these projects following negative responses from local governors, citing the low number of re-educable disabled persons[17]. On 23 September 1919, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security approved two decrees making the law of 2 January 1918 applicable to Algeria. These decrees provided for the creation of regional and local committees attached to the NODD, and the presence of indigenous members alongside the European members within the regional committee. In addition, these decrees encouraged the committees – without forcing them – to create rehabilitation schools in regions that were insufficiently equipped with them. The adoption of the same provisions in the countries under protectorate came later: the general resident of Tunisia adopted a beylical decree on 26 March 1922 applying the law of 2 January 1918, following the model of Algerian decrees. General Lyautey, general resident of the French Republic in Morocco, was initially in favour of a very limited application of the law of

[15] FR NOA, 61COL 808. Note, Paris, 30 November 1918, the Minister of Colonies to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.
[16] *Les Annales coloniales*, April 18, 1922.
[17] FR NOA, 61 COL 808. Note, November 30, 1918, the Chairman of the Colonial Health High Council to the Director of Military Services.

2 January 1918[18]. Repeated pressure from the NODD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs struggled to overcome the reluctance of the general residence in Morocco, which in 1921 called into question the need to adopt "such a regulatory and legislative apparatus" given the action already taken in the field of vocational integration, and the small number of potential beneficiaries in terms of rehabilitation[19]. It finally partially yielded in 1924 by accepting the creation of an Office for the Disabled and the Combatant.

Following the adoption of these provisions, committees of disabled and discharged war veterans were set up in the Algerian departments in 1920, in Tunisia and Guadeloupe in 1922 and in Morocco in 1924. In Guadeloupe, the Colonial Committee of the Disabled did not really begin its work until June 1923, helping the disabled to have their rights recognized (pension, etc.), to find an apprenticeship or a job. It did little until 1925 for administrative reasons because of lack of approval of the budget. The committee's action was then redirected towards the direct distribution of money in the form of birth grants, death grants, loans to the disabled and grants to associations of war victims[20]. In the other territories of the Empire (FWA, FEA, Madagascar, Indochina, etc.), no committee of disabled persons was created, but colonial committees of veterans were formed after 1929.

The characteristics of the regulations granting rights to war-disabled in the Empire were similar to other social legislation applicable in the territories of the Empire: they provided for partial and belated application of metropolitan provisions, with distinctions depending on territories and populations (French/Indigenous) (Lekeal, 2014). Two specific features deserve to be highlighted: first, because of their non-binding nature, certain legislation (in particular that duplicating the law of 2 January 1918) played a weak role in advancing policies in favour of war-disabled. Even before the adoption of these laws, local governors and associations were undertaking many actions in favour of war-disabled (creation of vocational rehabilitation centres, etc.). Indeed, in several colonies (Madagascar, Guyana, Tahiti), committees to assist discharged soldiers were organized very early on, as early as 1916, chaired by mayors of the capitals of the colonies or local elders. In addition, the application of the law of 2 January 1918 did not lead to the reopening of rehabilitation schools in the North African territories, to the great displeasure of the disabled who were affected. Second**,** while local governors appeared to develop a wide variety of social policies designed to minimize the state's obligations to wards of the Empire (Hassett, 2016, p. 340), war widows, and blind civilians, they did not systematically adopt this attitude towards war-disabled. The latter had easier access to significant economic benefits, particularly in terms of pensions and employment, because of their sacrifice for the "Fatherland" and the impossibility of discriminating too strongly against them without taking political risks.

2. Significant job offers for European disabled persons, but fewer for the indigenous disabled.

[18] Diplomatic Archives Center of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, La Courneuve (FR DAC), K - Africa, 53CPCOM/013740. Letter, October 30, 1920, from the Chairman of the NOMR Board of Directors to the Chairman of the Council, MFA.

[19] FR DAC, K - Africa, 53CPCOM/013740. Letter, April 1, 1921, the Delegate to the General Residence of the RF in Morocco to the Prsdt of the Council.

[20] FR NOA, 61 COL 808. Report, Basse Terre, 9 December 1926, the Governor to the president of the NOMR.

Depending on the territories of the Empire, local governors applied in varying ways the administrative circulars sent by the ministers of Metropolitan France and which enjoined them to organize the vocational reintegration of the war-disabled.

2. 1. Rapid placement of French disabled suitable for employment in local administrations and some private companies.

Colonial administrations promoted the vocational reintegration of disabled persons who were fit for a job, by reserving some of the vacant places in colonial administration for them in the post-war years. Most local governors adopted legal provisions to this effect: the Governor of Madagascar adopted an order in 1916 promoting access of French disabled persons to the local administration, by granting examination facilities and reserving low-skilled jobs in the communes (cemetery guards, water guards, etc.). In Tunisia, the beylical government adopted a decree (23 November 1919) reserving certain subordinate jobs for the disabled in public administrations. However, in French West Africa, the disabled did not seem to benefit from specific measures in addition to those attributed to former soldiers. In 1922, the disabled in Dakar thus made a demand to the Governor General of the FWA « that the jobs reserved for former soldiers be granted to them in preference »[21].

