



**Identity and belonging of the second generation youth with
Maghrebi origins in France**



By

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Abstract:

The second generation French youth with Maghrebi origins constitute a growing number of the current population in France, due to the immigration flows from North-African former French colonies and protectorates in the past century. They are time and again pointed out in French society as citizens of second order, suspected of having potentially problematic allegiances in discord with French values and are often associated with problems of integration and violence in the sink-estates. Several studies have examined the nature of their identity and allegiances, mainly pointing out to an identity crisis as a result of the dual cultural environment in which they live. This research aims to demonstrate that these plural allegiances are not in contradiction to one another, but are complementary – and that they don't affect negatively the feeling of belonging to France and the French community. This qualitative study examines the cultural universe(s) of these adults through discourse analysis.

Keywords: France, second-generation, Maghrebi origins, identity, immigration, integration

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Introduction

To understand and explore issues of identity and belonging to France, I must firstly address the historical and political context of migration policies in France that led to the adoption of the republican universalist model of integration 'à la française'. In this sense, the much criticized politics of identity and integration will serve as a framework in locating some of the questions that concern all French citizens, regardless of their origins. In exploring the gap between the founding principles of the French model and their effective implementation in immigration policies, lays the basis of dissatisfaction of young people of immigrant origin. Furthermore, with the increasing dangers of identity constructions around religious fundamentalism that threaten Europe, it is of importance to give recognition, show interest, and eliminate factors of marginalization, discrimination and social exclusion of young people of visible minorities which themselves can contribute for young people to seek refuge in fundamentalist teachings.

Approaching matters of identity and belonging of the second generation that is inevitably connected to the migration process of their parents (through the relationships they maintain with their family, but also through social perceptions), means questioning as well the idea(l) of French identity itself, the processes that led to evoking the debate of what it means to be French, and how all these debates assign societal roles to the youth with immigrant origin. In that sense, as much as one would want to separate this youth from the immigration experience of their parents when analyzing their identity, it remains nonetheless of great importance and even necessary to take it into account to better understand the context of France today and their perceptions of themselves. This furthermore implies a visible and undeniable connection between immigration and integration policies, the Republican ideal of values and mores, and the categories through which the State defines itself – all of which are interconnected and have to be analyzed as such in an attempt to fully grasp the complexity on questions of identity and belonging.

The question of migration is one of extreme urgency and importance, especially because contemporary France has been constructed in great deal by immigration (a fact that cannot be denied but has nonetheless encountered an attempt to be erased from the collective unconscious)

– one in four French people have a grandparent that immigrated to France (Sommaire, 2006). In a census done by the INSEE¹ in 2008, 3.1 million people aged 18-50 years old born in metropolitan France are children of immigrants (this census, however, took place one year after France abandoned ethnic statistics in censuses in 2007 as an attempt to avoid ‘ethnicizing’ or ‘racializing’ social relationships – and therefore, is to be taken with reserve and one should assume this number is by far superior to 3.1 million people.) That is why this number remains non-negligible especially as tensions rise on questions of identity and acceptance. By rendering descendants of immigrants invisible in censuses however, France does not guarantee protection against discrimination in practice; it merely theoretically justifies the application of equality according to the republican model of values. In addition, this census only addresses what is popularly named as ‘the second generation’, that is to say those with at least one immigrant parent. It is of great importance to mention that among the people facing discrimination, exclusion and social marginalization are also those that are now part of the third and sometimes fourth generation. I will however, focus on the second generation, as they have been the forerunners who claimed their plural belonging and openly asked for equal treatment during the social movements in the 1980s, and by gaining media attention, brought the awareness of their existence in French society. This generation refuses to be defined solely on the basis of their origins, and some are inclined to harbor feelings of victimization connected to colonial past, as well as a sense of exclusion by the society’s majority.

The interest in studying the plural identities of the second generation stemmed from an idea to distance the discussion from questions of ‘failed integration’ of youth with Maghrebi origin, and to offer an insight in the perceptions they build of themselves as social actors with two cultures. Furthermore, I wanted to take a look in the universe of young, active and educated young people whose parents have emigrated from the countries of Maghreb, in an attempt to break away from studies treating questions of identity among young people growing up in sink-estates (banlieues).

¹ Institut National de la statistique et des études économiques, insee.fr ; accessed February 2015

Is it possible then, as de Wenden (2014) asks – that these young people of immigrant origins are capable of negotiating a collective identity in French society as a result of their everyday life and not solely in reference to their country of origin; and with that, to think of them as equal actors in the French political space? Is it too far-fetched to claim that in the French collective unconscious there are still harbored preconceptions of what these young people are capable and what they are not capable of doing? Ultimately, how is this institutional attitude of closed doors detrimental to their perception of Self as French citizens, as young people who consider themselves as culturally integrated, but are nonetheless rejected by society? In this case, it is more likely that we are talking about problems of exclusion rather than integration – and that the struggle of the second generation is not a struggle of integration – it is against discrimination. I try to answer the question above in an objective manner, using 7 qualitative interviews with youth with Maghrebi origin.

Furthermore, this work does not focus on criticizing integration policies or emphasizing discrimination or racist practices in France. I will not try to prove nor dispel the existence of discrimination towards youth of migrant origin in contemporary France; I will merely take discrimination as one of the many categories that define their sense of Self and their place in society, contributing to their identity formation and feeling of belonging. A discussion on the question of integration is however necessary – for a successful integrationist model demands for one to play an active role in social life, to obtain recognition and have on one's disposal social and cultural connections. (see Amin, 2005)

My subject of interest concerns the identity formation of young people of Maghrebi origin, more specifically – the elements of self-perception that determine the feeling of belonging to both cultures at the same time. In this sense, I try to determine the categories that influence identity strategies and social conducts of young French people with Maghrebi origins. I try to explore the cultural universe of these young people, by examining their choice of values and feeling of belonging and the way they define and situate themselves in circumstances of ideological disparities. Mostly associated by society with the 'culture of origin' of their parents, these young people born in France find themselves trapped within these designations that they don't feel as their own. (see Amin, 2005)

I suggest that young people hold plural belongings which are complementary and do not result with exclusive belonging to one country, and furthermore, that these belongings are not in opposition in such a way to be still creating inner conflicts. However, as the French social context is being shaped by modern day events, it is necessary to emphasize that this qualitative study will not suggest general trends to be true for a greater part of French society, but will rather try to present an alternative way of approaching matters of identity and belonging of the second generation.

Chapter I - Historical and political context of immigration in France

I.1 Beginnings of migration

In order to address more specifically France's immigration policies after the Second World War (see below), I will start by shortly presenting France's relationship to migration since the creation of the Republic as such in 1789.

Having overthrown the monarchy, France established itself as a Republic, and became the cradle of the rights of Man and the citizen. The establishment of the Republic meant adopting values that stipulate civil equality, democracy and sovereignty, as well as defining what it means to be a citizen of the nation and an active participant in the political community. In time, becoming a French citizen meant becoming a Republican, and this was solely connected to a political affiliation to France, rather than a religious, ethnic or a historical one. (Walzer, 1998) Furthermore, this affiliation is important as it defines France's conception of nationhood as territorial in addition to political; highlighting the importance of land – designating as a French citizen those born on French land (*jus soli*). The political identification in turn, with the republican values gave birth in turn to a national consciousness. (Kastoryano, 1996)

A national consciousness emphasized the tendency for national cohesion; as it is very specifically confirmed in Ernest Renan's discourse on what nation is (*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, 1882). He emphasizes the refusal of a political representation of minorities that could endanger the integrity of the nation. The ideas of nationhood and loyalty to the republican values were key elements that constituted the French Empire. By turning the Republic to an Empire, Napoleon reaffirmed the policy of conquest, which later on became the signature of France's policies – to expand, assimilate and act as a '*mission libératrice et civilisatrice*' (Brubaker, 1992); the heir of which later in history was France's overseas imperialism. The Republican ideal was also meant to perform the civilizing and assimilationist mission within France's borders as well, which explains France's assimilationist attitude towards incoming migrants.

In the period shortly after the French revolution, immigration was not yet known in significant numbers; it was rather consisted of Polish exiles in the years 1830s. It is only later,

after the 1850s, that France will see larger waves of immigration, starting firstly with Jews fleeing persecutions that seek refuge in the motherland of human rights. What followed was the import of immigrants in the 19th century that brought additional labor supplies, and was associated with the victory of republicanism and the progress of French capitalism as well. In addition, the fall of birth rates and the increased industrialization contributed for the need of importing a new labor force. French farmers, having gained legal control of their land through the revolutionary land settlement, did not move to industrialized areas to act as workers. Growing cities needed workers, and these conditions, combined with a shortage of population growth, led to an increase of immigration in the late 19th century. Exclusively European, peasant workers came from Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Spain. The beginning of the 1900s sees an important presence of mostly Italian workers, as well as a first time involvement of employers of facilitating arrival of immigrant workers to France.

Searching to respond to this strong foreign presence in France, and establish some control over the immigrant population, France in 1888 imposes registration for immigrant workers in the city halls to obtain the right to work. This working permit is the predecessor of the '*carte de séjour*'. In addition, the Third Republic adopted in 1889 the '*code de la nationalité*' determining the distribution of French nationality according to the *double jus soli*; that is to say to children born in France who have a parent who was born in France. Those with immigrant parents born on French territory will obtain French nationality when they reach the age of 18, unless they refuse it; a way of accessing citizenship which remained until today.

During the First World War, foreigners volunteer as soldiers in the French Army. Soon after entering the war, France calls for additional military force from its colonies – Algerians, Senegalese, Malagasy, Moroccans and Tunisians. (histoire-immigration.fr) Having sent many men into war, France faces the need to recruit more workers to replace men and work along with women in the industrial sector. By this time, a working permit is mandatory for all immigrant workers in France. The colonial workers in France were trained using military discipline and colonial methods.

The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century brought an even more important population decline caused by the First World War. At the aftermath of the First World War, France made a call for recruitment of labor mainly from European countries – mainly Italy,

Belgium and Poland. In this period, it proved to be difficult to control the income of foreign workers in France, as the recruitment was mainly dealt with by the private sector. The period following the end of the war saw as well France's first efforts to control migration flows, by issuing national identity cards. Nationhood and citizenship starts playing a major role in the dynamics of migration; national membership and loyalty if not acquired by birth and upbringing, have to be earned through assimilation. (Brubaker, 1990) By defining membership of the nation-state as sacred, national, egalitarian, democratic and unique, (Ibid.) France sets the founding pillars of obligations and privileges that come with belonging to the nation.

