

Huguenots and *Nouvelle France*: Tracing the Impact of the French Protestant Minority on
Colonial Development in Canada

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Huguenot involvement was integral to the development of *Nouvelle France*, particularly in the early decades (~1590-1630), but their involvement was circumscribed by the evolving religious policies of successive French monarchs. *L'Edit de Nantes*, *l'Edit d'Alais*, and *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* were the manifestations of three distinctive phases of French religious policy. Each had a direct impact on Huguenot involvement in *Nouvelle France* and the colony's development. The first *edit*, which officially ended the War of the Three Henris and the French Wars of Religion, was enacted by Henri IV, a former Huguenot turned Catholic convert. The *edit* reflected his pro-Protestant sympathies, and its wording set the minimum for Huguenot tolerance in France and her colonies until the 1660s. *L'Edit d'Alais* acted as the pivot away from respect for the intention of *l'Edit de Nantes*. After the failed 1628 Huguenot Rebellion, Protestant freedoms in France were increasingly curtailed. The reign of Louis XIV accelerated this shift away from the Protestant tolerant remainders of Henri IV's *edit*. The promulgation of *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* in 1685 effectively terminated six decades of religious tolerance in France and her colonies.

The level and type of engagement Huguenots could have, officially, in the colonial project of *Nouvelle France* was dictated by what was and was not included in the wording of the three *edits*, among other official documents. Despite remaining an economic outpost until the reign of Louis XIV, *Nouvelle France* was a microcosm of France proper. As such, the practical effects of the various *edits* and conflicts in France are evident in the changes in Huguenot involvement over the decades, from explorers and transient merchant traders to established colonists. Huguenots were indispensable participants in the colony's early years, a useful if disliked minority in the 1630s, '40s, and '50s, and officially expelled in the early 1660s with the promulgation of *l'Edit de Fontainebleau*.

It was not changes in the attitudes of the Huguenots towards the colonial project but shifts in the crown's official policies regarding Huguenots which most impacted economic, population, and infrastructure development in *Nouvelle France*. In the colony's early years, Huguenots were heavily invested in establishing *Nouvelle France* as an outpost of the French empire. A significant portion of France's Huguenot population was in port cities along France's Atlantic coast, and many were merchants with an interest in intra-imperial and trans-Atlantic trade opportunities. Consequently, Huguenot money and resources were the foundation of early exploration and development in *Nouvelle France*. This participation was made possible by the highly tolerant wording of *l'Edit de Nantes*. Each successive *edit* and regime in France saw a diminution of state tolerance for Huguenots and, consequently, a diminution of Huguenot involvement and resources in *Nouvelle France*. The combination of eroded Huguenot involvement and a general failure of the French crown to develop *Nouvelle France* as anything more established than an economic outpost of the empire led to the colony's ultimate loss to the British.

Contextualization of Inquiry

The extant literature on Huguenots and *Nouvelle France* tends to focus on one of four areas: Huguenot persecution in France proper, Huguenot migration patterns and trade networks, Huguenot life in *Nouvelle France*, and the various ways in which the French crown engaged with Huguenots after the Wars of Religion. This paper necessarily touches on all these areas in the pursuit of analyzing the impact of French religious policies on *Nouvelle France* and the French Protestant minority. No other literature with this specific focus was uncovered during the research for this paper, unsurprising given the specificity of the research question. Many of the analyses covering the aforementioned research areas were large studies (book or thesis length)

focusing either broadly on those categories, the reigns of specific monarchs, or the development of France or *Nouvelle France* generally during a particular period. By focusing the analysis of this paper on the effects of the minority-state relationship on colonial development, this paper has opened a new, if limited, window onto a period of rapid change and development that is distinct from previous analyses on related subjects.

Early Years: ~1560-1628

Between 1562 and 1598, France was embroiled in eight civil wars fought primarily between Protestant and Catholic forces. This series of conflicts, known today as the French Wars of Religion, and the edicts they produced, set the tone of Protestant-Catholic relations in France for the succeeding two centuries. It was also during this period that the earliest French exploratory expeditions sailed across the Atlantic to North America.