These legal texts were applied with varying intensity from one territory to another. In Tunisia, less than a hundred jobs within the Tunisian administrations (police station, municipal administration, etc.) were attributed to disabled persons up until 1924[22]. The main beneficiaries were French disabled persons with qualifications or diplomas. In Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, in 1919, "of the 12 disabled, 6 returned to their former professions, and the other 6 received jobs in the various services of the Colony"[23]. The General Residence in Morocco was very active in job placement during the period 1917-1921. Out of 1360 disabled persons who returned from France, 1200 were placed in administrations and private companies before 1921[24]. General Lyautey obviously wanted to promote their vocational reintegration in order to establish them as a political support group for colonial order, in a tense political context due to Berber dissent in the Rif mountains, which had not ended with the war (Ganiage, 1994, p. 432). In Algeria, the administrations placed a minimum of several hundred disabled persons within their ranks, but the associations complained about the absence of a legal provision regulating the compulsory employment of disabled persons in private companies, following the example of the law of 29 August 1924[25].

After 1922, colonial administrations were less concerned with giving priority of employment to war-disabled people, and sometimes temporarily favoured "able-bodied" people. North African associations of the disabled challenged these practices and required the actual reservation of vacant positions for the disabled[26]. Following the publication of a new

[21] *Les Annales coloniales*, April 18, 1922.
[22] TU NA, SG 6 - 135, file 8. Tables on jobs available to the disabled, June 1924.
[23] FR NOA, 61 COL 808. E Colin, Note to the Minister's Office, April 17, 1919.
[24] FR DAC, K - Africa, 53CPCOM/013740. Letter, April 1, 1921, the Delegate to the General Residence in Morocco at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[25] *L'Algérie mutilée*, April 16, 1928.
[26] *Le mutilé de l'Algérie*, Alger, 11 February 1923, p. 15.

decree on 17 July 1929 in Metropolitan France, a new procedure of reserved jobs for the disabled and veterans was launched in the early 1930s in the North African territories. Formalized by decrees issued on the scale of each territory of the Empire, this new procedure led to the hiring of many war-disabled people in the first years, but the Tunisian administration very quickly bypassed it by downgrading reserved jobs for auxiliary positions, so that their allocation was decided by the General Secretariat of the Government and not by the commission on reserved jobs where disabled people's associations were represented. This situation was outrageous for the *Association générale des mutilés de la Grande Guerre en Tunisie*, which protested against these downgrades and demanded the reservation of auxiliary positions for the disabled and victims of the war[27].

However, the colonial administration was not the only one acting for the job placement of war-disabled: associations of war-disabled persons, committees of war-disabled and some municipal services were actively working on it as well.

2. 2. The painful problem of disabled people who cannot be employed.

Depending on his or her disability, individuals were only eligible for a predefined list of jobs determined legislatively. Thus, former soldier Léon Colin's application for employment as *porteur de contraintes*[28] in Algeria was rejected for insufficient physical fitness because of his disability (resection of the right elbow, ankylosis)[29]. He could only apply for two jobs: postman and court janitor. The disabled with severe disabilities, or disabilities deemed incompatible with most jobs (trepanation, deafness, etc.), had more limited opportunities to find a job.

Due to their specific administrative status, indigenous war-disabled benefited from a very limited number of reserved jobs in the administrations. In 1924, only 12 indigenous war-disabled held a position in the Tunisian administration, including 7 as *Sheikhs*[30] and 3 as *Amines*[31].

The majority of indigenous war-disabled were former farm workers, but their disability generally made the resumption of agricultural activity difficult. Due to a lack of qualifications, indigenous war-disabled found it difficult to find employment in companies or industry. In the North African territories, specific trade jobs were reserved for them: in Algeria, they benefited from the majority of the authorized quota for egg exports, as well as authorizations to open outlets for Moorish coffee. However, irregularities in egg exports led to the permanent withdrawal of these export licences. In addition, only a limited number of indigenous people had the opportunity of owning a Moorish café, because of few vacancies in the first half of 1926 in the department of Oran, only two positions for Moorish coffee makers

[27] TU NA, SG6-257, file 3. *Congrès fédéral des mutilés, AC et victimes de la guerre. Vœux, Congrès du 31 mars 1935.*
[28] Person notifying the taxpayer of a formal demand to pay their taxes.
[29] *Bulletin Mensuel Les Mutilés,* Oran, n°60, October 1922, p. 16.
[30] Persons responsible for the supervision of a small administrative division.
[31] Persons representing a corporation, responsible for verifying weights and measures and conflicts between employers and workers.

were allocated to indigenous war-disabled, out of 522 applications[32]. In Morocco, 91% of tobacco shops were attributed to war-disabled (French or Indigenous) or widows. In order to find new vocational opportunities for indigenous people, the associations also requested the reserving of the positions of *chaouchs* (public service workers) or *spahis* (horseman)[33].

In each territory where there was a high proportion of war-disabled (North Africa, FWA), several hundred people who wished to work remained without paid work for many years. Many indigenous disabled people were "unwittingly unemployed"[34] due to insufficient policies developed by local governments. Their economic situation worsened during the 1930s with the economic crisis and the decline in the relative value of pensions.