Two organizations appeared that were performing recruitment and control of migration flows after the First World War – the *Société Générale d'Immigration* that was mostly interested in importing cheap labor force; and the *Alliance Nationale Pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française*, whose leaders had nationalist motives. The *Société Générale d'Immigration* contributed during the years 1924-1930 for the import of one third of the total immigrant population present at that time in France, around 100 000 immigrant workers. (Hollifield,2010) This period sees for the first time a differentiation between immigrants able to play an active role in rebuilding France's industry and agriculture, and the 'undesirables' such as the indigenous peoples from the colonies. Despite this distinction, in the time between the two world wars, France still maintains the status of one of the countries in the world with strongest incoming immigrant currents. In the 1930s, there are almost 3 million foreigners in France, that is to say 7% of the total population, making France an immigrant country more than the United States. Italian and Polish are present in great numbers; however, statistics hide the presence of a great number of Algerian workers at the time considered '*musulimans sujets français*', and therefore not considered as foreigners. During the Second World War, France calls once again for soldiers and working force from its colonies to fight Germany.

In regards to proneness of assimilation, or 'assimilabilité', immigrants of European origin were thought to be more easily integrated in French society, mainly because of the closeness of cultures. Nevertheless, despite this being the case, France applied ever-changing and often contradictory policies in regards to migration. France will keep its ambivalent relationship to immigration by moving between policies of recruitment of main d'oeuvre/policies of open

borders, and forced return/policies of border closure to present day. It is important to notice that the French republican values still shape some areas of public life in France.

Immigration and integration being closely related to France's republican tradition; the republican model during these early stages of immigration in France served mainly to assimilate the new arrivals through education and military involvement. Following the Revolution, foreigners will mostly be welcome in France – with periods of intermittence – provided that they learn the French language, engage in the Republic and entrust their children to public schools. (Walzer, 1998)

I.2 Call for main d'oeuvre and changes of immigration policies

After the end of hostilities of the Second World War, a French project envisaged the entry of individuals of general interest to the nation – to reconstruct and rebuild France. France demonstrated its willingness of welcoming immigrants, and gave its guarantee for ethnic and cultural equality concerning economic migration. The postwar French system of immigration control was created in a very short period of time after the Liberation. The two principal agencies for managing immigration and refugee flows, the Office National d'Immigration (ONI) and the Office Français pour la Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA) were established in 1946.

Despite preferences for European and Mediterranean workers, France in 1946 gave freedom of movement to Algerians, making immigration from colonies at the time the main source of work force. Coming from mostly rural areas in Algeria, these workers undertook work in factories and mines. Algerians at this point were regarded as French citizens; hence there was no general sentiment in France that they were foreigners. Moreover, their presence in France was interpreted as serving solely an economic purpose – France maintained the opinion that these workers will willingly leave France after finishing their working contracts.

The period of 1945 until 1974 is known as the 'Glorious 30' or 'les Trente glorieuses' during which economy blossomed and working immigration from colonies was reinforced. For many workers as well, the project of returning to their countries of origin was active. They too, saw themselves as temporary residents hoping to go back home to their families. (Benguigui, 1997) In general, policies pursued by postwar French governments were designed to discourage settler immigration and encourage some nationalities, particularly North Africans, to return to their countries of origin. (Hollifield, 2010)

However, the ambiguous status of North and West Africans has continued to play havoc with attempts by the French government to control immigration, since those individuals in former African colonies who were born during the time of French rule called upon their legal right to ask for "reintegration" into French nationality. Thus, a cohort of former French nationals constituted a latent reservoir of African immigration to France. During the Algerian war (1954-1962) immigration from Algeria to France doubled – in 1962 the census counted 350 000 Algerians in France (Assouline, Lallaoui, 1997). They moved mainly to industrial zones, living

in deprived conditions, without their families. By placing them in specialized buildings reserved for single males, France was hoping to avoid family reunification.

While considered a country of human rights and refuge, France openly announced the changing of its policies regarding economic migration from the colonies under the pretext of the 'oil crisis' and recession that surprised it in 1973. France was closing its borders, and the sentiment of no longer being 'un pays d'accueil' which France always prided itself to be; was the catalyst for a national identity crisis in the years to come. (Gastaut, 2004) The economic crisis that France was going through, became a crisis of morals, reflected though the end of the working movement, the surfacing of the second generation born of immigrant parents, the problems in the sink estates (banlieues) and a general feeling of insecurity toward foreigners.

Nonetheless, the factual situation was that by the end of 1974, there were around 750 000 Algerians and 260 000 Moroccans in France. (Weil, 2005) This created a general sense of uneasiness, as unemployment was rising and jobs were becoming scarce for both immigrants and French citizens. The French had very much identified the immigrants to their role of workers; it was difficult to think of them as unemployed people. This unexpected situation led France to put into place a system of 'voluntary return'. The hopes were that workers would take the opportunity to go back to their countries of origin given a small monetary compensation; opportunity that was taken only by 4% of Algerians. (*Ibid.*)

France was therefore, facing a double challenge – of living up to its tradition of an open and welcoming country on one hand; and justifying its politics of border closure and strict managerial approach to migration on the other. In this sense, the new restrictive policies introduced a consciousness of the existence of immigrant workers with regularized status that had brought their families before the crisis took place. This revelation came as a shock to the French population, the return to the immigrants' countries of origin seeming as the only option prior to the crisis. (Gastaut, 2004) Apart from worker immigration, French authorities struggled to deter family immigration, which remained at fairly high levels (over 50,000 per year from 1974-80), even after the immigration stop was imposed in 1974. The economic rationale for stopping worker immigration however, did not apply to family immigration, which was deemed to be humanitarian rather than economic. (Hollifield, 2010)

Family reunification or ‘chain migration’ was an unforeseen turn of events that the French Republic did not know how to address. By the early 80s, France became alert of the fact that the migrant workers will not leave and that many will bring their families and hope to start a life here. The realization at the time that France had an unprecedented number of Muslims permanently settling in the country, raised concern about their integration in French society, and the debate on this subject took its place in French politics. The 1980s were also a crucial time that introduced new categories of citizens France had never had before. Facing its failure in applying the return policies for the migrant workers, a new debate was opened regarding the question of integration, as a result of the social movements initiated by the youth from the second generation. This second generation was mostly rooted in their parent’s culture, but economically and socially marginalized in France; the challenges and social movements of which will be discussed further down.

The socialist government that gained the elections in 1981 despite loosening up some prohibitions directed to foreigners, reiterated the importance of obeying to the republican values of integration on the basis of secularism, and immigrants were expected to assimilate quickly. By the end of the 1980s, the idea of ‘zero immigration’ was introduced only as a modified version of the politics the government adopted in 1974, stipulating strict control of the migration flow, represented by strictly closed borders. The politics of ‘zero immigration’ were an indicator of the government’s incapacity for constructing a coherent management of migration flows, and of the inescapable presence of immigrants in French society. (Gastaut, 2004) Furthermore, the truth of the situation was that there was a transition from a demographic fact – the reality that immigrants will have children in their host countries; to a sociological phenomenon – the emergence of the second generation as a social group that actually took place in France, despite the control exerted by a political philosophy of universalism. (Simon, 2003) Questions then appeared of the insertion of this population in society, as difficulties started to arise. In the mid 1980s, it was the failure of the return policies of the first immigrant generation that initiated the public opinion to turn towards the integration question of youth with immigrant origin under the momentum of their social movements. (Gastaut, 2004) Despite the creation of different public policies since 1981, the political discourse in France remained one of considering immigration and cultural difference at the origin of social problems. (Guiraudon, 2006)

This period of ‘blindness’ as Sommaire (2005) names it as to how to resolve this problem, has to do with France’s universalist and republican tradition that prioritizes access to civil values independently of ethnic, cultural, or religious belonging. It appeared, as Jacques Chirac famously declared in 1995, that a ‘social fracture’ (fracture sociale) emerged defining the public space and was considered by him to be one of the explanations for problems in underprivileged neighborhoods. This social fracture coincided with an ethnic, cultural and religious fracture as well; a division within society that revealed a certain failure of France’s politics of integration, (Ibid.) discussed below. On questions regarding problems of violence, aggression, and insecurity, media implicitly referred to descendants of immigrants. They did not always seek to know the reasons and explanations behind their acts and behaviors and did not try to determine whether their motivations can be found in the dysfunction of France’s integration policies. (Amin, 2008) The heat of the debate on immigration in the 1980s gave rise to antagonism towards migrants and their children, but that was also a time of the indignation of the second generation and a period of associative and organized social movements for equality.

After the end of the ‘Trente glorieuses’, since France has officially stopped the recruitment of foreign labor and immigrant workers established themselves long-term in France, the economic restructuring and chaotic urbanization contributed for a deterioration of living and working conditions of immigrant workers and their children. These difficulties, have in turn contributed for the progression of ethnocentrism, and a rising popularity of the far-right party. (Guirodon, 2006) This served furthermore to entrench differences between citizens, as France officially declared its wish to cease being a country of immigration; and simultaneously did not know how to address its immigrant population that has already settled. Nevertheless, the politics of ‘zero immigration’ faced its failure as the emerging second generation of immigrants was claiming its place in French society. Their growing visibility and open discontent paved the way for France to open a debate on its assimilationist policies.

Along with the establishment of general discomfort in regard with immigrants, France’s right wing party Front National was on the rise. Factors responsible for this rise of popularity were: fear of creation of a ‘communautarist’ society, questions of the relationship between Islam and the Republic, doubts of immigrants taking advantage of the welfare system and stealing jobs. In 1978, the Front National that was slowly gaining popularity put up posters with the statement:

‘One million unemployed is one million immigrants too much’. This newly popular attitude enhanced the division among the political classes, and contributed for the further stigmatization of immigrants and their children. (ina.fr, 2013) The rise of Front National coincided with the previously unseen numbers of migrants settling in France, but as well with the opening on the debate of French identity; the ‘migrant-individual’ being perceived as a ‘foreigner belonging to an ethnic community’ who himself, is opposed to the ‘national community’ (Kastoryano, 1996) This was also the first time in French history that extreme right had won representation in parliament, which contributed once again in applying regressive migration politics and reestablishing the conduct “random” identity checks of any foreign or suspicious-looking individual. (Hollifield, 2010) The abrupt transformation regarding the acquisition of French citizenship (by weakening the principle of *jus soli* as a birthright) bore with itself a message: acquiring French citizenship is a privilege, not a right, given only to those determined to make a commitment to the French nation. (Ibid.)

