

Charlie Hebdo and the politics of mourning

This article explores the different forms of mourning that structured the public and political memorialization of the victims and perpetrators of the Paris attacks by analyzing the discourses, ceremonies, and negotiations accompanying their funerals. It argues that political actors employed three distinct strategies of mourning to produce a hierarchy of French subjects organized around a spectrum of grievability. The first strategy, "mourning as erasure," was characteristic of the funerals of the three terrorists and evinced an active effort by the French state to efface any trace of their memory. The second, "mourning as exclusionary-inclusion," was exemplified in the ceremonies held in honor of Ahmed Merabet, a police officer mourned as a loyal guardian of the French Republic in terms that maintained his subordinate status as a religious outsider. The third strategy, "mourning as appropriation," was most pronounced at the funerals of the four victims of the attack on the kosher supermarket Hyper Cacher. Held in Israel, these ceremonies offered an emotional platform for both French and Israeli leaders to claim the Jewish victims as their own. These disparate strategies of mourning highlight the different ways that the dead help demarcate the boundaries of political communities.

Cet article examine les différents modes de deuil qui structurent la commémoration publique et politique des victimes et des responsables des attentats de Paris en analysant les discours, les cérémonies, et les négociations concernant leurs funérailles. Cet article affirme que les acteurs politiques emploient trois stratégies différentes de deuil pour créer une hiérarchie de sujets français organisée autour d'un éventail de modes et de degrés de deuil. La première stratégie, "le deuil d'effacement," fût caractéristique des funérailles des trois terroristes et fit preuve d'un effort actif de l'État français d'effacer toute trace de leur mémoire. La deuxième stratégie, "le deuil d'exclusion-inclusion," fût illustrée par les cérémonies en mémoire d'Ahmed Merabet, un policier pleuré pour avoir loyalement protégé la république Française, mais en des termes qui servirent à maintenir sa position subordonnée en fonction de son appartenance religieuse. La troisième stratégie, "le deuil d'appropriation," fût surtout notable lors des funérailles des quatre victimes de l'attaque

du supermarché Hyper Cacher. Ces cérémonies, tenues en Israël, furent utilisées par les personnalités françaises et israéliennes pour revendiquer les victimes Juives comme les leurs. Ces stratégies de deuil distinctes montrent les différentes façons dont les morts participent à la production des frontières qui démarquent les communautés politiques.

Introduction

On 20 January 2015, Frédéric Boisseau was buried in the village of Villiers-sous-Grez, eighty kilometers south of Paris. Boisseau, a 42-year-old maintenance worker, was shot dead in the lobby of the *Charlie Hebdo* building moments after two men armed with AK-47s burst through the front door. He was the first casualty in a series of terrorist attacks that left twenty people dead, including several members of *Charlie Hebdo*'s editorial staff, four hostages at a kosher supermarket, three police officers, and the perpetrators themselves. In the widespread demonstrations that followed, millions took to the streets under the rallying cry "Je suis Charlie" to mourn the loss of life and express solidarity with the French Republic. Yet, as his brother Christophe bitterly observed, Boisseau's death was largely "forgotten," having been eclipsed by the others (qtd. in de Sakutin).

Speaking at Boisseau's funeral, Minister of Labor François Rebsamen acknowledged that the victims "did not [all] have the same notoriety" nor "receive the same media coverage." He insisted, however, that "there is no hierarchy when it comes to suffering or tributes." All of the victims would be equally "mourned by the Republic," he continued, "because the Republic forgets nothing, forgets no one. The Republic does not distinguish between its children. She has only one child: the French people" ("Hommage à Frédéric Boisseau").

Contrary to Rebsamen's claims, this article contends that the Republic does in fact distinguish between its citizens and shows how the creation of a hierarchy of French subjects is predicated upon differential practices of mourning. It analyzes the discourses, ceremonies, and negotiations accompanying the funerals of both the victims and perpetrators to illustrate the different strategies of mourning that shaped the public and political memorialization of the Paris attacks. These strategies, which I refer to as erasure, exclusionary-inclusion, and appropriation, were utilized by political actors in their efforts to manage the dead. By focusing on the funerals, I seek not only to highlight the political work of mourning, but

also to demonstrate how the treatment of dead bodies is central to the construction of communal boundaries and political identities.