The half-century of near continuous confessional violence culminated in the War of the Three Henris (1584-1589). The Henris in question were: Henri de Navarre, a Protestant backed by the French Protestant forces; Henri I, Duc de Guise, a Catholic backed by the *Ligue Catholique*;¹ and Henri III, the contemporary king of France, supported by the religious moderates known as *les Politiques*. By the end of this war, Henri III was deposed and Henri I, Duc de Guise, was eventually defeated, leaving Henri de Navarre to claim the throne and become Henri IV, King of France. However, to secure his position as monarch and the support of the Catholic armed forces of France (*not the Ligue Catholique*), Henri de Navarre converted to Catholicism shortly after the Siege of Paris in 1590. Henri IV became known for his policy of

¹ The *Ligue Catholique* (alternatively called the Catholic League, or *La Sainte Ligue*/Holy League) was a predominantly urban group organized by Henri I, Duc de Guise. A combination political and religious group, the *ligue*, and Henri I, was supported by the Spanish Crown (Philip II) and the Vatican (Pope Sixtus V). The *ligue* aimed to preserve the right of worship of Catholics in France and the ousting of Protestant forces from the nation. Henri I was a Catholic and likely would have pursued policies to those same ends had he taken the throne.

tolerance towards Huguenots, the name given to French Calvinist Protestants, in the years after his ascension to the throne.

Though often attributed to his earlier Protestant confessional orientation, Henri IV's policy of tolerance, especially as expressed in the articles of the *l'Edit de Nantes*, had precedent in earlier *edits* and *arrêts* which had been produced at the cessation of hostilities during earlier phases of the French Wars of Religion. *L'Edit d'Amboise* (1563) and *l'Edit de Boulogne* (1573) are examples of a group of documents, sometimes called the edicts of pacification, which preceded *l'Edit de Nantes* and informed its contents. Like *l'Edit de Nantes*, *l'Edit de Poitiers* and *l'Edit de Boulogne* contain language concerning the following: the free practice of “*la Religion pretendue reformee*” (RPR or Protestantism); the freedom of conscience of RPR members; where they are allowed to practice their religion; to what extent they must abide by Catholic holidays and observances, at least publicly; provisions for Huguenots' protection as citizens under French law; the forcible *oublie* (or “forgetting”) of past events (this to avoid the necessity of capturing and/or prosecuting every practitioner of the RPR).² What is notable about the wording of these documents is that none of them strip Huguenots of their citizenship, and all, at least implicitly, recognize the RPR as a legitimate religious minority within France, if not a state religion. *L'Edit of Nantes* was not a particularly ground-breaking piece of official policy; it repeated most of the provisions mentioned above as well as others dealing with the return of property.

² Freedom to practice: *Boulogne* Article IV, *Poitiers* Article V and VII, *Nantes* Article XI; Freedom of conscience: *Boulogne* Article V, *Poitiers* Article IV, *Nantes* Article VI; Where to practice: *Boulogne* Article IV, *Poitiers* Article VI, *Nantes* Article VIII, IX, and XI; Catholic observance: *Boulogne* Article XXIV, *Poitiers* Article XIII, *Nantes* Article XX; Protection under the law: *Boulogne* Article II, *Poitiers* Article III, *Nantes* Articles II and VI; Forced “Forgetting”: *Boulogne* Article I, *Poitiers* Article I, *Nantes* Article I.

The primary difference between Henri IV's document and its predecessors was the number of specific provisions dealing with the integration of RPR practitioners into the judicial and civil administrative bodies of France and the length of time it was the de facto policy document concerning treatment of Huguenots in France. Previous documents and *edits* had lasted no more than ten years, essentially bridging the periods of ceasefire between eruptions of confessionally motivated conflict during the French Wars of Religion. *L'Edit de Nantes*, in contrast, was the culminant *edit* of that series of conflicts. It ended the War of the Three Henris and remained the primary *edit* about pacification until its official revocation in 1685 with the promulgation of *l'Edit de Fontainebleau*. *L'Edit de Nantes*, while in force, secured for the Huguenot minority the right to practice their religion (with conditions), to hold office, to work, and to live both domestically and internationally.³ Implicitly included in the wording of the document was the right to participate in the French colonial project in North America, *Nouvelle France*.

Before an analysis of the impact of Huguenot involvement on the development of *Nouvelle France* can be made, an understanding of the demographic profile of the Huguenot population is necessary. As will be described in greater detail below, Huguenots were predominantly of the merchant class, concentrated in the western coastal port cities. This meant they were perfectly situated to travel to, trade with, and supply the growing North American colony. The wording of *l'Edit de Nantes* gave them the freedom to pursue those opportunities, and they did pursue them. Huguenot participation in the development of *Nouvelle France* is recorded as far back as the original exploratory missions.

³ *L'Edit de Nantes*, articles IX (among others), XXVII, XX, and VI respectively.