In addition to these circumstances, the formation of sink-estates (‘banlieues’) in the urban conglomeration space was no longer perceived in public opinion as a personal choice. On the contrary, it was starting to be perceived as a failure – that of the immigration project. (see Kastoryano, 1996) This ethnic gathering was associated to poverty, reflected a negative identity of the community and referred to segregation as an additional problem of French society. The existence of the ‘banlieues’ as critical and dangerous spaces where violence was thought to be bred, brought further doubts about the success of France’s integration model. These spaces of exclusion became a place where those ‘excluded from assimilation’ lived. (Ibid.)

The debate on the creation of communitarianism and its dangers, the question of the practical integration of the second generation, and the discussion of effective anti-discrimination policies that initiated public attention in the 1980s, are still alive today. What’s more, the necessity of moving this debate forward is crucial for the further direction of development of French society. In this sense, should France reevaluate its integration model? Is it safe to say that the model is clearly dysfunctional, as young people with immigrant origins grow to be more vocal about their desire to feel welcome instead discriminated against? Does the growing popularity of the Front National ultimately pose a threat of the core republican values of equality and liberty? The fact is that France has used its Republican ideals of universalism, egalitarianism,

secularism and nationalism as a way of legitimizing immigration and integrating foreigners. (Ibid.) France's desire to solve the problem of uncontrolled immigration by employing rejection and exclusion, has led to the reality of the presence of a foreign population on the road to integration. (Gastaut, 2004) Indeed, the issues of rejection and exclusion are also tightly connected to issues of social rights that should remain unmentioned, in a context of crisis as the finances of the State are increasingly fragile. By presenting immigration at constant odds with republican principles and as a threat to civil society, France muddled up issues of social and ideological order with migration. Doing this, dissatisfaction among both descendants of immigrants and the French 'de souche' grew, and a debate on the founding republican principles, the question of effective integration and national identity was being opened.

I.3 The failure of France's 'intégration à la française' ?

On the founding principle of citizenship in the first article of the French constitution of 1958, France declares that: 'France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic'. Based on these four pillars, the French system maintains to assure a brotherly union of a nation of free citizens with equal rights. The problems arise when these principal pillars of the French model face an ever-changing economic, migratory and social reality. There is an increasing awareness of the existence of cultural diversity, mainly concerning the population of descendants of immigrants from Maghreb; and along with that, the question of their effective integration and as well as the exclusion they are facing. It is argued that there is both a real and a 'lived' or a perceived discrimination. The real discrimination they experienced only came to supplement their own feeling of non-recognition and discrimination left as heritage by the period of colonization. (see Weil, 2008) Consequently, one must not neglect the importance of colonial history when analyzing the complicated relationships between descendants of North-African immigrants and the French republic. Furthermore, issues such as urban segregation in sink-estates where most of the unemployed youth was living, and discrimination against youth of immigrant origin when searching for employment or accommodation, only confirmed the existence of discrimination founded on racial, religious, and cultural prejudice.

This is why the success of the assimilationist model has been challenged more actively since the 1980s, a period that coincided with the social movements for equality and against discrimination, later on as well with urban violence and riots in 2005, and nowadays is questioned under the threat of religious radicalization of young people from the 'banlieues'. The pillar of secularism was consequently shaken, as many felt that the Republic demonstrated intolerance and fear towards religions, in particular towards Islam. (see Brouard & Tiberj, 2005) A debate is therefore taking place on the efficiency of unquestionably trying to apply firm and possibly outdated republican values left in legacy in the face of a new reality.

Furthermore, the discussion on the proneness to be assimilated first took place when France started issuing demands for foreign workers. From the beginning, preference was given to migrant workers from the neighboring countries and Europe in general, as France believed they would be more easily assimilated. For this purpose, it was important to determine whether assimilation depends on the religious origin of the person or its personal capacities and the environment of host-society. Differentiating between groups of migrants according to their

ethnic origin was therefore part of the selection process of the immigrant population. This attitude present in the French public debate at the end of the 'Trente Glorieuses' was defined by the assumption of a predetermined inability to assimilate on the basis of ethnic origin. It remained until today an argument used to address the reasons for the ineffective integration of mainly people of Maghrebi origin. Despite the final decision of the law on importing foreign labor voted in 1945 that chose to prioritize individual capacities and degrading the possibility of selection of immigrants based on their origin, this debate played a major role in the creation of France's immigration policies in 1945 (see Weil, 2008). The attitude of claiming ethnic origin as a predisposition that disables effective integration into French society today is mainly active in the political agenda of the emerging Front National.

This leads to the demonstration of the perpetual conflict that persisted in the French public space until today – the indecisiveness between an ethnocentric conception of migration, and a more egalitarian approach of the policies of migration. Another challenge is to be added, that is the democratic one – which arises as the French state oscillates between the effort to maintain political traditions from the past; and a pragmatism that underlines 'political apprenticeship' in managing the presence of immigrants and their assimilation. (see Kastoryano, 1996) This is to say that in the struggle to uphold its values that dictated its relationship towards migration in the past, France might be neglecting an opportunity to revise what for many is a dysfunctional set of attitudes toward the Other. There have been consequently, some suggestions to reform the assimilation/integration model without violating its founding principles, such as suggestions for a 'modernizing republicanism' (see Schnapper, 1994), and 'multicultural republicanism'. (see Roman, 1996) France however, has been restating since the 1990s the importance of its 'traditional republicanism' for which acknowledgement of the 'right to difference' means deepening the 'multicultural illusion' and inevitably leads towards forming a society upon 'particularisms' rather than 'universalisms'. (Jennings, 2000) Bearing in mind the value that France attributes to the sense of a common identity and belonging to a common culture, any form of resigning from its founding principles is perceived as a direct threat to its political integrity, as well as a destabilization of the already fragile social order.

In this sense, it is inevitable to mention here the importance that France attributes to the question of secularism, and the fact that it prides itself to be a secular republic, as defined in the first Article of the French constitution of 1958. The secularism 'à la française' meant investment

in the education system, and made of the French school the main actor that would instill this republican value to the new generations. Secularism represents the State's neutrality facing different religious confessions. Furthermore, this neutrality came to symbolize tolerance by presupposing the liberty of conscience in the private and personal life of each individual. (see Kastoryano, 1996) However, on the question of immigration, the pillar of secularism was also challenged among others, as migrants from the former French colonies were predominantly Muslim. The arrival of Islam as a second most present religion in the French republic did not go without debate, and nowadays, does not leave the French public space deprived of discussion on the matter. It is to be emphasized therefore, that Islam in modern France presents an important point of differentiation, and that it became to a great extent a marker of the frontier of what is foreign, and a way of distinguishing the Other.

To continue the discussion on the failure or success of the French model, it is significant to define terms such as assimilation and integration, and their connection to better understand the current debate on the model in France. Amin (2008) insists on the importance of not employing the terms 'integration' and 'assimilation' interchangeably because they are of different nature. He brings forward the statement that France's assimilation policies do not initiate integration, since they do not demand reciprocity of exchange between cultures. He defines integration on the other hand, as the collection of psychological and social processes through which immigrants conform to the collective norms of the host society, while keeping their cultural specificities. Assimilation in this case, represents 'blending in', or in the case of immigrants, it is a requirement by the French state to be invisible, or more precisely, not to demonstrate visible differences in the public space. It is important to note however, that the issue stems from the often confused actors – the State and society. This is so, because the political concept of integration becomes a demand of a socio-cultural assimilation, marking a fine line between the demands of the State that touch into questions of socio-cultural order. This furthermore, does not necessarily stipulate that the political concept itself is wrong. Another important aspect of the issue is the line of division between the public and the private sphere.

What assimilation has in common with integration is the willingness to belong to the national community, but it is different from it by not wishing to maintain characteristics of the cultures of origin. This way, integration corresponds more to the multicultural model. (see Kamiejski, Guimond et al, 2012)

Kastoryano (1996) however, makes the differentiation between the two in regards to the population they concern - by defining integration as a concept addressing the 'inassimilable' population from North Africa, whereas assimilation is reserved for descendants of the European waves of immigration. Therefore, if one uses interchangeably the terms 'assimilation' and 'integration' when addressing issues concerning Maghrebi immigrants and their descendants, by defining this population as incapable of assimilation, one destines it to be incapable of integration as well; a use, I would argue, that imposes an invalid perception of reality.

Does 'intégration à la française' mean assimilation? As the French government claims to have been applying policies of integration since the 19th century, it seems to be safe to conclude that on a governmental level the two terms bear the same meaning. Consequently, defined as such, would it be safe to say that the 'intégration à la française' has failed as a project of assimilation? Bearing in mind however, that a great deal of the French population with immigrant origin, going back to the period of the beginning of the 20th century, has indeed adapted to the French integration model; the question remains to be answered whether this population as well feels integrated and excluded at the same time.

By differentiating these two terms and claiming that assimilation has failed, I would argue that integration instead (defined as closer to the multicultural model), has indeed taken place; and that the second generation youth of immigrant origin has successfully integrated in French society. However, while integration has succeeded among the second generation, these young people are nonetheless being excluded by society. The problem of integration is in fact a problem of exclusion, designated differently by different opposing groups of society, as Leveau & de Wenden (1988) stipulate it in their study of the second generation. By suggesting the distinction between the two terms, one can allow to examine the transfer of responsibility for the possible failure of France's republican model of expected integration through the process of assimilation. I argue that in its essence, assimilationist policies are not those of integration, and therefore they can be defined as a 'traditionalist' type of response which rejects any concessions of multiculturalism claims, and emphasizes the need to obey the orthodox republican principles of the secular state. (see Jennings, 2000) It remains to be debated however, whether France's reason for failure lies in the interchangeable use of the terms and the expectation for assimilation to bring about integration, in the rigidity of the political framework within which societal groups

interact, or simply in the outdated ideology that is unable to meet the demands of the modern French society.