The bodies of the dead have been a long-standing site of political activity and conflict in France. Up until the early nineteenth century, burials were administered by the Catholic Church, which exercised considerable discretion over who it would bury. Pagans, heretics, suicides, criminals, actors and actresses, Protestants, Jews, and the excommunicated were all excluded from the “Christian ground” of the churchyards (Kselman).¹ In the aftermath of the French Revolution, corpses of the old order became targets of political violence. As Michel Ragon recounts, when the National Convention voted for the destruction of the royal mausoleums of Saint-Denis on 6 October 1793, the skeletons of twenty-five kings, seventeen queens, and seventy-one princes were exhumed, thrown into two great ditches, and covered with lime to destroy them. Their lead burial vaults were removed by workers with pickaxes, melted down, and turned into bullets. The same year, the body of Cardinal Richelieu was taken out of its tomb and decapitated with much fanfare (Ragon).

In addition to acts directed at the corpse itself, the dead can become politically charged through ritualized ceremonies such as funerals. Generally speaking, funerals are rites of passage that ease the dead out of this world and into the next (Hertz; Van Gennep). They take many shapes depending on the character of the deceased and the circumstances behind their death. While the funerals of ordinary citizens are usually private affairs, individuals who have occupied positions of power or prestige often receive more elaborate and spectacular funerals. Like coronations or presidential inaugurations, state funerals are public ceremonies of power that are central to any political regime. Among official ceremonies in France, the state funeral is an enduring political ritual that has been performed continually since the founding of the state in the modern era (Ben-Amos). From the Old Regime to the present day, successive French governments have celebrated and mourned various figures through state funerals, though the choice of the categories of persons who warranted such an honor was determined by the state’s political goals and the prevailing political culture. The republican funerals of the French Revolution lionized Enlightenment philosophers like Voltaire, while the Third Republic was the first regime that regularly honored scientists through grand public funerals (Ben-Amos).

Like other public ceremonies, such as civic festivals, funerals can be integrative and exclusive (Ozouf). They help to integrate a community while simultaneously marking its boundaries and excluding others. They

produce an array of affective responses, ranging from anger and sorrow to empathy and solidarity. Such affects, and the moments of mourning that engender them, can play a powerful role in political life by lending emotional weight to political claims, particularly those related to the identities and values of a political community. According to Bonnie Honig, “mourning practices postulate certain forms of collective life and so how we mourn is a deeply political issue” (10). I would add that it is not just *how* we mourn, but *who* we mourn (and do not mourn) that is of critical importance for political life.

Mourning practices are consequential for politics because they reveal who belongs and which lives matter in political communities. Judith Butler has observed that the uneven distribution of physical vulnerability and precarity regulates norms of grieving. In raising the question, “What makes for a grievable life?” Butler underscores the political calculations that render certain human lives more grievable than others. She writes, “forms of racism instituted and active at the level of perception tend to produce iconic versions of populations who are eminently grievable, and others whose loss is no loss, and who remain ungrievable” (“Frames of War” 24). Following Butler, we might define a grievable life as one whose loss is recognized publicly and mourned collectively.

Yet framing the issue solely in terms of which lives are grievable misses an important dimension of the politics of mourning. While Butler offers a powerful and compelling dichotomy – grievable versus ungrievable life – the funerals that will be analyzed here, particularly those of the three terrorists, show how the regulation of mourning targets not only the dead but also the living. Prohibitions on mourning attempt to circumscribe which individuals are worthy of mourning and which groups are allowed to mourn publicly. Mourning becomes politicized precisely because it can be mobilized to bolster or subvert state objectives. It can provide an official framework to interpret public loss and cultivate civic identities (Stow) or, conversely, help catalyze political resistance to the excesses of sovereign power. Groups that are “ungrievable” face restrictions on mourning when political authorities believe that they mourn incorrectly or for the wrong reasons. Such prohibitions seek to control not only the subjects of mourning, but its form and content as well.

In a similar vein, Heather Pool suggests that social standing is created, contested, and confirmed in and through moments of political mourning. “For mourning to become political,” she argues, “losses must be visible to the public” (188). In the wake of tragic events, the different ways that the

dead are mourned (and not mourned) help clarify who has standing within the polity. "At its most fundamental level," argues Pool, "perhaps our sense of belonging is constructed through political mourning, when citizens see a loss *as a loss*" (188). By studying rites of mourning then, we gain insight into the processes through which membership, social status, and belonging in political communities is affirmed or denied.