In his article “The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685: The Demographic Fate and Customs of a Religious Minority”, Philip Benedict offers a breakdown of the demography and geographic dispersal of French Protestants in that period. His research showed the approximate Huguenot population in France between 1600-1685 was about 850,000, with over four-fifths concentrated in port cities along the north-west part of the Atlantic coast. These cities were heavily involved in trans-Atlantic trade, in which Huguenots actively participated.⁴ As a consequence of this dispersal, many of the major Atlantic port cities of France had substantial Huguenot populations, a significant portion of which were engaged in some form of trade. In his article tracing the activities of the Huguenot Gaigneur clan in the Canadian fur trade, J.F. Bosher notes that “trans-Atlantic business before the siege of La Rochelle (1627-1628) was almost entirely in the hands of Huguenot merchants.”⁵ Huguenot involvement in the Canadian fur trade and the fishing industry in Acadia (off the coast of *Nouvelle-Terre* and Labrador), especially in the pre-Rebellion years (roughly 1598-1628), indicates an aspect of Huguenot demography but also speaks to the continual adherence of the French government to the implied freedoms of *l’Edit de Nantes*. Though freedom to participate in trade is never explicitly mentioned in the *edit*, there is no wording expressly prohibiting it, and the document’s insistence on including Huguenots in the judicial and administrative hierarchies of the kingdom imply their participation in other aspects of the imperial project were acceptable.

Huguenots were involved in the development of *Nouvelle France* from the colonial project’s earliest years. As G.E. Reaman outlines in his book, *The Trail of the Huguenots in*

⁴ Philip Benedict, “The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 81, no. 5 (1991): 7, accessed March 27, 2020.

⁵ J.F. Bosher, “The Gaigneur Clan in the Seventeenth-Century Canada Trade,” in *Merchant Organization and Maritime Trade in the North Atlantic, 1660-1815*, ed. Olaf Uwe Janzen (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), 16.

Europe, the United States, South Africa and Canada, at least some of the funding for the first French expeditions to the new world was provided by La Rochelle Huguenots.⁶ The first permanent French settlement in North America would not be established until 1604, with the founding of Quebec, a joint effort by explorer Samuel de Champlain and Pierre du Guast, Sieur de Monts. While the religious affiliations of Champlain remain a subject of speculation, de Monts was a known Huguenot. In 1603, de Monts had “taken over from de Chastes in 1603 [...] a monopoly of the fur trade” in Canada as well as duties and rights as representative of the Crown in “the countries, territories, coasts, and confines [...] from the fortieth to the forty-sixth degree.”⁷ According to Reaman, merchants from Rouen, St. Malo, La Rochelle, and St. Jean de Lux were stockholders of de Monts’ monopoly company; De Monts was a Huguenot, and all of the cities noted by Reaman (Rouen, St. Malo, La Rochelle, and St. Jean de Lux) had active Huguenot merchant minorities by 1600, especially La Rochelle, which was known as a Huguenot stronghold until its fall in the late 1620s.⁸

Apart from merely assisting in the establishment of an early foothold in *Nouvelle France*, Huguenot administrators and merchants participated actively in the North American French colonial project. In *The Trail of the Huguenots*, Reaman provides a list of Governors of *Nouvelle France* from 1540 to 1632, noting their religious affiliations; the majority were Huguenots.⁹ French trans-Atlantic trade was part of a rapidly globalizing network of European trade which included the Canadian fur industry. As Boshier explains in his article on the “Protestant

⁶ G.E. Reaman, *The Trail of the Huguenots in Europe, the United States, South Africa, and Canada* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), 158.

⁷ G.E. Reaman, *The Trail of the Huguenots in Europe, the United States, South Africa, and Canada* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), 165.

⁸ For more on the particulars of Huguenot population density in these and other cities see Philip Benedict’s article “The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685: The Demographic Fate and Customs of a Religious Minority.”

⁹ G.E. Reaman, *The Trail of the Huguenots in Europe, the United States, South Africa, and Canada* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), 138.

International”, North America was integrated into that globalizing network as well as the expanding Huguenot trade network which included English and Dutch colonies and other European ports.¹⁰ The early Huguenot monopolies on the Canadian fur trade did not stipulate that furs procured in *Nouvelle France* had to be sold to French buyers or in French ports, and, because of migration which had occurred partially as a result of persecution within France in previous decades, Huguenot trading networks included England and the Dutch Protestant Republics.¹¹ Since a significant proportion of merchant networks were, in this period, family based, the diaspora elements of Huguenot families in Protestant-majority countries facilitated the creation of international, trans-Atlantic trade networks.¹² Later in the seventeenth century, as England asserted increasing dominance in the Atlantic world and on the North American continent and as France engaged in a series of conflicts with her Protestant-majority neighbours, engagement with the “Protestant International” would become increasingly problematic for Huguenots in Quebec. In the opening decades of the century, however, the Huguenot trans-Atlantic, international trading networks contributed to the economic development of *Nouvelle France*.