2. 3 The partial failure of vocational rehabilitation of illiterate war–disabled persons.

As early as 1916, workshops for shoemakers and tailors were organized at bases for colonial infantrymen in Casablanca and Blida. Actual vocational rehabilitation centres were organized the same year in the Algerian departments (in Kouba, Algiers, Oran), and in the following years in the protectorate countries (La Goulette near Tunis, Casablanca) and in Dakar. The Algiers department financed the creation of a rehabilitation centre in Kouba (which accommodated a total of 1437 students)[35], and the Oran department subsidized the creation of the Victor Vassal School in Oran (which accommodated at least 300 students in all), jointly with the *Union des femmes de France*. The governments' military health services were involved in the organization of several rehabilitation centres (Kouba, Casablanca, La Goulette). These institutions generally provided manual training: basketry, mat making, grass weaving, brush-making, carpentry, blacksmithing. Like many of the city's institutions, the objective was to turn students into independent small artisans (Collard, 2018). More marginally, the *Association d'assistance aux mutilés de Salammbô* organized vocational rehabilitation in the field of agriculture, and the *Amicale des Mutilés du Département d'Alger* organized a general education course. While Algerian institutions were intended for European and indigenous disabled people, the Casablanca institution was explicitly intended for former indigenous infantrymen with no education.

This vocational rehabilitation policy proved to be a partial failure. The number of beneficiaries was not negligible (at least two thousand in the Empire) but did not cover all needs due to the rapid closure of the schools in Casablanca, Oran and Tunis in 1920, and Kouba in 1922. These training centres sometimes had operational difficulties (management problems, waste of raw materials, etc.) and did not obtain the expected results: few rehabilitated disabled persons found a job on leaving, in particular because it was impossible to set up a production cooperative. In Morocco, the authorities were inclined, through racism, to consider that indigenous war–disabled were lazy by nature and had little motivation to learn. The delegate at the general residence of France in Morocco considered with contempt

[32] *Bulletin Mensuel Les Mutilés,* Oran, n°106, August 1926, p. 3.
[33] *Le Mutilé de l'Algérie.* February 11, 1923, p. 15.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[35] *L'Algérie mutilée*, June 1, 1923.

that the war-disabled at the Centre of Casablanca "wanted to learn nothing; and this most certainly because they constituted the dregs of the 1360 discharged Moroccans [1200 of whom were already placed]"[36]. The war-disabled had a different interpretation, and considered the poor results of the centre « were largely due to defective administration »[37].

In the early 1920s, the governors of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia considered that the failure of past vocational rehabilitation attempts made any further attempt illusory. Demands by war-disabled for the reopening of a school in Morocco, or for the organization of courses (accounting, typing) or apprenticeships with employers (carpentry, shoemaking, leather working) in Algeria and Tunisia[38], came to nothing.

The Dakar rehabilitation centre lasted longer than the others, but it was still too small to meet the needs. In April 1922, the president of the Dakar Group of War-Disabled called for "the creation of workshops for forge woodworking, shoemaking, leather working, binding, and the start of courses in accounting and industrial design"[39]. We do not know if this request was successful.

2. 4. Facilitating the acquisition of agricultural land.

In Metropolitan France, authorities encouraged the resumption of agricultural activity by enabling war-disabled to acquire plots of land through agricultural loans from Crédit Mutuel at a preferential rate (1%, with a further State subsidy for each child) (law of 5 August 1920). This law did not apply to the Empire's territories, but the associations of North Africa demanded the application of this law and priority in the allocation of *terres domaniales* (State land) grants. As a result of this pressure from associations, the general residents of Tunisia and Morocco gave them priority when allocating colonization plots or public lands. In Morocco, in 1919, 25% of medium-sized colonization plots were reserved for French war-disabled. On December 27, 1919, the general residence adopted a *dahir* (decree) that granted veterans one or more plots of state land, first in provisional ownership and then in full ownership. In less than two years, more than fifty war-disabled benefited from a plot of state land thanks to this provision[40]. In Tunisia, the protectorate reserved small settlement plots (60 hectares of cultivable land) for war-disabled, with advantageous loans (12,000 francs at 2%). At least 35 French war-disabled benefited from this provision before 1923. About thirty other war-disabled benefited from privileged access to normal settlement plots (100 hectares). Several dozen indigenous war-disabled also gained access to land allocated by the protectorate to indigenous farmers during the 1920s[41]. Unlike the Tunisian and Moroccan governments, the Algerian government refused to reserve colonization land for the war-disabled, wishing rather to encourage the settlement of "French farmers" in the colony[42]. It

[36] FR DAC, K - Africa, 53 CPCOM/013740. Letter, April 1, 1921, the Delegate to the GR of the FR in Morocco to the Prsdt of the Council, MFA.
[37] *Le mutilé de l'Algérie*, 11 February 1923, p. 19.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] *Les Annales coloniales*, April 18, 1922.
[40] FR DAC, K - Africa, 53CPCOM/013740, Letter, April 1, 1921, the Delegate to the General Residence of the FR in Morocco to the Prsdt of the Council, MFA.
[41] *Bulletin Mensuel de l'Office du Protectorat français en Tunisie,* February 1926, n°178, p. 28.
[42] *Bulletin Mensuel Les Mutilés,* Oran, n°93, July 1925, p. 7.

went as far as to relax the agricultural credit rules for the disabled, allowing more than a hundred of them to obtain land during the 1920s.