In what follows, I examine the different strategies of mourning employed in the wake of the January 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. I argue that these strategies produced a hierarchy of subject positions organized around a spectrum of grievability. Drawing on a variety of French and English-language sources, including newspaper articles, interviews, and public speeches by political leaders, I show that at least three distinct forms of mourning were at work in the funeral ceremonies held for the perpetrators and victims of the attacks.

The first strategy, which I call "mourning as erasure," was characteristic of the funerals of the three terrorists and evinced an active effort to efface any trace of their memory, starting with their bodies. The second, "mourning as exclusionary-inclusion," was exemplified in the ceremonies held in honor of Ahmed Merabet, one of the three police officers killed in the line of duty. Merabet, a French-born Muslim of Algerian heritage, was mourned as a loyal guardian of the French Republic but in terms that maintained his subordinate status as a religious outsider. The third strategy, "mourning as appropriation," was most pronounced at the funerals of the four victims of the attack on the kosher supermarket Hyper Cacher. Held in Israel, these funerals offered an emotional platform for both French and Israeli leaders to claim the Jewish victims as their own. While Israeli leaders used the occasion to encourage European Jews to migrate to Israel, French authorities insisted that such a move would undermine the social fabric of the French Republic. As such, the victims were mourned as part of a broader effort to consolidate the political boundaries of the French and Israeli nation-states.

In my analysis of the funerals, I pay close attention to the political deliberations that accompanied the handling of the dead. Deciding where to bury the bodies entailed complex and difficult negotiations involving families and political actors at the local, national, and international levels. That there should be some discussion about the proper location for burial is perhaps unsurprising, given the strong symbolic connections between the site of burial and a sense of individual and collective belonging (Balkan). Yet the extent of the negotiations, particularly with regard to the bodies

of the three terrorists and the victims of the supermarket attack, point to the degree to which states are invested in corpse management as a means of sovereign governance. Following other scholars, I view sovereignty as an effect of practices that target the body and adjudicate questions of life and death (Foucault; Stepputat). Deliberations over the proper site of burial suggest not only that the bodies of the dead are a critical site for the enactment of sovereign power, but also that the treatment of the dead is itself intimately linked to the construction of political identities and communal boundaries.

Mourning as erasure

On 9 January 2015, two days after attacking the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi were killed by French security forces at an industrial estate in Dammartin-en-Goële, 35km north of the capital. A third gunman, Amedy Coulibaly, was killed in a synchronized raid on the kosher supermarket where he had murdered four people and taken several others hostage. The corpses of the three gunmen were brought to a police morgue at the Forensic Institute of Paris to be kept in storage until a decision could be reached about where to inter them. Under Article L2223-3 of the Code général des collectivités territoriales, French citizens are entitled to burial in the district where they lived or died (“Code général”). Despite their status as French citizens, however, deciding where to bury the three gunmen was no easy matter. “If I am asked to bury Saïd Kouachi, I will refuse categorically,” declared Arnaud Robinet, the mayor of Reims, the city where Kouachi had lived. Cemeteries are “a place of peace” he said. “I don’t want them to become a place of hatred” (qtd in de la Baume and Bilefski). Robinet was one of many political actors involved in the disposal of the gunmen’s corpses and his statements illustrate the contentious nature of the negotiations accompanying their burial. The clandestine manner in which the terrorists were ultimately buried reflects efforts by the French state to disavow them by eradicating any trace of their memory.

Mourning as erasure entailed a series of exclusions targeting the terrorists’ corpses. According to newspaper accounts, the French authorities initially sought to bury Coulibaly and the Kouachi brothers in Mali and Algeria respectively (Rousseau and Cadorel). The Algerian and Malian governments refused these requests on the grounds that the men were not citizens of either state. Although their parents had immigrated to France

from Mali and Algeria, all three were born and raised in France and held French citizenship. Furthermore, as Algeria's Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra pointed out, the Kouachi brothers had "never set foot in Algeria" (qtd. in Rousseau and Cadorel).