Post-Rebellion: 1628-1661

The freedom of participation enjoyed by Huguenots as a result of Henri IV’s policy of tolerance and inclusion did not last. Henri IV’s successors, Louis XIII and Louis XIV, produced policy documents that transitioned the official stance on Huguenots towards intolerance and, in Louis XIV’s case, active persecution. This transition was not immediate upon the death of Henri

¹⁰ J.F. Boshier, “Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1995): 25, accessed March 27, 2020.

¹¹ J.F. Boshier, “Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century,” 78.

¹² For more on this, see J.F. Boshier, “Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century.”

IV, and *l'Edit de Nantes* was not officially revoked until 1685. In the intervening decades, however, several events occurred which saw the shifting of the French government's stance away from the tolerance of Henri IV and towards the eventual revocation of *l'Edit de Nantes* by Louis XIV.

Two instances of Huguenot-government conflict which clearly demonstrate the changing attitudes of the French government towards Huguenots were the Siege of La Rochelle (1628) and the subsequent *l'Edit d'Alais* (1629). A Huguenot rebellion, led by the Huguenot Duc de Rohan, broke out in France in 1625. At this time, Louis XIII had been king of France for fifteen years and Cardinal de Richelieu had been First Minister of France for one year, though he had held various other high-ranking government positions for over ten years and was a trusted adviser to Louis XIII. Richelieu played a notable role in defining the official response to Huguenot activity in France well before the outbreak of rebellion in 1625. As W.J. Stankiewicz explains in his article "The Huguenot Downfall: the Influence of Richelieu's Policy and Doctrine", one of Richelieu's primary political goals was to centralize power in France in the person of the king. Stamping out other centers of power, including politically active, wealthy religious minorities, was central to that aim. The Huguenot's combination of wealth, status, and fraught history with the French monarchy meant they were a significant potential threat to Richelieu's consolidation plan. If the Huguenot's and the rest of the aristocracy ally against the monarchy, Richelieu would never be able to achieve his goals. For similar reasons, as Stankiewicz explains in the article, Richelieu did not solely pursue Huguenots to this end; Jesuits were also identified as objects of Richelieu's focus.¹³ Huguenots, however, were a growing and persistent minority of religious non-conformists, unlike Jesuits who were technically Catholics.

¹³ W.J. Stankiewicz, "The Huguenot Downfall: The Influence of Richelieu's Policy and Doctrine," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 99, no. 3 (1955): 154, accessed March 27, 2020.

By the 1620s, the Huguenots had formed networks of communication and had sufficient social and financial infrastructure to support yearly mass meetings of the congregations scattered across the country as well as the support and participation of some of the nobility, like the Duc de Rohan. This communication network made it possible for the Huguenot minority, which, while limited, were still a numerically significant portion of the French population, to organize for their political rights as well as facilitate their confessional needs as a religious community.¹⁴

Louis XIII directly confronted the Huguenot rebels, rather than merely directing his forces from afar, notably during the Siege of La Rochelle near the end of the conflict. The siege, which lasted from September 1627 to October 1628, was a decisive victory for the Crown, despite an unsuccessful attempt by the English navy to intervene on behalf of the Huguenots. The resulting *Edit d'Alais* marked a departure from the pacifying provisions and language of *l'Edit de Nantes*; where the 1598 *edit* had secured Protestant economic, political, and religious freedom, *l'Edit d'Alais* stripped the Huguenots of parts of their military capacity (and consequently their ability to act as a political body) and drastically reduced their ability to organize in a similar way in future.¹⁵

Another result of the Crown's success in defeating the rebels was economic. Huguenot merchants were still a strong economic force for France in the late 1620s, but after the fall of La Rochelle and the subsequent destruction of the political organization of the Huguenots, the Huguenot merchant community was faced with another threat: *La Compagnie des Cents-*

¹⁴ For more on this, see Stankiewicz, "The Huguenot Downfall", 157.

¹⁵ Article XIX of L'Edit d'Alais states that "Toutes les fortifications desdictes Villes et lieux seront entierement rasées et desmolies fors la ceinture des murailles, dans le temps de trois mois" and other particulars which effectively stripped the Huguenots of the ability to raise arms against the monarchy. The razing of fortifications was especially damaging, as it meant, should Huguenots feel attacked in future, they would have no protected place to which they could flee. Article XIX can be considered an attack on Article VII of L'Edit de Nantes, which secured for Huguenots the right to worship in those fiefs whose owners were also practitioners of the RPR; the fiefs generally included medieval fortifications.