In the other territories of the Empire, we have not found any evidence of similar provisions favouring the installation of the war-disabled in agriculture. In French Guiana, Joseph Photius, a war-disabled person living in Cayenne, pointed out "the injustice and insult done to the wounded of the Colonies, particularly in French Guiana" because of the absence of the application of the law of 5 August 1920, and asked to benefit from a loan to access rural property. Even in territories where the authorities do not facilitate the acquisition of agricultural land, many war-disabled contributed to agricultural activities "for themselves or for others", as in Guadeloupe[43].

The multiple vocational integration schemes set up for the disabled varied from one country to another, with North African countries having a greater impact in this field due to strong pressure from associations. Job placement in employment was intended primarily for French war-disabled. This discriminatory attitude could be explained both by the wishes of local governors to respect colonial hierarchies (priority to French disabled people in employment), by the prejudices of colonial administrators, and by the low educational level of these disabled people, which made them unsuitable for administrative positions.

3. Adequate financial resources through pensions?

A series of provisions were adopted to confer significant economic benefits for the vast majority of the Empire's war-disabled. The invalidity pension was the most important economic benefit of all, but it was not the only benefit granted. In Algeria and Tunisia, the disabled had also had free health care since 1922, following strong mobilization of associations. In the territories of North Africa and French West Africa, indigenous and European war-disabled with more than 50% disability also benefited from the exemption of certain taxes (either from personal property taxes or from the head tax). In each territory, local governors also provided several dozen severely war-disabled with institutional accommodation (sanatoria, military camp for disabled people in Côte d'Ivoire, *Maison des invalides marocains de Mogador* in Morocco, *Centre d'hébergement de Kouba* in Algeria, from 1922) or grant them priority access to accommodation in inexpensive housing (in Tunisia).

The invalidity pension was an important and stable source of income for the war-disabled (Surun, 2012, p. 194), but it was not always their only financial resource (income linked to employment, craft activity). The military pension system was the main measure granted by the French State to the disabled, veterans and dependants of war victims, and the most expensive of all (21 billion francs in 1920, and 50 billion in 1934). These pensions generated a huge monetary transfer between Metropolitan France and the territories of the Empire, which was then reflected in the vitality of the local economy. French authorities sought to calculate their amount on the basis of four criteria: the cost for the French State of

[43] FR NOA, 61 COL 808. Letter, Saint Claude, 4 September 1924, the Governor of Guadeloupe and dependencies to the Minister of Colonies.

expenditures; the need to preserve colonial hierarchies; the services rendered by the various army units during the war; and the political consequences of any inequality of pensions between French and indigenous war-disabled (risk of strengthening the anti-colonial struggle). Finally, the application of the pension system posed significant social and economic challenges in the territories of the Empire due to the practice of polygamy by many Muslims, while the metropolitan system of reversion of pensions to widows and orphans was designed for monogamous unions.

The issue of invalidity pensions cannot be separated from that of seniority pensions. From 1924 onwards, the authorities discarded the logic of equality of seniority pensions between French soldiers and indigenous North Africans, by suspending increases for indigenous soldiers, unlike those of the French military (law of 14 April 1924 and implementing decree of 10 December 1925). The disparity was already high enough in 1929 (an indigenous person received 75% and 85% of the pension of a Frenchman of the same status), and it was aggravated by the increase in the amount of pensions granted to the French military in the 1930s, going to about 55 to 65% of the retirement pension granted to the French in 1937. This disparity was the subject of much debate in North Africa that alerted the Army General Staff, which was concerned "not to let the indigenous people's minds give rise to fears of a gradual disregard for their services"[44]. The differentiation of pensions by seniority for French and Indigenous war-disabled had set an important precedent that then influenced the management of invalidity pensions.

Until the early 1920s, the war-disabled did not receive their invalidity pension, but rather a provisional allowance of a paltry sum while waiting for the rest, determined on the basis of a medical assessment of their degree of invalidity. Doctors used an indicative scale guide, which was imperative for evaluating disability, blindness and tuberculosis. It was requested that the most favourable rate possible be applied. War-disabled had the opportunity to claim their pension entitlement within five years after their disability discharge. Facilities were offered to illiterate war-disabled to apply for pensions, in particular through the use of a fingerprint system in FWA[45]. The vast majority of war-disabled who applied received a pension, which varied greatly from one territory of the Empire to another. On 31 December 1926, in FWA, 1057 European war-disabled and 10151 indigenous war disabled were receiving an invalidity pension[46]. We do not know the number of invalidity pensioners in the other territories of the Empire.

3. 1. Equal pension rights for European and indigenous war-disabled in North Africa and in the 4 municipalities of Senegal, thanks to the law of 31 March 1919.