France finds the beginnings of assimilation as a political conception of membership and belief in the Roman tradition; that ‘the State can turn foreigners into citizens, and peasants or immigrant workers – into Frenchmen’. (Brubaker, 1992) This assimilationist understanding of nationhood in modern France contributes for the characterization of the second generation of immigrants as socially and culturally French. Furthermore, by rejecting the category of ‘origin’ in censuses, we witness an attempt to hide the second generation from public censuses in compliance with the pillar of equality, universalism and social cohesion. This can alternatively be explained with the concern ‘not to relate the descendants of immigrants with an immigration which they themselves have not directly experienced and which is probably only a distant reference to most of them.’ (DeRudder 1997, cited in Simon, 2003) Nevertheless, in its efforts to slow down the visibility of the second generation, the French model of integration minimizes the transmission of cultural legacies from the immigrants to their children, simultaneously denying any collective acknowledgement of immigrant origins. Until the early 1970s, the model quite successfully pursued the second point. (see Simon, 2003) However, with the growing conscience of the visible presence of the immigrant population, France faced the challenge of defining its actions towards a population that demanded collective recognition.

The control of transferred legacy was firstly done through the school as an institution inculcating republican values and where individual emancipation took place. Another important challenge that undermined the role of school in producing French citizens that have adopted the republican values became in the mid 1970s, the increasing unemployment. Young people faced the reality that school no longer guaranteed unconditionally opportunities for progress and social advancement. This opened space for questioning the school as an institution where the values of the French republic as unity, universalism, secularism and history were of the utmost importance.

The second site for engraving republican values to the masses was indeed the army. Nevertheless, the army, like the school came to lose its impact on molding young French in the model of a representative citizen of the Republic. The reluctance among young people of joining the army is a direct result, Jennings (2000) argues, of ‘a growing unwillingness by individuals to accept the constraints imposed upon them by the collectivity in the shape of the state’. The

unreliability of these two republican sites for shaping future French citizens further took its toll on the French model of integration as successful.

As with regards to who bears the responsibility to integrate, France's equation of the assimilation model is the following: immigrants adopt or add up to their existing cultures the richness of French values, culture and history, not vice versa. The French High Council for Integration holds to the fundamental principles of the French model: the duty to integrate falls to individuals. By not awarding recognition to the legitimacy of collective identities within the public sphere, religious and ethnic groups are therefore not accorded special privileges in public policy, nor are they granted special protection. In the same spirit, the 'color blind' public support and recognition are addressed only to individual merit and advancement. This principle excludes as well the establishment of structured immigrant communities, because this would threaten the national cohesion. An additional fear that prevails furthermore is that these immigrant communities can grow to become political actors in French society. The official discourse on universality denies all special treatment of the foreign population, and does not allow favoring immigrants nor any other group or community, all that for the benefit of the national cohesion. In order to avoid the risk of over-simplifying the matter, it is worth noting that France refuses the public recognition of communities as a constitutive part of the people, and therefore refuses their political representation, for example, in the form of members of parliament. However, France accepts organized and recognized communities as interlocutors that serve for the further implementation of public policies.

Coming back to the subject of responsibility, by refocusing the politics of integration on the question of fighting discriminations, there is a 'transfer of responsibility from the migrant towards the host-society.' (Didier Facin, cited in Guiraudon, 2006) The reason behind this criticism is the inevitable connection between the policies of integration and the reality of discrimination. It is the revolt against discrimination manifested by the increasing population of descendants of immigrants that brought the question of model reforms under the spotlight. It started in the period of 1978-1980 when public action on the question of immigration was completely founded on the prejudice of 'inassimilabilité' (the idea that a population is naturally not capable of being assimilated); addressing mainly the cultural and religious origin of the North African community. (see Weil, 2008) Nevertheless, in 1998 the High Council of Integration recognized the 'connection between integration and discriminations, which

represented a turning point in French history of treating the immigrant question.’ (Didier Facin, quoted in Weil, 2004) This meant conditioning the success of integration with discrimination by not considering foreigners as responsible for the difficulties they are facing; but the functioning of French society itself, along with unintentional behaviors leading to discrimination. (see Weil, 2004) This is led to recognition of the existence of discriminations founded on racial, religious and cultural prejudice, despite all policies of integration put into place by France. Consequently, if integration policies are put within the framework of anti-discrimination, the non-integration of immigrants and their offspring means that it is French society that does not assure equality of chances. In this case, French institutions and French citizens are responsible for the situation of immigrants. This responsibility shift has as a product the reconsideration of the unfolding events that undoubtedly question the practical application of French values, so one can ask the question whether the urban riots in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the decline of the position of women, or even the development of radical Islam are not the ‘consequences of a certain *republican* communitarianism directed towards populations of Maghrebi origin?’ (Sommaire,2005) This would presuppose that it is the Republic that performs a *repli communautaire*, and not the immigrant communities, as the republican discourse holds to be true.

Brouard and Tiberj (2008) in their study on French integration of the second generation of Maghrebi and Turkish youth have concluded that France is indeed facing an integration crisis; which focuses mainly on two points – the religious factor and the rise of communitarianism. On one hand, politicians, intellectuals and a major part of the electorate believe that the incorporation process has failed and hope for greater assimilation and fewer multicultural claims from the French with immigrant origin. Similarly, an annual report² in 1991 showed a progressive dissatisfaction with the integration of immigrants among French ‘de souche’. While in 1985, 42% of the enquired population thought that immigrants (by immigrants they implied North-Africans) cannot integrate in French society because they are very different, in 1989, that percentage becomes 51%. (see Kastoryano, 1996) This demonstrates the increase of the opinion that there is an inability of Magrebi descendants to integrate into French society. On the other hand, the French of immigrant origin demonstrated through this particular study (see Brouard & Tiberj, 2008) a high level of religious accommodation who perceived themselves as being part of the French community. This evident paradox may also be a reflection of reality that might lead to

² L'état de l'opinion ; annual report of SOFRES,1991, cited in Kastoryano (1996), p.74

the question of exclusion related to integration. The argument that integration has already taken place has to be therefore emphasized. It then becomes not so much a question of integration, as it is a question of the reasons for which an overwhelming percentage of the French 'de souche' do not perceive it as a sufficient effort by the part of descendants of immigrants that plays an important role for producing perceptions, shaping the public opinion, and consequently, represents a population easily manipulated for the goals of the Front National.

Furthermore, social activism played a great role in the indignation of the young of North-African descent, which consecutively threw light on the debate on the success or failure of integration. Despite the attempts not to employ significant changes that might prove to be incoherent with its republican values, France's immigration policies have experienced changes mostly after events that provoked emotion, episodes of interethnic tension, immigrants' strikes, or urban riots. So it is logical that it is only around the 1980s that France launched the debate on its assimilationist model in comparison with the multicultural model and suggestions appeared for reforms within the existing republican model, facing the riots of the second generation. The increasing number of partisan associations founded and led by individuals of the emerging second generation within this associative movement declared having found there a *cadre d'action*; they mobilized to demonstrate an identity after becoming aware of a persisting difference. (see Kastoryano, 1996) The realization of the existence of cultural differences was the initiator of this social action, which later on transformed into a political one, when accompanied by claims for recognition of this difference by the state. This period was highly tumultuous for France, as the reexamination of the model coincided with the initiation of the debate on French identity. Therefore, both the social action of the second generation and the debate on French identity were politicized; in particular the politicization of identity was closely related to the emergence of this new class of intermediaries – the representatives of the associations. (Ibid.) It is through these political identifications that national consciousness was awakened, and this general sentiment of a crisis that concerned directly the national identity, that led to a necessity of restating the republican traditions.

Questions such as: 'Who is French?' and 'Who is a French citizen?' remained to be answered in a France where the crisis initiated by economic problems turned to cultural issues posing a threat to French identity. This leads us to the conclusion that France witnessed a

transformation of its economic crisis to a French identity crisis after 1974 due to the unanticipated demographic change. The identity crisis is a result of the fact that in the past citizenship, cultural belonging and political loyalty were inevitably intertwined, whereas presently, there is a ‘desecrated understanding of citizenship’ (*citoyenneté désacralisée*) (Brubaker 1992, Kastoryano 1996). This is the case as young people of immigrant origin who have their French citizenship either attributed at birth; either they have applied to get it at age 18 – start to disassociate the legal question of citizenship and questions of loyalty and belonging. These citizens often consider themselves as citizens in the name only. This is visible in the political debate that since the 1980s focused on *les exclus*, the excluded. There has been a ‘widespread agreement that amongst the ‘excluded’ are the young unemployed, often from immigrant backgrounds, who have found themselves cast out to the suburbs, *les banlieues*’. (Jennings, 2010)

Perceiving this disassociation as a danger, the French State put into force the requirement for showing willingness to obtain French nationality – the law of 1993 obliged young people of immigrant parents born in France to make a declaration of intent between the age of 16 and 21 if they wanted to acquire French citizenship. This notion came into public discourse as an apprehensive response of the political classes to prevent ‘*une citoyenneté pour les papiers*’ – citizenship only for documents. (see Kastoryano, 1996)

The risk of the disassociation between citizenship and belonging is double: firstly, the young people of immigrant origin facing the rejection and denial of their existence by society as a whole make violent claims for recognition that makes strong implications to the danger of radicalization. France fears this identity regression under the pretext that it poses a danger of creating communautarist movements. (see Sommaire, 2005) Secondly, they feel as if they live a double reality – in a France where they are ‘*Français de papier*’ (French only on paper) and are scrutinized because of the visible traits that make them different.

France was reminded on several occasions of the dissatisfaction young people of the second generation felt with the March of 1983 (discussed below), as well as more recently with the riots in disadvantaged neighborhoods in 2005. Nowadays, the prevailing fear of religious radicalization of these youngsters is a product of associating immigration with problems of ethnicity, urban violence and threats to republican values. Consequently, the current debate in

French society is that there is a fertile ground for creating an identity regression, a state of reclaiming the identities of origin of their parents, which consecutively creates a dissonance in interactions with French society. These multiple identity claims can be furthermore interpreted as a demand for the real implementation of the so proclaimed *universalisme français*, 'of a France unfaithful to herself'. (Nora, 2010) The youth that re-appropriates its past and demonstrates the emergence of new identities therefore is perceived as a danger to the French national identity; that is to say to its social and cultural homogeneity. By consequence, these young people become a threat to the homogeneity of republicanism.