Associés. The *Cents-Associés* was an all-Catholic trading company created by Richelieu to cut Protestant merchants out of Canadian trade. In earlier years, monopolies and other documents concerning the rights and responsibilities of merchants participating in the Canadian trade had specified that the colony of *Nouvelle France* was to be Catholic but did not expressly forbid Huguenots from working, traveling to or from, or living in the colony. The charter of the *Cents-Associés* technically contained no provisions against Huguenots, but the *Compagnie* was granted a sweeping purview:

[...] forthwith, the traffic of all furs, skins and pelts of the said New France; and for fifteen years only, to begin the first day of January of the year 1628, and ending on the last day of December, which ends 1643, all other commerce, whether land-based or naval, which can be made, extracted from, traded or trafficked, in which kind and manner that may be, in the entirety of said country.¹⁶

Not only did the charter of the *Cents-Associés* essentially eliminate the possibility of Huguenot participation in Canadian trade, but it also contained provisions for populating *Nouvelle France*.¹⁷ This was a distinct break from most charters and monopolies which had been granted after Champlain's; *Nouvelle France* had been primarily an economic outpost project up to 1628, with few concerted, government-supported efforts to establish a non-commercial population. The provision for populating *Nouvelle France* in the *Cents-Associés* charter, then, was a break from

¹⁶ "Acte pour l'établissement de la Compagnie des cent Associés pour le commerce du Canada, contenant les articles accordés à la dite Compagnie par M. Le Cardinal de Richelieu, le 29 Avril, 1627" (1627), in *Edits, Ordonnances Royaux, et Arrêts du Conseil d'Etat du Roi, Concernant le Canada; Vol 1* (Quebec: P.E.Desbarats, 1803), 4, accessed March 29, 2020, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6543083q/f33.item.r=religion>. "... pour toujours, le trafic de tous cuirs, peaux et pelleterie de la dite *Nouvelle France*; et pour quinze années seulement, à commencer au premier jour de Janvier de l'année 1628, et finissant au derneir Décembre, que l'on comptera 1643, tout autre commerce, soit terrestre ou naval, qui se pourra faire, tirer, traiter et trafiquer, en quelque sorte et manière que ce soit, en l'étendue du dit pays." – translation mine.

¹⁷ "Acte pour l'établissement de la Compagnie des cent Associés pour le commerce du Canada, contenant les articles accordés à la dite Compagnie par M. Le Cardinal de Richelieu, le 29 Avril, 1627" (1627), 3. "tant pour eux que pour les autres, faisant le nombre de cent leurs associés, promettent faire passer au dit pays de la *Nouvelle France*, deux à trois cents hommes de tous métiers des l'année prochaine 1628" "pour peupler la *Nouvelle France*" or "to colonize" in the sense of introducing a new population into the area.

an established pattern that highlighted the changing attitudes of the French government towards Huguenot participation in the colonial project.

Another event signaled change in the dynamics between French Catholics and Huguenots concurrently with the promulgation of *l'Edit d'Alais* and the formation of the *Cents-Associés*. In 1628, the Kirke brothers first barricaded the St. Lawrence then laid siege to and took the city of Quebec in the following year. The Kirkes were working for the English, but they were ethnically Huguenot: they had been raised in Dieppe and their mother was a Huguenot. Their father was an English Protestant. Such a direct, particularly Protestant attack on the French colony was a problem for the French Crown and the authorities of *Nouvelle France*. Huguenots in *Nouvelle France* were suspected of aiding the Kirkes before and during the barricading of the St. Lawrence and taking of Quebec. Already by the late 1620s, as Bédard writes, “the protestants were suspected of not being good and faithful servants of the king, because they were considered bad servants of God and of the [French Catholic] Church.”¹⁸ Additionally, Huguenot trade with France’s occasional enemies, England and the Dutch Republics, was problematic for the crown, especially as England became increasingly dominant in North American affairs. The incident with the Kirkes served to heighten existing tensions between Protestants and Catholics in *Nouvelle France*, regardless of any actual involvement.

Louis XIV’s Personal Rule: 1661-1685

The final shift in official policy concerning Huguenots began with the death of French First Minister Cardinal Mazarin in 1661. Mazarin was Richelieu’s hand-picked successor, and the policy changes he implemented during his time as First Minister were broadly similar to

¹⁸ Bédard, *Les Protestants en Nouvelle-France*, 21.