The law of 31 March 1919 introduced a new pension system for the land and sea armies in Metropolitan France and the Empire's territories. The amount of the invalidity pension varied according to the degree of disability, the status of each soldier in the French army (regular or auxiliary corps), and his military rank. Article 73 of this law determined the

[44] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Copy of an undated letter from the Minister of National Defence and War to the Minister of Finance.
[45] FR NOA, 61 COL 192. Telegraph dispatch, Dakar, 27 March 1917, Clozel to Min. Paris Colonies.
[46] FR NOA, 61 COL 192. Letter, Dakar, April 13, 1927, The Governor General of the FWA to the Minister of Colonies.

equality of pension rates between the French military and the "indigenous soldiers of Algeria and of the colonies or protectorate countries in which recruitment takes place by conscription"[47]. The benefit of this equal treatment initially concerned only indigenous war-disabled recruited in Algeria, Tunisia and the four municipalities of Senegal[48]. It was then extended to Moroccan natives in 1924. This differential treatment between the indigenous people of the Empire, desired by the Ministry of War, was based on their way of life: in the North African countries, their way of life was close to the French, and "it is not the same in our other colonies"[49], in particular in FWA and FEA where "the natives of the Negro race have kept a social organization which cannot be compared to ours and their way of life is far from imposing the same burdens on them as on French citizens"[50]. This differential treatment had two objectives, one economic, to limit government spending, and the other political, to obtain the sympathy of the indigenous populations of North Africa and Senegal. On the other hand, article 74 of the law of 31 March 1919 differentiated between the pension reversion system applied in the metropolitan area and that applied to the beneficiaries of indigenous Muslim soldiers from North Africa who were not naturalized. For the latter, the pension was divided into a considerable number of beneficiaries (widows, children), with no possibility of reversion among the different spouses. As proof of the French authorities' consideration for the war-disabled of these territories, the public administration regulations applying the law of 31 March 1919 to the colonies were published on 2 October 1919[51].

Table n°1. Table of maximum pensions awarded to French and indigenous war-disabled concerned by the law of 19 March 1919 (Algeria, Tunisia, four municipalities in Senegal, then Morocco).

Percentage of invalidity	10%	50%	80%	100%
Captain	440	2200	3520	4400
Chief Warrant Officer	260	1300	2080	2600
Soldier	240	1200	1920	2400

Source: *JORF*, April 2, 1919, p. 8891.

The amount of these pensions increased during the 1920s, thanks to the efforts of associations of the disabled in Metropolitan France, which obtained increases in 1925 and 1927 in order to compensate for inflation. However, it should be noted that indigenous war-disabled in North Africa and the four municipalities of Senegal generally received pensions much lower than those of the French disabled in the same territories: first, because they remained in very low positions in the military hierarchy (Fogarty, 2008: 111); second, because they belonged to a military unit separate from the regular French army for a more or

[47] *Journal Officiel de la République française*, 2 April 1919, p. 3389.
[48] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Note, Paris, 17 March 1918, to the Army General Staff.
[49] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Draft note, 28 Feb 1918, Alby to the General Pension Service.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Journal Officiel de la République française*, 7 November 1919, p. 12491-12492.

less long period of time. Finally, the pension reversion system was very unfavourable for the beneficiaries.

Because of their membership in the auxiliary corps, Algerian infantrymen and Moroccan auxiliaries did not enjoy the rights granted to disabled members of the French regular army until 1919 for Algerians, and 1924 for Moroccans. The July 1915 decree conferred on them minimum provisional daily allowances: Algerian spahis (cavalry) received an allowance equal to that of the French and 2nd class indigenous soldiers of the regular corps, i.e. 1fr 70; and Moroccan auxiliaries received a variable rate according to rank, from 1fr 25 to 1fr 70 for non-commissioned officers.

While the Algerian case was regulated by the law of 31 March 1919, this was not the case in Morocco. From the time of the war, the Moroccan indigenous war-disabled challenged this inequality of status with the French war-disabled. They put pressure on the ministers of Metropolitan France to obtain the integration of Moroccan units into the regular French army. While the Ministers of War and Foreign Affairs were in favour of this integration into the French regular army, General Lyautey was categorically opposed to it, and he was supported by the Minister of Finance (Wanaïm, 2009). The indigenous combatants of Morocco were denied the pensions provided for by the law of 31 March 1919 because they belonged to the Moroccan auxiliary troops. The situation was resolved in January 1924, when the Minister of War issued a decree to confer a new grant to former soldiers of Moroccan troops[52].

Moreover, when faced with budgetary constraints, colonial administrations did not hesitate to discriminate against the indigenous war-disabled from North African territories. In March 1923, the Ministry adopted a circular denying the benefit of child bonuses to the indigenous war-disabled of Algeria, which outraged the associations of the disabled[53]. When the associations referred the matter to the Council of State, it finally confirmed the rights of Algerian indigenous war-disabled granted by the law of 31 March 1919.