The French state's desire to export the bodies suggests that it wanted to avoid the symbolic pollution stemming from the burial of terrorists in its territory. More importantly, this move can be understood as an attempt to rewrite the personal biographies of the three gunmen to divest them of any connection to France and obscure their legal and political status as French citizens. In effect, it was an attempt to denaturalize them posthumously. Such efforts reveal a kind of genealogical racism that assumes that the children of immigrants are perpetually linked to the ancestral homelands of their parents and grandparents, thereby remaining outsiders in the French political community. This logic helps explain why the French state acted *as if* the three men were not French. By refusing to accept the bodies of the gunmen, the Malian and Algerian governments simultaneously affirmed their Frenchness.²

Despite the gunmen's citizenship, politicians across the political spectrum felt uneasy about burying them in French soil. Mayor Robinet, a member of the now defunct conservative Union for a Popular Movement party (UMP) was vehemently opposed to granting a burial plot to Saïd Kouachi. "I don't want a grave in Reims to become a place of prayer and contemplation for fanatics" he said when asked about the possibility of burying Kouachi there. Robinet's comments show how the political threat posed by Kouachi's grave was not simply a matter of his grievability. Although Kouachi could be accurately described as an "ungrievable life," the danger was that he would be mourned improperly, by the wrong type of people, and for the wrong reasons. Robinet assumes that the terrorist would become a martyr and that his grave would serve as a site of pilgrimage for "fanatics." As such, Robinet's effort to deny Kouachi a burial plot is a strategy of erasure enacted as a prohibition of mourning.

Patrice Leclerc, a member of the French Communist Party (PCF) and mayor of Gennevilliers, where Chérif Kouachi had lived for several years, also expressed reservations about the prospect of his burial in the town. Although Leclerc successfully blocked a request from Saïd's widow to bury the brothers together on the grounds that Saïd had not been a resident of Gennevilliers, he was compelled to proceed with Chérif's burial. "I didn't have a choice," he explained: "like all mayors, I would prefer to avoid burying a terrorist in my territory, but I applied the law" (qtd. in "Saïd

Kouachi enterré”). Another local official, whose name was not disclosed because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the burial, said that “even if it doesn’t please us, we respect French law” (qtd. in de la Baume).

While French burial law grants citizens the right to be buried in the district where they lived or died, it also provides the mayor of the city with some discretion over how and when the burial takes place. The method of the gunmen’s burial is instructive. The Kouachi brothers were both interred in the middle of the night under the cover of darkness in anonymous, unmarked graves. No family members were present and the locations of the cemeteries and gravesites were not disclosed to the public. Describing the burial of Saïd, mayor Robinet said that it occurred “in the most discrete, anonymous way possible” in order to avoid the possibility of the grave becoming a “shrine for certain types of people” (qtd. in “Saïd Kouachi enterré”). Similarly, mayor Leclerc said that Chérif’s grave would remain anonymous “to prevent any threat to public order and to preserve the tranquility of the city” (qtd. in “Chérif Kouachi”).

As for Coulibaly, although his last known residence was with his girlfriend Hayat Boumedienne in Fontenay-aux-Roses, the municipality was not obliged to take his corpse since the couple was not married. Asked about the possibility that he would be buried in Fontenay-aux-Roses, mayor Laurent Vastel suggested that the bodies of terrorists should be subjected to “mandatory cremation” to prevent their graves from becoming “unhealthy sites of pilgrimage” (qtd. in Saliceti). While Vastel’s proposal was not carried through, Coulibaly was buried secretly and anonymously, much like the Kouachi brothers. His body was interred in an unmarked grave in the Muslim section of a cemetery near the Paris Orly airport at six in the morning under tight police security (Gauron).

These accounts highlight the multiple ways in which different political actors were invested in controlling the corpses of the gunmen and, by extension, shaping the conditions of their memorialization. At each step, French authorities utilized different strategies of erasure as a means of regulation. Attempts to export the corpses and to obstruct their burial in France were moves that erased the gunmen’s citizenship and legal status, while the decision to bury them in unmarked graves was an erasure of their personhood and memory. Strategies that render certain subjects invisible are constitutive of sovereign power. Describing the practice of enforced disappearance, Banu Bargu argues that it is a specific form of violence that seeks not only to eradicate the person it targets, but also to “erase the fact that the person ever existed” (43). The corpses of the

three terrorists were not only hidden from sight but, more importantly, the act of anonymous burial was deployed as a means of foreclosing the very possibility of mourning. My point is not that the terrorists deserve to be memorialized or celebrated – they do not – but that the negotiations surrounding their burial demonstrates how the constitution of political boundaries is intimately linked to the management of dead bodies. Efforts to export their corpses are akin to posthumous denaturalization and reflect attempts to excise the terrorists from the French nation – both literally and symbolically.