I.4 La Marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme or La Marche des Beurs – more than a social movement

The youth of the second generation, more specifically the descendants of North-African or Maghrebi immigrants defied the attempt of the French State to render them silent of their discrimination by organizing what is known now in French history as 'La marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme' that was later on renamed by media, to be called 'La Marche des Beurs' in 1983. The social climate being particularly tense at the time, a pacific march, with an idea to stop the progression of an unfavorable and obnoxious attitude towards children of immigrants, turned the attention of the State toward the needs of these young people. With the coming of power in 1981 of the Socialist Party, especially after the long rule of the right-wing party, there were expectations that a significant change was on its way regarding France's policies addressing migrants and their descendants. French public opinion recognized in the few years preceding the march, the existence of a population that seemed anchored in French society; a reality that until that moment was neglected. The atmosphere prevailing French society in the beginning and throughout the 1980s was defined by several elements – firstly, with the debate in French society around delinquency of the youth with immigrant origin that accompanied the election of François Mitterand as a president; and secondly, the gravity of France's economic crisis. This was equally a period of noted violence between the police and the young people living in the suburbs. The general public opinion of the time still contained the idea of a return to the country of origin of the immigrant workers, and finally, there was the question of integration (the term employed at the time by media) of the youth with immigrant origin. (see Gastaut & Chabani, 2013) What Gastaut (2013) calls a '*racisme ordinaire*' is transmitted by the media discourse in the 1980s, naming these young French people as 'young Maghrebi' (jeunes Maghrébins) or 'young immigrants'(jeunes immigrés).

The social landscape of the 1980s was furthermore defined by the rising of the Front National, whose main constituent of discourse was the fear - that these young people were in fact a threat to the Republican values and that; it was immigration that was threatening French identity. This continues to be the leitmotiv of the far-right movement to this day. A social division then appears, between on one hand, the French '*de souche*' that claimed the intangible Frenchness – '*la francité intangible*' (Ibid.) and the youth of immigrant origin that claimed their place in French society. It is within such social and political context that the March for equality

and anti-racism finds its beginning in the neighborhood of *les Minguettes*, in the suburbs of Lyon. Joined by numerous citizens, journalists and militants, the 'Beurs' managed in turning the march in an event. They succeeded in capturing the attention of media and gaining visibility; hoping to say 'yes' to a France of equality and fraternity, 100.000 people came together in Paris at the end of the march. The march was in its core, a march against racism and for equality of all people, not only of the youth of the second generation. Half way through, the march against discrimination and for equality took on a political implication led by the political parties of the left and antiracist organizations. Upon an invitation of President Mitterand, representatives of the movement were welcomed in the Elysée Palace. During this meeting, he guaranteed the putting into force of a residency card with duration of 10 years. Such was the immediate outcome of the march in 1983. However, despite the hopes for the entry of a new era in French society with no discrimination after the march, it remains to be debated whether there have been any positive significant changes in the relationship between France and its population of French citizens of immigrant parents; especially since for many, the legacy of the march thirty years later is long forgotten.

The importance of this movement lies in the fact that it was undoubtedly a triggering moment for the appearance of a claim for recognition of the youth with immigrant origins, a first one of its kind, and the appearance of a consciousness in French society of the presence of a whole generation, whose existence passed unnoticed until then. It is mentioned here because of its connection with the indignation of the youth of the second generation, as well as because it was an important factor in the visible construction of a shared, so called, 'Beur' belonging. The indignation of this population undoubtedly opens the question of identity – the choice between an attributed identity and an identity constructed according to the relations with the environment.

This is how this whole generation demonstrated their desire to cease to be made invisible and how it claimed its place in society. They claimed their part of 'Frenchness', exhibited the visibility of their whole generation and the diversity of French society. In a comment on the march, Simon (*Le Monde*, 2014) said: "They are (t)here, but they are still not a part of collective representations", to which I would add, that when they are part of the collective representations, it is often the negative ones they are assigned to. The second and sometimes even the third generation wished to be recognized, as Séverine Labat (2010) puts it as: '*des Français à part entière et non des Français entièrement à part*'.

If discussed within matters of identity, shared belonging and strategies of adjustment, the ‘*Marche des Beurs*’ can be taken to represent an ‘external strategy’ (see Malewska-Peyre, 2002) of the second generation youth to manifest their identity, reclaim their difference, and take their place in the landscape of representations in France. This strategy came as a response of the change concerning the ‘*place sociale*’ (*Ibid.*) of themselves or their parents, but was as well a response to a change of values and a meeting of cultures. This is the reason for which the ‘*Marche des Beurs*’ is important in the discussion of emerging identity claims, as in the 1980s ‘*Beurs*’ declared having found in the movement a *cadre d’action*, of becoming aware of a difference and getting together to demonstrate an identity. (see Kastoryano, 1996) By refusing the representations assigned to them by society as a whole, of being defined as immigrants, this March was among other things a claim for the identity of a French person with immigrant origin, ‘*Beur*’, or simply a French citizen. This strategy of valorization of the collective identity can lead to a commitment to collective or social movements. (see Malewska-Peyre, 2002) For many, the March represented a call of these young people for living their difference in equality, dignity and mutual respect. Malewska-Peyre estimates the identity strategy that appeared with young people in the 1980s, as an ‘intermediary strategy’, showing that this youth was looking for similarities with the group of the majority (the French with no immigrant origin, or Français ‘*de souche*’) *without* renouncing from their own difference. This identity strategy is furthermore an *integrative* one – and can be defined on the basis of egalitarian and pacific democratic values, as seen with the March. By attaching themselves to supranational values, egalitarian ideology and the rights of man, within them, these young people construct their identity and find their *raison de vivre*. (*Ibid.*)

Nowadays, the situation hasn’t changed significantly regarding youth of immigrant origin. More than 30 years after the ‘*Marche des Beurs*’, not many different options are available in French society for progressing towards a path of mutual acceptance; there is rather, a constant cycle of an ‘eternal return to insecurity’. (see Boubeker, 2013) There is furthermore a call for the revision of French institutions that should act as protectors of rights for equality to revise the integrationist model that is no longer functional. (*Ibid.*) The current criticism of immigration focuses on the belief that immigrants refuse to enter into mainstream French society.

Public perception revolves around the thinking that this specific group would demand and obtain special treatment thus ignoring the Republican ideal of equality among citizens. (see Brouard & Tiberj, 2008) Furthermore, the debate on the place and space in French society of the young people with immigrant origin is becoming increasingly important as tensions rise in different fractions of French society. For Brouard & Tiberj, (2008) one of the questions defining the context on immigration politics is the possible experience of an identity crisis of the French. They hold that part of the insecurity can be attributed to the fact that while suffering an identity crisis, the French question their capacity to integrate new waves of immigration.

In this sense, this refusal of an assigned immigrant identity questions not only the definition of the identity of the youth of the second generation, but also that one of the French identity as well and the notion of citizenship. (see Malewska-Peyre, 2002). That is seen through the establishment of an atmosphere of crisis that started in the 1980s and was directly linked to the French national identity, leading consequently to a necessity of reminding of French traditions and history. (see Kastoryano, 1992) One can consequently conclude that the reaffirmation of the founding principles of the French republic that started in the 1980s, and ultimately, the national identity, was a direct product of the debate on immigration. The debate on the national community in turn, initiates a debate on principles of membership in the community, but also on the mechanisms of inclusion.

Chapter II – Identities

II.1 Defining French identity: problems and constants

The question of what it means to be French, or for that matter American, German, Canadian or Dutch, consists of ambiguous definitions and imposes the usage of vague categories defining identity, especially in a context of globalization, accelerated writing of history and fluctuating multiple personal identities and belongings. However, in order to continue addressing the question of identity and belonging of the second generation descendants of Maghrebi immigrants to France, one needs to address and elaborate on the issue of the ever-changing image of France and how it reflects on the self-perceptions, but as well as on the collective discourse of reinforcing a sense of national identity and belonging. To examine identity determinants and strategies of dealing with multiple belongings, one needs to set the framework by showing how France's awareness and/or denial of its changing face shapes mainstream perceptions, what are the categories through which this action is enforced, and what problems are met during this process. Finally, I will demonstrate how and why this debate takes up on political importance in the French context, and how it might contribute for future developments.

To begin, it is important to note that identity remains a dynamic category and therefore, it proves itself difficult to define in strict terms; since its 'constitutive elements are psychological and social aspects in connection to a relational situation at a certain moment, of one social agent (an individual or a group) as a social actor.' (Kastersztein, 2002) On the other hand, even when one presupposes that there is no such thing as a definite, static, and confirmed French identity - one can equally conclude that despite the definition of identity as a fluctuating, fluid and multiple, it should be addressed as an **analytical category**, which would contribute for an effective 'social analysis - including the analysis of identity politics, as social analysis requires relatively unambiguous analytical categories' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This presupposes the search of more 'hard' categories defining identity. Therefore, in an attempt to merge these two seemingly opposed viewpoints, I will try to address some of the categories that are constant in particular in relation to French identity politics, while keeping in mind the notion of identity as a

‘divisible, combinational and heteroclite assembly of social representations, however, most often lived as a coherent and integrated unity’. (Manço, 1999)

In the case of France, I will argue that even though the reality of the formation of identity constructions demonstrates a dynamic and ever-changing process; France is attempting to revive and retain a very fixed version of what it means to be French – resembling the model of national belonging that obtained its greatest glory during the 3rd Republic (see Ribert, 2006), under the threat of the emerging new identities of the new generations. This, in return, might be one of the factors leading to presuppose there is *a priori* a gap that separates the ‘true’ French nation from the youth with immigrant origin, which inevitably leads to stigmatization and marginalizing of a great part of the French population, as well as to a division between people - instead of uniting them around a common project.

As a consequence, there started a search through the past for a representative model of belonging to France that came as a response of the state to the debates that were opened concerning the lack of identification of the youth of immigrant origin with the French nation. (*Ibid.*) This perceived insufficient identification with the national model led in turn to actions such as proclaiming it an offence of contempt (*délit d’outrage*) to disrespect the French national flag and anthem in 2003, and the obligation to teach the French national anthem in schools with a law in 2005. Following this strain of thought, one can ask the question of why was it exactly in this period that this presupposed lack of identification was evoked in public debates - was it not because of the weakening of the identification with the national identity in general in France which became a concern present in the political debate more actively in the 1980s; the more active questioning of the national institutions as the army and the school, or the more vigorous claims for recognition by this new population that proclaimed itself to be both French citizens *and* of immigrant origin. It is important to mention here some of the major themes that are present in the construction of the French national idea of identity such as – unity, universalism, the exceptionality of the French, antiquity, the importance of history, secularism, etc. These serve as points of reference when evoking discussions of what it means to be French, but are also threads which determine to a great extent the French *imaginaire*.

Lacking a uniting national project after the 1970s, France faced the disillusionment that a great history lies ahead of her, and developed the need to refer to her past glory. According to Nora (2010), as a first category setting the margins of the framework within which French identity should be placed is the past - embodied through the weight of history and its importance. Along with the past or history, are other categories such as continuity, the role of the State and heritage in setting the framework within which identity and belonging are addressed and (re)created, all of which are discussed below.