“les protestants étaient suspectés de ne pas être de bons et fidèles serviteurs du roi, parce qu’ils étaient considérés comme de mauvais serviteurs de Dieu et de l’Église.” – translation mine.

those pursued by Richelieu post-1628. From the death of Louis XIII in 1643 to the ascension of Louis XIV in 1661, Mazarin and Anne of Austria (wife of Louis XIII and regent until 1661) controlled French domestic and foreign policy. Notably, they did not actively persecute Huguenots, but neither did they radically alter anti-Huguenot legislation that was already enacted. As Ruth Kleinman writes, the government's Huguenot policy during Anne's regency was "keeping the Protestant minority tranquil."¹⁹ To this end, in December 1649, the French government issued an order stating that all *edits* and declarations favouring Huguenots which had been enacted or held over during the reign of Louis XIII were to be upheld.²⁰

While Anne and Mazarin essentially maintained the status quo during Anne's regency, upon his ascension, Louis XIV began differentiating himself from all his predecessors. In 1661, Louis XIV instituted self-rule. This level of authoritarian control was unprecedented in France and had implications for every facet of government, including religious and colonial policy. Self-rule was an extreme variant of Richelieu's proposed "unity of government" model, and Louis XIV's persecution of Huguenots was likewise more extreme than Richelieu and Louis XIII's post-1628 persecutions. Where previous French monarchs had shifted away from Henri IV's generous interpretation of *l'Edit de Nantes* by following the letter of the *edit* or adding new *edits*, Louis XIV ignored previous *edits* and interpretations entirely in favour of a new, extreme, highly-focused persecution of Huguenots. As Kleinman explains, in a series of 1661 rulings and proclamations, Louis XIV expressed his approval of forcibly converting Protestant children to Catholicism, undermining and preventing communication between synods, and snubbing Huguenot delegations.²¹ This change signaled that Louis XIV, more than his royal predecessors

¹⁹ Ruth Kleinman, "Changing Interpretations of the Edict of Nantes: The Administrative Aspect, 1643-1661," *French Historical Studies* 10, no. 4 (1978): 553, accessed March 27, 2020.

²⁰ Kleinman, "Changing Interpretations of the Edict of Nantes: The Administrative Aspect, 1643-1661": 553.

²¹ Kleinman, "Changing Interpretations of the Edict of Nantes: The Administrative Aspect, 1643-1661": 570.

Richelieu, Anne, or Cardinal Mazarin, felt the Huguenot minority in France was a threat to be eliminated rather than an inconvenience to be tolerated.

On the Canadian front, Louis XIV's transition to self-rule had a slightly delayed but no less significant impact. In 1663, *la Compagnie des Cents-Associés* ceded its monopoly of *Nouvelle France*. The territory previously controlled by the *Cents-Associés* was passed by Louis XIV to the control of the new *Compagnie des Indes Occidentales* and a *Conseil souverain*, which controlled trade and colonial administration respectively.²² This change was part of a larger overhaul of French trans-Atlantic trade networks, but the *Cents-Associés* had been replaced by the *Compagnie des Indes Occidentales* for a reason. From the perspective of the French crown, a glaring failure of the *Cents-Associés* was their inability to successfully transport the three hundred colonists to *Nouvelle France*, a task stipulated in the *Cents-Associés'* charter.²³ Additionally, in the process of replacing the *Cents-Associés*, Louis XIV took direct control of the colony's administration through the *Conseil souverain*. The *Cents-Associés* had served its purpose but could not meet the demands of Louis XIV's new aims in trans-Atlantic trade and colonial development in North America.

There was still a minority of ethnic, if not actively practicing, Huguenots in *Nouvelle France* despite the "exclusion" clause in the *Cents-Associés* charter.²⁴ This exclusion had been written into the charter during the Huguenot Rebellion (1628), when the threat of Protestant disloyalty loomed large in the minds of administrators at the highest levels of French

²² J.F. Boshier, "The Imperial Environment of French Trade with Canada, 1660-1685," *The English Historical Review* 108, no. 426 (1993): 60, accessed March 27, 2020.

²³ "Acte pour l'établissement de la Compagnie des cent Associés pour le commerce du Canada, contenant les articles accordés à la dite Compagnie par *M. Le Cardinal de Richelieu*, le 29 Avril, 1627" (1627), 3.

²⁴ "le seul moyen de disposer ces peuples à la connoissance du vrai Dieu, étoit de peupler les dits pays de naturels Francois catholiques" From "Acte pour l'établissement de la Compagnie des cent Associés pour le commerce du Canada, contenant les articles accordés à la dite Compagnie par *M. Le Cardinal de Richelieu*, le 29 Avril, 1627" (1627), 1.

government. The increasing Protestant English presence in North America, especially in New England, and Huguenot ties to the “Protestant International” were threats to the Catholic establishment of *Nouvelle France* in 1663 as they had been in 1627.

Not all Huguenot trade had been eliminated by the charter of the *Cents-Associés*, nor had Huguenot migration to and from Canada ceased. As Leslie Choquette writes in her book *Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada*, the actual status of religious minorities in *Nouvelle France* was ambiguous, since principles of legal documents and charters were not equitably or consistently enforced in practice. Both Protestants and Jews, for example, could reside in *Nouvelle France* provided they did not openly practice non-Catholic forms of worship.²⁵ From a legislative perspective, however, Huguenots were no longer welcome in *Nouvelle France* by 1627.