Mourning as exclusionary inclusion

In contrast to the inconspicuous burials of the gunmen, the funerals held for the three police officers killed in the attacks were major political spectacles. Officers Franck Brinsolaro, Clarissa Jean-Philippe, and Ahmed Merabet were honored at a memorial service held at the Préfecture de Police in Paris on 13 January. In attendance were high-level members of the French government, including President François Hollande, Prime Minister Manuel Valls, and the Ministers of Defense, Foreign Affairs, and the Interior. Thousands of French officers stood watch alongside delegations of police and military representatives from Argentina, Greece, Italy, and the United States as President Hollande solemnly placed the medal of the Légion d'Honneur atop each of the flag-draped coffins. After a minute of silence, a military band played *La Marseillaise*.

In a speech delivered at the ceremony, Hollande praised the officers for their courage, declaring that they “died so that we could live in freedom” (“Hommage aux victimes”). He also underscored their family histories, noting that “they represented the diversity of origins of the forces of order in our country.” Their biographies not only set the tenor of the speeches made in their honor but also structured the ways in which they were mourned and incorporated into the French body politic. Jean-Philippe was born in the French overseas territory of Martinique while Brinsolaro and Merabet were both second-generation French citizens born to Italian and Algerian immigrant families respectively.³ As such, their personal backgrounds could be used to celebrate a sanguine vision of French multiculturalism, much in the way that the formula “black blanc beur” was deployed to extol the success of the 1998 French national soccer team and ethnic diversity in France.⁴

The accolades bestowed upon Ahmed Merabet are particularly poignant when contrasted with the discourses surrounding the burial of the three terrorists. As a French Muslim of Algerian heritage who grew up in Livry-Gargan, a *cit * in the Parisian suburb of Seine-Saint-Denis, Merabet's profile is, at face value, quite similar to that of the Kouachi brothers. Yet, as a police officer, Merabet was more clearly aligned with the French state and could therefore be held up as a successful example of a "well-integrated immigrant." These overlapping identities (French, Muslim, police, immigrant) framed the public mourning of Merabet and reflected a strategy of exclusionary-inclusion. He was described by the press as a "bridge-builder" (Sage) with "one foot in the *banlieue* and the other in the police" (Fikri), and eulogized by Hollande as being "very proud to represent the French Republic" ("Hommage aux victimes"). In his speech, Hollande also contended that "Ahmed Merabet knew better than anyone that radical Islam has nothing to do with Islam and that fanaticism kills Muslims."

The French president was not the only public official to emphasize Merabet's religious identity when valorizing the contributions he made in defense of the Republic and its values. Speaking at his funeral at the Cimet re musulman de Bobigny, Dalil Boubakeur, president of the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) asserted that "Ahmed was a Muslim French citizen [*citoyen franais musulman*] and a servant of the Republic. He gave his life to the service of the state and the security of the French." Calling the gunmen "barbarians," Boubakeur went on to say that "This is not Islam. Islam is peace" (qtd. in Bontinck). In a similar vein, Abdelbaki Attaf, an administrator at the Ennour Mosque in Gennevilliers, which Ch rif Kouachi was known to frequent, said that the funeral was a "symbol of Ahmed's dual membership in both the Muslim community as well as the fatherland [*patrie*]" (qtd. in AFP).

These eulogies invoke a particular kind of French Muslim subject while delimiting the forms of Islam that are acceptable within the *la que* political order. A "good" Muslim is understood as one who serves the state, upholds its values, and is willing to give up her life in its defense. Radical Islam, on the other hand, is presented as a pressing security threat not only for the state, but for ordinary Muslims too. Hollande, Boubakeur, and Attaf go to great lengths to avoid conflating Islam with terrorism or violence but still maintain an analytical distinction between being Muslim and being French. Merabet is never just French, but is consistently hailed as being both Muslim *and* French. The two identities, while potentially compatible, are nonetheless kept separate.

Such positioning reflects and reinforces the double bind faced by French Muslims today, where the constant need to affirm their citizenship undermines their claim to equal membership in the French polity. To put it differently, there would be no need for French Muslims to proclaim their status as citizens or for others to confirm their citizenship if they were already accepted as full members of the body politic. As Mayanthi Fernando has observed, “the more they assert their Frenchness, the more they reveal the precariousness of their belonging” (65). Thus, while the public commemoration of Merabet’s service could be read as a moment of political inclusion, the manner in which his biography is folded into a larger narrative of collective mourning reproduces a vision of the French nation where ethnic and religious minorities remain outside of the dominant national imaginary.