Firstly, on the category of past - since the past is not completely representative of the present and neither does it guarantee a glorious future, the core of the crisis on the question of national identity lies in the lack of a leading historical subject, and a crisis of the perception of French national identity becomes evident. (see Nora, 2010) While Nora accentuates the importance of memory in the construction of the idea of French nation and identity, Ernest Renan on the other hand, in his discourse on the nation is of the opinion that one of the important factors for creating a nation is forgetfulness (*l'oubli*). That is to say to forget the trauma that accompanied the unification and the creation of France as we know it today, the *oubli* of the divisions that preceded the establishment of France as a nation proclaimed through the glory of the French Revolution. Can one consequently suggest then, that the idea of France might be founded on both concepts of forgetting and remembering at the same time, a sort of selective memory anchored around the ideals shaping the French imaginary? The forgetfulness mentioned here refers more to the denial of the fact that the 'leading nations of Europe are nations of essentially mixed blood' and that 'There are not ten families in France that can supply proof of their Frankish origin, and any such proof would anyway be essentially flawed, as a consequence of countless unknown alliances which are liable to disrupt any genealogical system'. (Renan, 1991) In addition to forgetting the aforementioned, France has as well willfully engaged in a collective amnesia when it comes to disassociating the atrocities of colonization from French national history. That helps her to deal to a certain extent with the consequences of decolonization that remain a visible wound. In return, an identity crisis of the French is triggered. To unite this forgetting with remembering the great men, a heroic past and glory is 'the social capital upon which one bases a national idea' (*Ibid.*)

Renan in his discourse makes it clear what does not determine a nation (geography, ethnicity, interests, religion, language..), to conclude that what does define a nation is the soul, and the spiritual principle. However idealistic this might seem, the conclusion that can be drawn from it is that, the definition of a nation is firstly an idea - an idea which resides on the principle of moral conscience of men that give advantage to the community and the greater good rather than their individual desires. In this sense, following Renan's directives on nurturing and engaging one's self in the creation of a nation, one can suggest that the France of today should not have any issues with the aforementioned categories such as ethnicity, religion or language for that matter within the nation-state, as long as the men and women constituting it think of themselves as living and working for a common cause of their nation. However, it is of great evidence in reality that these categories do indeed pose questions on the authenticity or better, the right of belonging to the French nation imposed by a majority of people towards a minority whose origins, religion and language are different than those of the majority of citizens. This way, it can be suggested that in France, language, nationality and religion are still important fragments of the French identity but also categories that serve as 'the core of a collective identity imagined as real or mythical past that appear through social relations as markers of situational boundaries' (Kastoryano, 2010). These categories when evoked become so much more valuable to have to be let out of the bargaining for a new conception of the French identity, that would comprise the acceptance of holding multiple belongings at the same time.

Secondly, the category of continuity embodies France's pursuit of territorial acquisition, an administrative and constitutive continuity. It presupposes as well a certain loyalty to the way of functioning, a cycle of mending social fractures and divisions and their re-appearance. (see Nora, 2010) This continuity acts like a factor for stability, pointing out France's ability to endure despite the challenges, an invincibility of sorts.

Thirdly, in France, it is the State that preceded the nation – that is to say France's consciousness of herself did not come naturally from the unification of cultures, society nor language; it was imposed in an authoritarian way by the State itself, which consecutively connects this consciousness to power, and therefore becomes political; this makes of France a state-centered nation. It is by and through the state that national unity was created in France. (*Ibid.*) This political unification of people was what triggered the birth of nationalism or French

national feeling – as there was nothing particular that indicated what being French meant in religious, ethnic or historical terms, the idea that ‘becoming French meant becoming Republican.’ (Walzer, 1999)

Finally, another category that determines the conception of French national identity is the importance of land. On one hand, an important share of France’s sanctified notion of herself rests upon the almost mythological image engraved in French consciousness – seeing France as a land of conquest under the leadership of Louis XIV, Napoleon or during colonial times, when France played the role of a civilizing missionary. On the other hand, there is the idea and the fear that France was and still is - a land open to invasions. The many invasions of France throughout history serve to reinforce an imaginary of a France under threat – an imaginary on which the far-right in France bases its discourse. From this, one could conclude that these categories even though debatable remain generally ‘hard’ and could contribute as guidelines in depicting the framework within which French identity can be discussed.

Furthermore, defining French identity therefore presupposes the definition of ‘Frenchness’, which itself, has been undergoing serious changes to the point that its essence remains unknown to many. For some, there is an unknown ingredient that makes up the French, in their essence and existence, an invariable of spiritual order – as if the preconception of French identity was part of a substance. For others, the French identity is already part of the imaginary space and it does not exist in fact in reality. (see Nora, 2010) At this part of the discussion, a differentiation imposes itself – namely, between the descriptive and the prescriptive concept of French identity. Are we debating about an identity that describes what we truly are, or is it a matter of indicating how we should be? The Republic itself is a prescriptive concept – by consequence, the same applies to the question of identity. The national identity ultimately, is either a prescriptive ideal, either a fantasy. The prescriptive ideal of identity waiting to be attained is not harmful by itself; it includes traits that act as guidelines to achieve that same ideal, whereas it is a different approach to discuss an unrealistic image of what it means to be French. The question is – which one of these is predominant in the French perception of themselves? Do all these concepts equally participate in the formation of the French imaginary?

For instance, the model of national belonging taken from the III Republic as the prototype of 'Frenchness' that served as a reference to address the question of French identity, can be thought to be both prescriptive and imaginary and unrealistic. What is more, in this particular model, 'national belonging dominates over other belongings (religious, political, cultural..) which were in turn, confined to the private sphere.' (Ribert, 2006) One was firstly French, and then a Catholic, a Breton, or a Normand. The dominance of national belonging over other belongings was confirmed and justified through France's assimilationist project – sameness served to assure equality, and acknowledging the Other meant for France to redraw 'its boundaries of an 'us' of which the content is nourished by national rhetoric and historical experiences'. (Kastoryano, 2010) By imposing an erosion of differences after one has claimed Frenchness, France is employing a defensive strategy of dealing with the arrival of an ever growing Arab population. In this sense, addressing equality through sameness would have been a functional project if France was indeed a nation where no ethnical difference existed, where colonization never took place, and for that matter immigration waves from the former colonies to France. Even this way, it is unlikely that sameness would have been assured, unless we speak of a sameness of color only. France is continuously bargaining with history through selective remembering and erasing elements of history that could undermine the fixed framework within which lies the idea(l) of true Frenchness. Here one could introduce the argument that France's emerging consciousness of her own changing face (regardless of the desired oblivion) along with its absence of the concept of cultural difference despite its factual presence and the impossibility to embrace it within its assimilationist model, may be one of the reasons for experiencing the identity crisis.

In the case of France, one can conclude that while having a population that is ethnically and religiously diverse, this same 'diversity is not yet fully incorporated in the representation of Frenchness.' (Simon, 2012) That is to say that France is multicultural, even if she does not accept to adopt the multicultural model. The 'Us vs. Them' discourse that has been initiated as a result of the increased visibility of part of the population which itself stands in opposition of what national identity is and gives it its restrictive character, inevitably creates a cleavage between parts of the population. However, the role of the national identity as a framework for equality stands to be revised, argues Simon (*Ibid.*), as within the discourse of 'Us vs. Them' the national identity is defined negatively, by stating what it should *not* be. Here emphasis is put on

defining ‘Frenchness’ not on the basis of nationality or cultural codes and behavior, but on a restricted vision of who ‘looks French’. From this, defining identity negatively, one could conclude that an increasing representation of ‘Frenchness’ is being ‘not Arab, not Black and not Muslim’. This clearly leads to questions of contested nationality and sentiments, and it denies the possibility of a ‘hyphenated’ identity – an identity combining references to both France and a minority culture. It furthermore could contribute, as we already witness it today, to increasing societal tensions around the definition of national identity; or/and it could lead to more exclusion of the population that does not fulfill these ‘conditions of membership’. (*Ibid.*)

France has difficulties accepting its changing face, which contributes to a partial denial of membership to the national community of an important part of its population, namely descendants of North-African immigrants. That way, France is undermining its possibility for national cohesion, and instead creates a discourse that could prove to be a fertile ground for deepening the already present societal divisions. Such a rupture creates a perception of ‘incompatible’ cultures - suggesting that North-African culture in particular and ‘authentic’ Frenchness are two diametric opposites. It undermines as well the possibility for constructing complex postcolonial identities (these people claim to have plural identities *which for them are not in conflict but are on the contrary complementary*) at the same time responsible for and the product of the adjustment of these populations in modern France. Here one could ask the question whether it is not possible to treat equality and difference in the French society not as contradictory arguments, but as complementary? Do these plural identities undermine the national cohesion? I would argue that they do not, but that through such initiation of a debate on the national identity, this debate is likely to prove to be rather divisive than inclusive.

This ‘Othering’ (presenting a part of the population as different and unable to access the national unity on the grounds of fundamental cultural, ethnic and religious difference) is proved to be sharper for the ‘second generation descendants of post-colonial migrations’³, since they are most ‘visible’ in French society – a fact that contributes for a crystallization of the tensions surrounding the definition of national identity’. (*Ibid.*) To continue, ‘Othering’ a part of the population can show how ‘implicitly or explicitly identity is perceived as a ‘permanent

³ Trajectories and origins (TeO) : Survey on population diversity in France done in 2008-2009 on a sample of 22.000 people analyzing identity patterns of immigrants and their descendants, focusing on how these relate to French national identity; Patrick Simon

difference’ and as the main source of cleavage in one society’. (Kastoryano, 2010) This ‘permanent difference’ in the French case takes the form of differencing the Other by attributing to it a religious or a racial identity as its main characteristic. One of the defining elements of the national identity framework is therefore one of restrictions – that excludes visible minorities and Muslims in particular from granting them membership in the national community.