In 1928, the Army General Staff declared itself in favour of lowering invalidity pensions for the indigenous war-disabled in North African countries, because the current rates "are far too high given the conditions of indigenous life", and "can lead men to aggravate their infirmity and do nothing to hasten their recovery or improve their state of health"[54]. Taking as a model the situation of pensioners by seniority, it recommended that the General Secretariat of the Ministry of War adopt "for the future, with regard to the indigenous North Africans, lower invalidity pension rates than those of the French"[55]. Due to the political implications of such an amendment, the opinions of the Governor General of Algeria, the Resident General of Morocco and Tunisia were sought as to the amount of retirement and invalidity pensions. The general residents of Morocco and Tunisia accepted the idea of disconnecting pensions for the indigenous people (maintenance of the same pension rate for the indigenous people in case of an increase in the amount of the pensions for the French military)[56]. On the other hand, the Governor General of Algeria considered it essential to

[52] *France Maroc, revue mensuelle illustrée*, June-July 1924, p. 104.
[53] *La France mutilée*, 3 June 1923, p. 1.
[54] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Draft of a note, Paris, 26 December 1928, Guizard and Sciard to the General Secretariat.
[55] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Note, Paris, 31 May 1930, Sciard and Guizard, to the General Secretariat.
[56] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Note, 22 October 1930, the Secretary General of the Ministry of War to the Army General Staff.

maintain “full equality between French and indigenous people”, because of the fundamental challenge of Franco-Indigenous collaboration. The head of government shared his opinion. Informed of this enquiry, the North African war-disabled gathered in Oran in 1930 strongly protested against this possible revision and undertook to fight to preserve equal rights[57]. This associative pressure, combined with the positioning of the Governor of Algeria, and the absence of an increase in the amount of pensions for the French disabled, contributed to maintaining the status quo in 1931. The General Secretariat of the War Ministry considered that “there was no need to raise the issue to avoid unnecessary controversy”[58].

Throughout the 1930s, North African associations of disabled called for an increase in the level of invalidity and seniority pensions, but we lack sources to know whether increases were granted by the authorities.

3. 2. Pensions of a much lower amount for indigenous war-disabled from other colonies (FWA, FEA, Madagascar, etc.).

The methods for determining the invalidity pensions of indigenous veterans from other colonies only became explicit one year after the law of 31 March 1919, by the decree of 22 September 1920. This decree determined pension rates that varied according to the colonies, distinguishing between the FWA and the FEA (between 40 and 60% of the rate attributed to French disabled persons according to rank), then the other colonies (Indochina, Côte des Somalis, New Caledonia, Oceania, receiving between 30 and 43% of the rate of French disabled persons), and finally Madagascar (between 25 and 32% of the rate of French disabled persons). Not only were these pensions very low, but the severely disabled indigenous invalids in these territories did not benefit from the pension supplements granted to severely disabled invalids who were beneficiaries of the law of 31 March 1919 (25% increase for persons who needed assistance from another person, and supplements in the event of serious multiple disabilities). Moreover, the indigenous disabled of these colonial territories did not enjoy the increases attributed to the French disabled who benefited from the law of 31 March 1919 during the 1920s. On the other hand, the French disabled in these colonial territories received a pension similar to that of the French in the metropolitan area.

Table n°2. Table of invalidity pensions for French and indigenous soldiers in various territories of the Empire (amounts fixed in 1919 and 1920).

	French and indigenous disabled from Algeria, Tunisia, the four municipalities of Senegal, and Morocco (from 1924). And French disabled from the other territories of the Empire (law of 31	Indigenous soldiers from FWA and FEA	Indigenous soldiers from Indochina, the French Somali Coast, New Caledonia, and the French Establishments in Oceania.	Indigenous soldiers from Madagascar

[57] *Le Mutilé de l'Algérie*, 4 May 1930, p. 4.
[58] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Military Staff Analysis Note, 17 February 1932, "Pensions for the Beneficiaries of the Military".

	March 1919)											
Percentage of invalidity	10%	50%	100%	10%	50%	100%	10%	50%	100%	10 %	50 %	100%
Chief Warrant Officer	260	1300	2600	140	700	1400	113	565	1130	84	420	840
Soldier	240	1200	2400	100	500	1000	72	360	720	60	300	600

Sources: *JORF, 2 April 1919, p. 8891; JORF, 13 September 1920, p. 13473.*

The criteria for awarding pensions were very strict and some war-disabled protested against the legal basis of the pension, the assessment of their pensions, the low level of pensions, or the non-renewal of their pension. For example, a disabled Senegalese infantryman named Doua-Bi-Daouan, residing in Gouraoulfa (Côte d'Ivoire), who had both hands and both feet amputated, was refused renewal of his invalidity pension in 1924 on the grounds that he had contracted gangrene of the extremities away from combat activities, during guard duty in Toulon. Informed of the situation, several officials tried to alert the Governor of the FWA of the injustice of this decision, which could have a "deplorable effect on the indigenous people"[59].

Associations of war-disabled demanded regular increases in their pensions during the 1920s, without obtaining satisfaction. The demands of the indigenous disabled of these colonies were relayed by various associations of war-disabled in Metropolitan France (*Union Fédérale, Association républicaine des anciens Combattants*), as well as occasionally by some parliamentarians. In 1929, the communist deputy from Seine, Georges Beaugrand, protested against the low pensions of the indigenous disabled (1000 francs for a 100% disabled indigenous soldier, compared to 7160 for a disabled French soldier). He acted as their spokesman, indicating that the indigenous veterans "expect to receive the same allowances as the disabled French"[60].