The choice of Merabet’s burial site also deserves some scrutiny. To begin with, it was never in doubt that he would be buried in France. Unlike the three terrorists, there was no attempt to deport his body to his purported ancestral homeland. In a sense, Merabet’s burial in France was a testament to his belonging. More telling, however, was the decision to bury him in the Muslim Cemetery of Bobigny, which has a unique place in the history of French colonialism. The cemetery, which is one of the oldest Muslim burial grounds in France, was established in 1937 to honor the thousands of colonial subjects who fought and died for France in the First World War (D’Adler). It is one of three cemeteries in French territory reserved exclusively for Muslims, the other two being located on l’Île de Réunion.⁵ As such, the choice of Bobigny as a burial site helped situate Merabet’s death in a longer historical chain of sacrifices made by Muslims on behalf of France.

The mourning of Ahmed Merabet simultaneously affirmed and qualified his membership in the French nation-state. At each turn, he was celebrated as a model citizen in a manner that upheld his subordinate status. The eulogies, speeches, and funeral orations underscored his political inclusion and integration while foregrounding aspects of his identity that marked him as Other. His burial in a Muslim military cemetery was intended as a gesture of honor but also reflected his positioning as an heir to colonial soldiers who fought on behalf of the French Empire in an earlier era. Even the choice of political figures present at his funeral, particularly Dalil Boubakeur, a long-standing advocate for a republicanized Islam, exemplifies the quandary faced by millions of French citizens like Ahmed Merabet, for whom political inclusion is predicated upon unwavering allegiance to the state.

Mourning as appropriation

The funerals of the four men killed in the kosher supermarket Hyper Cacher challenged the notion that France should serve as the central locus of belonging for all of the victims of the terrorist attacks. On 13 January, the bodies of Philippe Braham, Yohan Cohen, Yoav Hattab, and Francois-Michel Saada arrived in Jerusalem on a plane chartered by El Al airlines. Although none of the men were Israeli citizens, their families, some of whom were pressured by the Israeli government, opted to have them buried in Israel (Hasson). Avi Zana, director of the Aliya & Meilleure Intégration (AMI) Foundation, which provides support to French Jews who emigrate to Israel and was assisting the families of the victims, said that “This is not an easy decision [...] if we decide to bury in France, then it is clear that our future is in France” (qtd. in Hasson). All four men were French citizens and three held dual Tunisian citizenship. The decision to bury the men in Israel rather than France was a source of embarrassment for the French government, which sought to assure its Jewish population that it was an integral part of the French Republic.

Their bodies were interred at the Har HaMenuchot cemetery in Jerusalem, the same burial ground where the victims of an attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse had been buried in 2012. Though it was not an official state funeral it had all the trappings of one. The ceremony drew thousands of people and was attended by several senior Israeli political figures, including President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as members of the Knesset and French Minister of Ecology, Ségolène Royal. The funerals were broadcast live on every television channel in Israel and served as the backdrop for a national day of mourning. Israeli political leaders used the funeral as an occasion to encourage Jewish migration to Israel, claiming that Israel was their one and only homeland. As such, the victims were appropriated in the service of political projects aimed at consolidating the boundaries of two different national communities.

The appropriation began even before the victims’ bodies arrived in Israel. Speaking at a rally held in Paris on 11 January, Prime Minister Netanyahu said, “I wish to tell to all French and European Jews – Israel is your home” (qtd. in Booth and Eglash). His comments invoked the idea of a Jewish homeland to make the claim that European Jews belonged in Israel and to encourage them to come “home.” But the actual process of “return,” at least in the case of the four victims, was ad hoc, provisional, and beset with

inconsistencies. While the burial of Israeli citizens is subsidized by the state through Israel's National Insurance Institute, foreign nationals who wish to bury a family member in the country are required to pay the full cost of a cemetery plot, which in Jerusalem start around NIS 90,000 (US\$23,500). The families were initially offered plots in the Mount of Olives cemetery in East Jerusalem at a cost of 15,000 euros per grave, but this site was rejected because of security concerns for the VIPs who would be present at the funeral (Hasson). They were then approached by a businesswoman who offered to donate four plots in a multi-tiered grave in her private plot at the Har HaMenuchot cemetery, but this location was ruled out because of problems with legal permits. Finally, they were offered individual graves at Har HaMenuchot at a reduced cost of NIS 50,000 (US\$12,700). After a day of internal discussion and negotiation, Minister for Religious Services Naftali Bennett announced that his office would absorb the costs of the burial plots (Sharon). These negotiations highlight the contradictions in the lofty rhetoric of homecoming and the provisional support that return processes receive in practice.