The pursuit of a policy of explicit exclusion was left largely unpursued in the colony until Louis XIV ascended to the throne in 1661, but after that point, official policies began to change in *Nouvelle France*, mirroring the advancements of Huguenot harassment and persecution in France proper. As Bédard explains, in 1676 the Superior Counsel of Quebec adopted a general policy concerning Huguenots, namely Article XXXVII of *les règles de la police*. Article XXXVII stipulated that Protestants did not have the right to assembly for the exercise of their religion “under pain of chastisement under the rigor of the ordinances”; additionally, Protestants were allowed to summer in the colony but could not winter there without reason.²⁶ Where the

²⁵ Leslie Choquette, *Frenchmen Into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 149.

²⁶ Marc-André Bédard, *Les Protestants en Nouvelle-France* (Quebec: La Societe Historique de Quebec, 1978), 29. “En 1676, le Conseil Supérieur de Québec dont il fait partie adopte une politique générale concernant les <<personnes de la religion prétendue réformée>>. Dans l’article XXXVII des règlements de police, il est stipulé que les protestants n’ont pas le droit de s’assembler pour l’exercice de leur religion <<sous peine de châtement suivant la rigueur des ordonnances>>. Le text ajoute que les protestants pourront venir l’été dans la colonie, mais qu’ils ne pourront y hiverner à moins de raison légitime.” – translation mine.

Cents-Associés charter had previously forbade the settlement of new Protestants in the colony and their exclusion from the majority of French trade in Canada, “*l’article XXXVII des règlements de police*” unequivocally stated the new hardline position of the administration of *Nouvelle France* towards Huguenots in the colony.

L’Edit de Fontainebleau

The gradual movement towards a policy of intolerance and exclusion which had begun with the death of Henri IV culminated in *l’Edit de Fontainebleau* (1685). *L’Edit de Fontainebleau* explicitly revoked all rights and privileges afforded French Protestants in previous *l’Edit de Nantes* which had not already been revoked by previous *edits*, like *l’Edit d’Alais*. In the official wording of the *edit*: “we have judged that we can no longer make concessions [for the Huguenots] [...] that the revocation of the entire Edict of Nantes, and the particular articles which were accorded after it, and all those which were made since in favor of the said Religion [is necessary/desirable].”²⁷ Additionally, *l’Edit de Fontainebleau* stripped Huguenots of their right to migrate (Article X, with the exception of Huguenot clergy unwilling to convert (Article IV)), freedom to practice (Article XII), and the right of association (Article XII “meeting under pretext of prayers of religious services”).²⁸ One notable absence from the *l’Edit de Fontainebleau*, which was conspicuously missing from the *l’Edit de Nantes*, was any mention of citizenship. Where this omission in the *l’Edit de Nantes* had facilitated, however implicitly, the integration of French Protestants into the judicial and administrative hierarchies of

²⁷ “Edit du Roy, Portant Suppression les Edits de Nantes et de Nismes” (1685), accessed March 27, 2020, http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/francophonie/Edit_de_Fontainebleau-1685.htm.

“nous avons jugé que nous ne pouvions rien faire de mieux [...] que de révoquer entièrement ledit édit de Nantes, et les articles particuliers qui ont été acordés ensuite de celui-ci, et tout ce qui a été fait depuis en faveur de la dite Religion.” (note the “nous” is the French equivalent of the Royal “we”.) – translation mine.

²⁸ These had all been guaranteed by *L’Edit de Nantes*. (The articles above specified refer to those in *L’Edit de Nantes*)

France, its omission in the *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* meant that all Huguenots were subject to French law, however antagonistic or hostile such laws may have been or would become under Louis XIV.

The prohibition on migration, and specifically emigration from France, was partially a response to the Huguenot exodus which had begun in earnest in the early 1660s.²⁹ As Choquette writes, “of these [Protestant out-migration] movements, the Protestant exodus involved the greatest number of people, more than 200,000 between 1660 and 1710, and continual, smaller contingents thereafter.”³⁰ Philip Benedict notes a persistent and, in the half-decade before *l'Edit de Fontainebleau*, distinct drop in the Protestant population, especially in the areas of the “Midi and Center West”, the geographic area which included many of the major west-coast port cities which historically housed large Huguenot minorities.³¹ *L'Edit de Fontainebleau*'s no-migration clause was intended to stop the outflow of capital from France. In the major urban centers especially, a significant portion of the Huguenot population was comprised of artisans, merchants, and lower nobility rather than peasants, though there certainly were significant Huguenot peasant populations. The exodus of Huguenots, then, was problematic for Louis XIV's government because it constituted a hemorrhage of both human and economic capital from France; as Benedict records in his article, Huguenots fleeing persecution in France migrated to London, England, though extant records indicate that many Huguenots also fled to Germany and the Dutch Republics as well as various North American colonies.³²

²⁹ Huguenots had opted to leave France in smaller numbers earlier than that date. The 1660s marked a period of significantly higher emigration of Huguenots to places outside of French control.