More on the particularities of these multiple identities – more specifically the *Beur* identity and how it interacts with French society will be discussed below; for now it suffices to mention the importance of the existence of a population which claims a dual allegiance that combines identification with France while guarding a certain loyalty to the country of origin of their parents. According to the TeO research, this pattern is dominant for the second generation, from which stems this particular interest in examining the identity determinants of precisely this population. The problem of the French national identity becomes then more evident when confronted with the emerging ‘new generation’ identities (among which in particular the *Beur* identity). In turn, the threatened identity and the idea of an invaded motherland is used by the far-right to depict this population’s existence, culture, belief and identities as incompatible with the national idea(l). This is so because the far-right deepens an increasing fear of a budding communitarianism that would pose a threat to the French national unity. These group identities or more so, the rising consciousness of their existence and their claims for recognition are perceived not only as a danger to the republican values, but could also be seen as a direct attack to the French universalist tradition that has not delivered its promises for equality. It becomes clear then, that one of the most important factors contributing for the identity crisis is namely the discord with the republican ideals by an alarmingly increasing number of the population who vote for the far-right. Unfortunately this points out to the effectiveness in the discourse of the Front National in recruiting followers by manipulating an idea. Nevertheless, while this tendency remains significant in terms of quickly growing popularity and its radical opinions – it is equally essential to mention that this opinion does not however depict the whole of the public opinion in France.

In addition, an increasing tendency is present in the French discourse along with the action of ‘Othering’ – that is the fear, or more clearly the phobia implanted in the public debate

that not only French identity is threatened, but something even more serious is taking place– the idea of what it means to be French is being replaced with instances of minority identity. The core of the phobia lies in the fact that soon enough the French will be obliged to change themselves or even more seriously – a redefinition of Frenchness will impose itself or it has already taken place. From this, such defensiveness and strict guarding of the French imaginary space as sacred is justified.

Furthermore, one is obliged to ask the question of why it is exactly in this moment of history that such a debate has been initiated on the subject of identity, and of the effects it has on collective and personal self-representations and identities. According to Nora (2010), the reevaluation and the identity gap (*rupture*) of French identity is connected greatly to France's retreat from the great History, in other words to its entry in a new history that did not have the wisdom, heroism, nor the universalist reason in it. This took place in the 1960s and 1970 with the arrival of increased production and consumerism. It continued through the 1980s when the national representative model was challenged facing the demands for recognition of the emerging population – French nationals who refused to be treated as immigrants and demanded a new place in the social hierarchy, other than the one of their parents. Most recently, the French model of identification felt threatened in the riots of 2005 that took place in some French suburbs, and just in 2015 – with the attack of the provocative caricature newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. The one thing in common for all these events is the mobilization of the national community against in particular the Muslim part of the population believed to be responsible for the uprisings – which contributed for reinforcing the threat by radical Islam as the main cleavage in French society. It consecutively led to a collective and historical pessimism of the French, along with a fear nourished by perceived insurmountable differences between parts of the population. Overgeneralizations are common, and seeing Islam as a religion unable to coexist within the Republic is certainly a case for some part in the public opinion – however, it is precisely in times like these that a distinction has to be made between the Islam that imposes itself above the law of the Republic and the Islam that can coexist within it and furthermore serve as an interlocutor between the Republic and the Muslim part of the population.

Since the nation as Renan imagined and defined it in 1882 meant the unification of both notions of the nation – the nation as heritage, and the nation as a project, something to be

constructed; (France does not have a uniting national project nowadays) of which France witnesses the disassociation today, proves to be another of the main reasons for the crisis of the national identity. Instead, by launching the debate on national identity in 2007 and the creation of the Ministry of immigration, integration, national identity and united development, (Ministère de l'immigration, de l'intégration, de l'identité nationale et du développement solidaire") –Nicolas Sarkozy undoubtedly associated the debate on national identity to the subject of immigration and to restrictive immigration policies. He stated for Le Monde in 2007 that ‘National identity is the antidote of tribalism and communitarianism – we should talk about it together of fear that if not repressed, this feeling might contribute for terrible resentment’. By using derogatory and grotesque terms as ‘tribalism’, it becomes clear that Sarkozy does not make the distinction between cultural and political communitarianism, to whom maintaining a close relationship with people with the same culture presupposes possible demands for political recognition which does not correspond to the universal law. Even though this debate faced its failure at a fast pace and was formally abandoned in 2010, it nonetheless contributed for some significant reflections on the subject of national identity present in France in relation to its politicizing and its usage for gaining political points through addressing societal cleavages and (almost) mythical representations. Firstly, the usage of key words such as – ‘honor’, ‘mother land’, ‘pride of being French’, ‘merit’, etc., point out to an almost caricature-like, exaggerated representation where ‘being French is an honor that belongs to everyone to merit it; it is adhering to a form of civilization, values and mores’, however remaining clear that for those not apt to adhere to the French values, the door is open to leave. (‘Si certains n’aiment pas la France, qu’ils la quittent’, Nicolas Sarkozy, quoted in lemonde.fr, 2009)

Secondly, the political response to the blurred demarcations of French identity was to reaffirm the republican values through measures such as punishment for contempt and verbal assault (*outrage*) of the national anthem, for example. The reference to symbols of the nation such as the flag and the national anthem are for the most part devoid of meaning when brought in connection to the ‘core’ of what it means to be French – in this sense, is it not exaggerated to believe that by imposing for instance learning the national anthem in schools, young people would consecutively develop greater respect of the republican values? Is this reference to such tangible symbols of the nation not just an attempt to hold on to the mirage of what it means to be French, precisely because it is unclear what being French is? Finally, the usage of the term

‘reaffirmation’ of what it means to be French underlines a sort of fixation, a remembering that inevitably leads to evoking historical representations of ‘Frenchness’ not allowing the natural flow of identity, and not accepting its possible changes. However, despite Sarkozy’s resignation on the debate on national identity, and after declaring that he regretted attaching the subject of identity to the Ministry of Immigration that should have been delegated to the Ministry of Culture - this fixation to an imaginary French identity has been willfully taken over by the Front National and other right-wing oriented parties (as the *Union pour un mouvement populaire* for example) concerned with security. Through this it becomes clear the exclusionist mechanism under the surface of this debate whose partisans are of the opinion that Muslims by being incapable of assimilating to the imaginary national identity, are source of criminality, delinquency and insecurity.

Is it then possible to discuss Republican identity instead of a national identity? If one was to make a distinction between national identity that is an imaginary construction in the pursuit of politicizing and dividing society and the republican identity founded on a community of values, the Declaration of Human Rights; is it pertinent to suggest that one should rather accept that the nation is defined as such through and by the republican values and, to go back to the aforementioned statement of Walzer that ‘becoming French meant becoming Republican’? Can we therefore propose the abovementioned distinction between the normative ideal of identity and the unrealistic fantasy – the Republican identity being then the prescriptive, desired ideal which society moves to attain, whereas its opposite is the fantastic, outdated version that does not correspond to reality but remains unattainable as well in the future? This however, stipulates an inseparable element of the notion ‘republican’ – that is based on a strong political concept, which leaves more space for debate; not omitting that indeed, the French Republic is a political community.

Often the cult to the republican values has been used as a tool in building the idea(l) of national identity; however, despite the difficulty to disentangle these notions, one should be reminded that the former one leads to values connected to republicanism, and the latter to nationalism. The definition of a nation by its republican and not nationalist values could then lead to a redefinition of what it means to be French in the sense that it would no longer be of importance of which lineage and origin has one come to belong to the national community –

what it would matter would be, as Renan suggested, ‘as it is summarized, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent - the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life.’

From this debatably idealistic note, the discussion will move to examining the emerging identitie(s), namely the Beur identity - the consciousness of the existence of the new generations of post-colonial descendants, and demonstrate its influence on the perception of national belonging. I will furthermore elaborate how this particular claim for recognition was used to create a cleavage in France’s imaginary, and how it served in many instances to the opposite of its original purpose, that is to say to alienate and not embrace a part of the population.

II.2 Identity determinants – Beur identity claims

It is necessary to firstly determine the history and the usage of the term Beur, and only then to go on exploring inherent identity determinants and categories that might relate to the population it designates. Taking the word ‘Arab’ and using a double inversion (from which one gets ‘rebe’ and applying the same method) it using a way of speaking called ‘verlan’, which itself is a game of words from the construction *à l’envers*, meaning reading and speaking in reverse; it is constructed the word Beur. It is officially taken to designate second generation North -Africans, French people of North -African descent. When it first appeared in the 1980s, it was a claim against the derogatory and over-generalized notion of Arab, much used in French society. It furthermore served as a denomination to help this population to oppose the attributed ‘immigrant’ identity of their parents. Then, it grew to designate part of an indignant young population that claimed equal treatment, and that was looking to transfigure social and political recognition. There have been however, since the beginning of the Beur movement, people who firmly disagreed with the naming of this population in such a way, thinking it as derogatory and offensive as the word ‘Arab’, and suggesting a simple acceptance of this population in the representation of France’s new face. The term was particularly contested by militants of the cause ‘La Marche pour l’égalité et contre le racisme’ from the region around Lyon, who during the peaceful protests refused to have the movement associated with that particular denomination.

Furthermore, this notion was imposed and popularized by media because of several contextual reasons in French society namely – the political context of the 1980s as the election of François Mitterand as president in 1981, the right to association granted to foreigners, and the political debate of socio-cultural matters regarding racism and integration. In addition, the particular relationship that France developed with the descendants of Maghrebi immigrants came as a product within the colonial context (as Sayad (1999) points out, because this immigration was exemplary in many ways and different that other immigration waves (*immigration exemplaire*)); and is ultimately characterized by its main trait – non-European descendants of Islamic faith. (see Santelli, 2004) The specific usage of Islam in the French context when addressing matters of identity will be discussed further, and naturally here it is implied that not

all descendants of North-African immigrants are practicing Muslims; however Islam remains to act as an important differentiating characteristic.

Very much publicized through media, this denomination remained and has been widely used by academics and scholars to refer to this pioneer generation that initiated the movement for equality and against racism. I will therefore use it as well - to refer to the identity claims and determinants of second generation youth with immigrant origins from Maghreb, and to examine the cultural and political implications of it from its appearance until today. I will firstly mention the identity constituents that defined Beur movement at its beginning, and then move on to a more recent interpretation by showing how there has been once again a change in perceptions in French society, and how French society unavoidably influences and is being influenced by identity itself.

What is evoked in one's consciousness when the word Beur is employed? What other denominations are thought appropriate to address this particular population? What are the common unifying elements of this group of people, and if there are any, do they stem from their self-attribution based on realistic similarities or are they merely a response to an existing tendency of categorizing in French society? Do the elements of resemblance go in direction of a common cultural specificity or unity is merely a product for gaining visibility and acting as a social and political actor? Ultimately, how have these determinants evolved during time in the French social context, and how have they reshaped the image of the second generation(s)? All these questions are necessary if the goal is ultimately to approach understanding the place of Beurs in society and looking into matters of identity affirmations.