The funerals offered an emotional platform for Israeli politicians to address their supporters both at home and abroad. In messages delivered by senior political figures, the dead were instrumentalized to buttress appeals for members of the Jewish diaspora to immigrate to Israel. Netanyahu elaborated on the points he had made in Paris during his speech at the funeral, asserting that "Jews have the right to live in many countries, and it is their right to live in perfect safety, but I believe that they know deep down in their hearts that they have only one country, the state of Israel, that will accept them with open arms, like beloved children" (qtd. in Rudoren). He added, "Today, more than ever, Israel is our true home, and the more numerous we are, the more united we are in our country, the stronger we are in our one and only state." President Rivlin echoed Netanyahu's comments and addressed the victims directly: "Yohav, Yohan, Philippe, Francois-Michel, this is not how we wanted to welcome you to Israel. This is not how we wanted you to arrive in the Land of Israel, this is not how we wanted to see you come home [...] We wanted you alive, we wanted for you, life" (qtd. in Dvorin and Kempinski). Rivlin also encouraged French Jews to make Aliyah, declaring that "Our land is your land, our homes are your homes."

While Israeli politicians used the funeral as an occasion to encourage Jewish emigration from France and elsewhere, their French counterparts were adamantly opposed to the idea and insisted that such out-migration would be a blow to the founding principles of the Republic. Speaking at

the funeral ceremony in Jerusalem, Ségolène Royal noted that “France is proud to hold the largest population of Jews in Europe” and that “there is no room for anti-Semitism in France” (qtd. in Booth and Eglash). Prime Minister Valls went further, asserting that “If 100,000 people of Spanish origin were to leave, I would never say that France is not France anymore. But if 100,000 Jews leave, France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure” (qtd. in Goldberg).

Although their aims were different, both governments appropriated the dead to advance claims about the contours of the nation-state. Mourned as victims of anti-Semitic terrorism, the four men killed at the Hyper Cacher supermarket engendered a passionate debate over the place of Jews in contemporary France. While Israeli political figures read the attacks in terms of an ongoing security threat whose solution entailed systematic immigration to Israel, French officials made strong statements to assure French Jews that they had always been and would forever remain an integral part of the Republic. As such, the dead were central to the articulation of a particular vision of political community and its natural *demos*.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the Paris attacks, 4 million people took to the streets to participate in the largest political demonstration in modern French history. Many brandished flags, pencils, and signs reading “Je suis Charlie.” But Charlie was one of many figures invoked by the demonstrators, who also carried placards proclaiming “Je suis Ahmed,” “Je suis juif,” and “Je suis policier,” reflecting the plurality of identities and solidarities on display. Others declared “Je ne suis pas Charlie” in an effort to draw attention to what they saw as the bigotry of *Charlie Hebdo* and the dangers of political conformity (Nelson; Norton). These invocations and refusals problematize any reading of the demonstrations that would characterize them as a simple exercise in national unity. Such reactions illustrate the political stakes of mourning practices and exemplify how the dead are central actors in struggles over communal boundaries and collective identities.

As this article has shown, the political positioning of the dead depends not only on symbolic rituals and ceremonies, but is in a very material sense determined by the treatment of their physical remains. The materiality of a dead body is critical to its political efficacy. This is because corpses can be moved around, strategically displayed or hidden from sight, and can

be used to physically ground political claims (Verdery). In the case of the three terrorists, efforts to repudiate their membership of the French nation entailed discreet burials under cover of darkness, a strategy that was also utilized with Samy Amimour and Omar Mostefaï, two of the perpetrators of the Bataclan attacks in November 2015 (Delhorn-Bugard; Lang). Acts of erasure are one strategy for managing problematic and politically charged bodies. As evinced by the disposal of other high-profile corpses, such as Osama Bin Laden's secret burial at sea and Boston Marathon bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev's burial in an unmarked grave in Virginia, dead bodies are a critical site for the enactment of sovereignty. These actions demonstrate the degree to which states and other political actors are invested in corpse management. More broadly, they show how the handling of the dead helps shape the contours of political communities.