Following the 1929 economic crisis, the Army General Staff was more favourable to increasing the rate of invalidity and seniority pensions for colonial soldiers, due to the intensity of the economic and social crisis in the colonies. An inter-ministerial commission (Finance, Pensions, War, Colonies) was set up in 1932 to study this question and propose new rates. It approved an essential principle: "the invalidity pension granted to the indigenous soldier [was] essentially a maintenance benefit - and that to be equitable, it [must] be based on the average cost of the individual's existence in his social environment"[61]. It recommended increasing all pensions and providing a supplement for the indigenous severely war-disabled. The Ministry of Finance refused to grant increases to seniority pensioners, but agreed to increase invalidity pensioners. A new decree on 16 April 1932 unified and increased the amount of invalidity pensions for indigenous colonial soldiers (who were subject to the decree

[59] FR NOA, 61 COL 192. Copy, Bingerville, E. Pieussergues, undated (before March 1927), the Administration of the Daloa Circle to the Governor of the FWA.
[60] *Journal Officiel de la République française. Débats parlementaires*, 28 November 1929, p. 3635.
[61] FR DHS, GR 7 NN 9 1037. Letter, Paris, 8 January 1937, from the Minister of Colonies to the Minister of Defence.

of September 1920). It also issued significant supplements for the severely disabled requiring the assistance of a third person (similar to the supplements provided for in Article 12 of the March 1919 Act)[62]. Finally, it granted the same rights to indigenous veterans who became naturalized French citizens as to native French, but the number of beneficiaries of this measure was extremely limited. These increases only partially satisfied those concerned.

Table n°3. Table of invalidity pension rates for non-commissioned indigenous soldiers set by the decree of April 1932.

Grades	10%	50%	80%	100%
Chief Warrant Officer	340	1700	2720	4000
Infantryman	170	850	1360	2000

Source: *JORF*, 22 April 1932, p. 4345.

3. 3. Sufficient financial resources and prestige to establish a home and achieve social advancement?

These pensions and the multiple economic benefits associated with being disabled allowed French war-disabled – and to a lesser extent indigenous war-disabled – with significant degrees of invalidity to live comfortably. While the pension was largely insufficient for the war-disabled in the metropolitan area (Prost, 1977, p. 56), it was significant for the disabled in the colonies, for whom it constituted a valuable inflow of cash. The press reported on the importance of these resources for the indigenous people: an observer from Tlemcen (Algeria) stated : “Did you know that in the village the indigenous war-disabled is considered to be a "mercanti", i.e. a privileged person of fortune who can live without work and experience at his ease the "sweet idleness" so dear to the Arabs”[63]? Above all, the pension offered them the opportunity to support a family, and thus to remain attractive in the matrimonial market and preserve their masculinity in a world where men had a duty to support their families. The historian Echenberg also mentions that the return of wounded soldiers with substantial and permanent pensions led to “adjustments in the purchase price of wives” in FWA (Echenberg, 2009, p. 152). While it is impossible for us to provide statistics on marriage rates, reading the association journals proves that marriages and births were frequent among the war-disabled. For example, the war-blinded Tunisian Hassen Ben Salem Kriem, from Teboulba, announced in 1937 the birth of his daughter Khedija to his comrades in Metropolitan France[64]. In addition, European and indigenous war-disabled who worked had significant resources thanks to the combination of pension and salary. They could build up a small capital, buy a house or open a small business (Bekraoui, 1987, p. 375). However, we should not overestimate this financial contribution to the disabled from France, which only occurred periodically (once every quarter). Many indigenous people, in need of more regular cash flow, took out loans from loan sharks, who eventually recovered a significant part of the pension. In 1932, a group of Mascara's indigenous war-disabled “strongly protested against

[62] *Journal Officiel de la République française*, 22 April 1932, p. 4345.
[63] *Le courrier de Tlemcen*, June 30, 1922, p. 1.
[64] Archives of the Foundation for the War Blind, Paris. Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Union of the War Blind of 24 April 1937, p. 29.

the shameful exploitation of which most of them were victims by certain loan sharks who made advances to them on their pension at a rate of 150%"[65].

However, the main question is whether indigenous war-disabled, thanks to these resources and the prestige conferred by the status of war-wounded, could more easily change their legal status, leave native status and/or become French citizens in the new colonies, where this distinction existed between the two world wars. In the old colonies – the four communes of Senegal (Saint Louis, Gorée, Dakar and Rufisque) and the French settlements of India – all the inhabitants were French citizens during this period (Surun, 2012, p. 166). In the other French colonies, the indigenous peoples were "French subjects", not endowed with French citizenship. In the protectorate countries, the indigenous people were *French protégés*, "Tunisian subjects" or "Moroccans subjects". In addition, in some colonies (Algeria, FWA, FEA, New Caledonia, Madagascar, etc.), indigenous people were subject to discriminatory measures related to the Indigenous Code (offences and arbitrary punishments, which could be transformed into collective labour) (Fabre, 2010, p. 287).