³⁰ Leslie Choquette, *Frenchmen Into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 195.

³¹ Philip Benedict, “The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 81, no. 5 (1991): 52, accessed March 27, 2020.

³² Benedict, “The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685,”: 44-45, accessed March 27, 2020.

As mentioned above, Huguenot merchants had participated in the ever-expanding Protestant international trading networks from the earliest years of the French North American colonial project and even those Huguenots who were not involved in trans-Atlantic trade tended to be, at a minimum, artisans, or sailors. As J.F. Boshier explains, Louis XIV's religious and foreign policies forced Huguenot merchants to choose between loyalty to France (and by extension Louis XIV) or to their co-religionists. The latter held connotations of treason, since the majority of non-French Protestants in the Atlantic sphere were Dutch or English, both countries actively competing with France for dominance in North America and in Atlantic trade.³³ While the promulgation of the *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* made emigration illegal, those Huguenots who left France before and after 1685 were, by and large, able to establish themselves elsewhere, their skills and resources making them attractive to their prospective host countries. Louis XIV's policies of persecution, then, served to effectively rid France and her colonies of Huguenots, but at the expense of a significant loss of population and national resources in the form of trade and capital.

In the North American context, the French Protestant exodus and *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* made the Huguenot populations still in *Nouvelle France* and those settled in the English and surviving Dutch colonies a potential security threat. These populations, after 1685, had no reason to remain loyal to France, which certainly contributed to tensions within the French colony, but equally important were the effects of population drain. After 1685, Huguenots were not permitted to practice their religion anywhere in the French empire, including *Nouvelle France*, and many of those who had made a home in the colony even after the 1627 exclusion left at this juncture. This diminished *Nouvelle France*'s already comparatively small population, thus

³³J.F. Boshier, "The Imperial Environment of French Trade with Canada, 1660-1685," *The English Historical Review* 108, no. 426 (1993): 73-74, accessed March 27, 2020.

making it more vulnerable to future attacks from France's enemies on the continent.³⁴

Additionally, the drain of economic and human capital was felt in *Nouvelle France* as it was in France proper, perhaps more so considering it was not until Louis XIV that any concerted efforts had been made to develop *Nouvelle France* into anything other than an economic colony, now without the benefit of Huguenot resources.

Conclusion

The promulgation of *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* marked the completion of a particular trajectory in French policy which began upon the death of Henri IV. While *l'Edit de Nantes* was still nominally in place until 1685, the actual rights and privileges of *l'Edit de Nantes* had been intentionally eroded by the various events and policy decisions of the intervening decades. Ultimately, the French colonial project in North America was not strong enough after 1685 to compete militarily with its larger British neighbor. The lack of extant non-commercial development in *Nouvelle France* and the expulsion of Huguenot resources left the colony vulnerable to its expansionist southern neighbors. After several successive military losses, *Nouvelle France* was ceded to English control on September 8, 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

Though the Huguenots had always been a minority in France and *Nouvelle France*, their demographic concentration amongst the nobility, the artisan, and the merchant classes is a necessary dimension to analyze in discussions of the effects of *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* on the development of *Nouvelle France*. The loss of human and economic capital that followed because of the Huguenot exodus before and immediately after 1685 meant that France and her colonies

³⁴ According to the Colonial (US) Census, the estimated population of the colonies was approximately 155,600 people. The Canadian (New France) Census data for 1681 estimates the population of New France to have been approximately 9,677.

were more vulnerable to attack and less economically competitive in the trans-Atlantic context. This was especially true in *Nouvelle France*, which already suffered from a large population gap between itself and its English neighbours. However, the sudden weakening of France which was, arguably, a result of *l'Edit de Fontainebleau* cannot fully account for the comparatively vulnerable position of *Nouvelle France*. From the colony's earliest years, the French government had expended relatively little effort in populating the colony, instead preferring to develop it as an economic colony. The concentration of Huguenots in the merchant class and in the western port cities of France combined with their consistent interest in and engagement with *Nouvelle France* and trans-Atlantic trade made them a considerable factor in the development of the French colony. It was less the Huguenots themselves, then, but rather the shifts in official policy regarding the Huguenots' ability to participate in the colonial project that directly impacted the development of *Nouvelle France*.

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