While the politics of mourning and strategies of corpse management help clarify some of the mechanisms behind processes of identity formation and boundary construction, moments of collective mourning merit greater scrutiny since they can also serve as catalysts of political and institutional change. As Pool has demonstrated in the context of the United States, political mourning can challenge existing social hierarchies by instigating efforts to recognize and include previously marginalized groups in the body politic. However, moments of political mourning do not necessarily lead to progressive political inclusion and, as Pool notes, can help to affirm or strengthen the status quo. With this in mind, what should we make of the political and institutional responses to the Paris attacks?

Many political analysts characterized the attacks as an assault on the fundamental values of the French Republic. President Hollande succinctly summarized this view in his assertion that "France was attacked in what it holds most sacred: freedom of expression, the Republic, and human equality" (qtd. in Bilefsky). Yet in the months that followed, the French authorities implemented several new measures aimed at curtailing public expression and enabling broad powers of surveillance. In May 2015, the French parliament passed a new surveillance law that grants intelligence agencies the right to tap phones and emails without seeking permission from a judge. The bill was vetted by France's highest court and deemed constitutional two months later. More recently, in February 2016, France's lower house of parliament approved a bill that would strip French-born dual citizens convicted of terrorism charges of their French nationality. This bill, which would have created a constitutional distinction between French citizens with a single citizenship and those with multiple citizenships,

led to the resignation of France's Minister of Justice, Christiane Taubira, and was eventually withdrawn from the parliament by President Hollande after widespread criticism linking it to Vichy-era policies that stripped thousands of French Jews of their citizenship.

These measures point to the ways that a politics of mourning can be exploited to serve reactionary projects aimed at consolidating the regulatory and policing powers of the state. They reflect a troubling trend wherein security concerns are invoked to justify the expansion of executive powers and the surveillance of large segments of the populace. In delimiting which subjects are included, excluded, or marked as a threat to the integrity of the political community, mourning practices are critical sites for the enactment and contestation of sovereign power. In the wake of tragic losses, a politics of mourning must resist being co-opted in efforts that seek to restrict democratic rights and freedoms in the name of security.

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Notes

- 1 With the Napoleonic decree of 23 Prairial, year XII (1804), control over burial was transferred to municipal authorities. Henceforth, no burials would be permitted in churches, Protestant chapels, synagogues, or within city limits. See Kselman.
- 2 A similar situation occurred in 2012 when Algerian authorities refused to accept the body of Mohamed Merah, a French citizen with Algerian roots. Merah had gone on a rampage in Toulouse and Montauban, killing seven people, including three children and a rabbi at a Jewish school. He was eventually buried in an unmarked grave in a Muslim cemetery in Cornebarrieu against the wishes of the city's mayor. See "L'encombrante dépouille de Merah enterrée en France." On the burial of the four Jewish victims, who were interred in Israel, see Ginsburg and Fisher.
- 3 It should be noted that the body of Clarissa Jean-Philippe was transported to Martinique for burial. The Archbishop of Martinique led the funerary services, which were attended by numerous high-ranking politicians, including Minister of Overseas France George Pau-Langevin, Overseas Counselor to President Hollande Marc Vizy, and Fabrice Rigoulet-Roze, Regional Prefect of Martinique. Although I do not have the space to provide a detailed discussion of her funeral, I view the decision to repatriate her body and the patriotic ceremonies accompanying her burial as a symbolic affirmation of the links between the Overseas Territories and Mainland France. See "Martinique: solennité, émotion et tristesse aux obsèques de Clarissa Jean-Philippe."
- 4 However, as Paul Silverstein has shown, the celebratory discourse of multiculturalism following France's World Cup victory in 1998 was "predicated on the active suppression of certain kinds of cultural and religious difference deemed incompatible with or dangerous to the French nation" (42).

- 5 The availability of burial grounds for Muslims in France is circumscribed by two important laws – the Napoleonic Decree of 1804, which abolished confessional cemeteries and the Law of 14 November 1881, which prohibits the construction of separate confessional parcels (*les carrés confessionnels*) in municipal cemeteries. The Law of 1881 was part of a series of measures taken to ensure “neutrality” and “non-discrimination” within French cemeteries. Despite these regulations, around seventy-five Muslim sections have been established in municipal cemeteries in France, but Bobigny remains the only cemetery reserved exclusively for Muslim burials. See van den Breemer and Maussen; Ural.

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