The indigenous war-disabled, as ex-soldiers, were among the few categories of people who could apply for French naturalization. If they obtained French nationality, they lost their status as indigenous Muslims and the related constraints. The naturalization process was very uncertain, with decision-making officials applying naturalization measures in a very restrictive and personal way. In Algeria, following the adoption of the Jonnart Act on 4 February 1919, indigenous soldiers who served in the French army had the possibility of applying individually for French naturalization (Gros, 1997, p. 44). The same provisions were adopted a few years later in Tunisia, in FWA and FEA. Some indigenous war-disabled were indeed asking to be naturalized, such as the disabled Tunisian Mohamed El Ghardi, who was *chaouch* at the civilian security office in Sousse, and who requested his naturalization in 1923[66]. He was supported in his application by the Association générale des mutilés de la Grande Guerre en Tunisie. We do not know if it was successful.

However, in all these countries, the administration distributed certificates of French nationality sparingly. As the administration considerably restricted the number of beneficiaries, the person concerned was more likely to obtain it if he or she met other criteria (knowing how to read and write French, possessing a military decoration, being an owner, having held a public office, having good morals, etc.). During the inter-war period, a few dozen veterans of the FWA (including many decorated war-wounded) thus obtained their naturalization, but one out of two applicants was rejected (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2001, p. 296).

The situation was slightly different in Madagascar, where retired indigenous ex-military pensioners had the possibility of requesting exemption from native administrative status following the adoption of an exemption order by the Governor General in March 1921 (Valensky, 1997, p. 79). However, this exit from native status did not mean they benefited from the status of French citizens.

CONCLUSION:

[65] *L'Echo d'Alger*, 25 February 1932, p. 7.

[66] *Bulletin trimestriel de l'Association générale des mutilés de la Grande Guerre en Tunisie,* N° 19, April 1923, p. 10.

War-disabled were generally regarded with respect by colonial governors and metropolitan politicians, who adopted a series of measures in 1916 to ensure that these disabled did not feel "abandoned" by the Fatherland. This explains why the Empire's war-disabled enjoyed a range of rights almost similar to those of Metropolitan France (including economic rights) a few years after those of France, and not several decades later as in the case of the civilian blind in Algeria (Brégain, 2016). However, the disabled of the Empire did not benefit from the same possibilities of vocational rehabilitation as those of France nor from free surgical and medical care (except in Algeria and Tunisia). The sources remain insufficient to carry out a systematic comparison of all the services offered in all the territories, but make it possible to note the extreme heterogeneity of the assistance policies in the colonial Empire, with strong territorial and ethnic inequalities in the allocation of the various services. The privileged status granted to the war-wounded in North Africa is visible through the regular movement of community leaders and political leaders (disabled parliamentarians, pension ministers) between France and the countries of North Africa, through the high pensions accorded, and the significant presence of prostheses fitting services and rehabilitation centres.

The Empire's policy to assist the war-disabled was one of the few social policies that provided protection for colonized populations. This social policy, which was costly for France, was a priority because of the political imperative of showing gratitude for those who sacrificed themselves for the country, but also and above all to maintain the backing of the colonized populations and the political support of the disabled and former combatants in a context of growing anti-colonial nationalism. These political issues explain the equality of pensions between French and indigenous war-disabled in North African countries and in the 4 municipalities of Senegal. The case of Morocco is emblematic of this: General Lyautey showed the most apprehension concerning the massive return of the indigenous disabled by demanding their retention in France; he organized a substantial policy of job placement of war-disabled; then the French authorities agreed to reintegrate Moroccan infantrymen into the regular army in 1924, thus allowing them to enjoy equal rights with the French disabled in terms of pensions. On the other hand, the French authorities' choice to grant much lower rights to FWA war-disabled (lack of a priority job placement policy, lower pensions for the indigenous disabled), despite their numbers and recognition for their bravery, could be explained by their perception of the political situation in this colony, namely that there were no political risks to maintaining colonial hierarchies and openly discriminating against the FWA's indigenous war-disabled.

By equalizing the rights of indigenous and French war-disabled, this social policy contravened colonial hierarchies, but only in a geographically selective way (in North Africa and in the 4 municipalities of Senegal), and partially (only in terms of pensions and vocational rehabilitation). Moreover, some ten years after the end of the war, the attentiveness and interest shown towards indigenous war-disabled evaporated, and discriminatory impulses were reflected in the speeches of senior officials of the Ministry of War, who were now ready to terminate the equal treatment of indigenous and French war-disabled in North Africa in terms of pensions. In all other colonies, indigenous war-disabled were severely discriminated against, they only had a pension that was much lower than that of the French disabled.

Throughout the Empire, indigenous war-disabled had less access to administrative jobs, agricultural land and bank loans. Only a very small minority of them managed to leave native status *indigénat* and become naturalized French citizens. Due to the repressive colonial context, indigenous war-disabled generally expressed only indirectly – through the voice of the disabled French – their criticism of the injustice of colonial policies. While the condition of the war-disabled led many French and indigenous disabled people to feel pride for having served France and to have defended French institutions, others, such as the former Senegalese disabled rifleman Lamine Senghor in the metropolis (Murphy, 2013), fought the injustices of the colonial system during the 1920s.

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