To start the discussion, an apparent observation is needed. As time goes by, it is only logical that many of the first activists involved in the movement for equality are now parents themselves, to a third generation, or grandparents to a fourth generation. That way, an approach in terms of generation only might not be particularly obvious to defend. However evident it might appear, it is important to keep in mind the chronological order of things, and emphasize that a certain attitude in society that was true for the second generation in the 1980s is different for the second generation of today. In the same way, some of the identity determinants might have also changed in time; both through self-attribution and through the changes that took place in French society which itself has contributed for modifications in representations of this part of

the population. I will therefore, have a chronological approach to these identity claims and perceptions as well, analyzing how they have changed through time, examining the reasons for it, and finding common elements between them.

When attempting to answer the aforementioned questions, one cannot abstract one's self from the very specific categorization of the social space, which this particular notion refers to. Namely, in the 1980s, when this population gained visibility, the term *Beur* depicted a social figure – young people with immigrant parents from Maghreb, coming from 'sensitive' neighborhoods (*quartiers sensibles*), in the margins of society, susceptible of meeting social difficulties, bearing contentious values, at the center of the debate on integration, etc. This term, and along with it, the part of society it evoked - initiated both hope and desperation corresponding to the attitude, depending on whether one decided to see the actions of these people as an attempt of defying outdated categorizations and refusing a marginalized status, or as a population whose success in school, proneness to delinquency and loyalty to France are continuously questioned. However, as previously mentioned, the creation of the term coincided with the first organized movement for recognition as citizens with full and equal rights; and for a great majority of the marching youth it primarily represented their organized struggle in an effort to defy stereotypes and pre-assigned societal roles. They were, as de Wenden (2000) calls them – handymen and handywomen of situational identities (*bricoleurs d'identités de situation*) that wanted to contribute to the concept of classical citizenship with their new approach.

Whether we choose to call this population 'the second generation', 'generation from immigration' (*génération issue de l'immigration*), 'second generation of immigrants', or 'Beur generation', or as they were also referred to in the 1980s 'children of immigrants' (*enfants d'immigrés*) or 'young immigrants' (*jeunes immigrés* – this particular one being arguably incorrect) - it is clear that we are referring to the descendants of Maghrebi immigrants. Here we should point out the emphasis put on the word 'immigration' that clearly demarks on one hand a sort of social stigmatization, but also reaffirms the crucial linking point to the immigration process of their parents – a point they would rather separate paths with.

In this context it is essential to bring forward Sayad's (1999) observation – that naming this population as *Beurs* confirms the separation with the generation of their parents; because 'there can't be a generation without a distinction from the preceding generation' (Santielli, 2004)

In other words, the Beur generation was constituted in opposition to the preceding generation of their immigrant parents. This demarcation is the first common/unifying element of this population, which served to assert their demands for equal treatment as all French citizens. Furthermore, giving this population a name served by itself as a way of recognizing its existence – a first step towards negotiating its place in society. The current usage of the term Beur however has changed; by the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the term was slowly disfavored as it was thought to no longer serve its purpose. It did however, help this youth to gain visibility and nowadays it is mostly used to denote once again mainly the pioneer population of the 1980s, and it still bears a great connotation specifically to the *Marche des Beurs*.

The second generation descendants of Maghrebi immigrants were not people who lived the same trajectory as their parents, who left more traditional societies to move to modern ones – this relates to the first common element mentioned above regarding the need for a distinction from their parents. Yet often, they were inevitably defined through the reference to their origins in French public discourse and society which continuously reflected upon them that particular part of their belonging as the main determinant of their place in society. This is why it is important not to omit the fact that ‘feelings of belonging and constructions of ethnicity can and should be understood not only as preferences toward a minority identity but also as a consequence of the repeated experiences of discrimination and stigmatization’ (Simon, 2012) often experienced in French society.

Preceding their official massive appearance in the public eye during the March, this youth was depicted through media almost exclusively in negative terms, including insinuations for inherent communitarianist traits. To this representation was surely attributing the geographic marginalization of a great part of this population, and an increasing number of violent incidents that took place in the sink-estates (*banlieues*). With the March for equality and against racism, these French citizens wanted to break with the representations they believed did not define them, at least not completely. A creation of a new perception came out naturally from their refusal to take the place of their parents in society. In a sense, they needed to offer to the society a new, revised version of social representations that showed them as conscious and capable social and political actors. They did so by reclaiming the French part of their identity without renouncing

their origins – proposing a new concept of citizenship that does not contest their loyalty to the republic despite their plural belonging, and giving them a possibility of acting as political actors as well. (see Leveau & Wihtol de Wenden, 2000). This was in a sense a two folded process – on one hand, there was a need to put an end to the collective representation depicting the second generation in a same way as their parents, and on the other hand, there was the refusal to lose their cultural specificity that inevitably bore a bond with their parents. This refusal (of some, but not all) to break away from their (cultural) heritage is therefore the second common element that defined this population. However, a consequence of such seemingly contradictory demands leads the discussion inevitably to the cultural element and its place in identity claims, and furthermore, its political implications.

Moreover, as identity is a category dependent both on self-prescribed values and attributed values and characteristics by the receiving society that can often be interiorized and adopted as one's own; an equally important part when discussing identities in the French context is the perception France nourishes regarding these populations. Identity expressions are therefore, 'the product of an interactive process, within which are playing relations of power', (Simon, 2005) but the ambivalence with regard to 'origins' does not concern the majority group (that itself does not have 'origins', other than mythical); therefore, it is the majority group that forms the reference. (*Ibid.*) This way, the notion of 'origins' takes upon a stigmatizing meaning, attributed and reflected upon the descendants of Maghrebi immigrants. Despite everything that separates the North-African (Maghrebi) descendants between themselves (different socio-political-colonial contexts and history of their countries of origin, different politically-administrative treatment (in regards to their status for obtaining French citizenship which is itself inevitably a result from the colonial history that mustn't be neglected), or a different socio-professional and territorial implantations), 'they all participate in the same sociological and cultural reality, and more importantly, they are perceived in an identical manner (*Maghrébins, Arabes, Musulmans*) by French society.' (Sayad, 2014) Consequently, French society through these perceptions prescribes common, unrealistic characteristics and enables development of sweeping generalizations regarding this part of the population. It is debatable whether there is real complicity among these different populations that makes them identify with one another, as well as on what grounds it may be founded (memory of colonial repression, geographical proximity, shared immigration history, or the generalizing and condescending attitude

increasingly present both in French public discourse and society towards them). Whichever is true, the fact remains that the attitude of persistent attribution of common, often negative connotations to refer to this population (including the first, but also the second, third and sometimes fourth generation of descendants) is present in French society. A process of mutual 'Othering' then effectively takes place – it is a process focusing on differentiating one's self from the Other, in this case, of two groups – the French 'de souche' and the second generation. The importance of the role of the Other in identity constructions becomes evident then, since the image of one's self is constructed by and through the perception of the other. (see Wallet-William et al., 1996) To complement this statement, it is not only through the perception of the Other that the Self is defined, but it is also and as importantly, 'through the relationship with the Other that the Self is elaborated'. (Taboada-Léonetti, 1990) One is then compelled to ask questions - to which extent has this generalizing tendency (treating them all as Arabs) forced them to define themselves in a similar way? What does this tendency reveal about created and nurtured perceptions of this population in French society? Is this announcing the creation of a new culture which will continue to serve as a model of collective identification, is it sufficient to help create a strong and lasting identity, or is it only a place of transition from where this population solicits the French social body?

These individuals were/are already an active part in modern society, and they prove(d) to be emancipated members of such societies. They invented and accepted the common reference of themselves in French society - a necessity imposed by the French cultural and immigration context, which was thought to help facilitate the negotiation of their demands for equality. Furthermore, the affirmation of this new and manifold identity during the 1980s went inevitably in the direction of contributing for political actions, and represented a way of negotiating advantages that would have taken much longer to be discussed through the creation of political parties or syndicates. However, as Sayad (2014) emphasizes, the attempt to achieve recognition in the public sphere through political engagement faced a challenge - as for some, this population was already politically recognized (through the fact that many of them were French citizens by right); it was cultural recognition they were lacking. I will argue that the common identification of Beurs was a product of solidarity among many different populations, but was partly accepted because of the imposition of identical treatment within French society. This self-designation appears to be according to Sayad (*Ibid.*) both an 'unbelievable designation' (*appellation*

dérivoire) as a tool of defense from a discourse of domination (particularly in a post-colonial context), but also serves as a claimed identity to ‘start an emancipation since the denial contains already in itself the beginning of subversion’ (*Ibid.*)

French by right, the youth with Maghrebi origins was often suspected of not having strong enough ties to the Republic, they were demanded proof of their loyalty to the republican values and were under pressure of having to demonstrate their merit to be accepted and to belong as equal actors in French society. We could argue in this sense that the law (*Code de la nationalité*) of 1993 that stipulated that children born of foreign parents should ask to obtain French nationality before they reach the age of 18 – was such a measure of demanding a sort of loyalty to the republic, (de Wenden 2000; Weil 2008) and that as Weil (2008) puts it - ‘it reactivates its painful past and provokes by consequence a phenomenon of de-identification with the French nation among the second generation’ (particularly North-African). Weil argues in the same context that this specific measure also contributed among some of the young people concerned by it for a return to their origins (*retour aux origines*), especially among Algerians in the period of 1986-1995. (*Ibid.*) This contributed for a feeling of undesirability of young Maghrebins on French soil, and a feeling that their presence was merely tolerated. Even though voted to be removed in 1998, the demonstration of willingness (as demanded by the law of 1993) to belong to the republic while having been born and raised on French soil, was a certain manifestation of suspicion. There have been from the beginning in the 1980s, two opposing discourses in the French public space regarding the second generation – some believed that the national integrity was threatened and actions should be imposed to those who did not show a willingness to integrate; others thought it logical to give a helping hand to a generation that demonstrated a desire to be accepted; both discourses finally contributing to a ‘continuous and confirmed reference of this population as non-nationals, where culture operated both as a tool of integration and exclusion’. (Pérez, 2014)

From here, it is the notion and use of culture that will guide the discussion; as most often the suspicion manifested stems from the presupposition that these individuals are facing multiple and opposing cultural identities above all. As culture is ‘necessary to construct identity’ (Wallerstein et al., 1996), these individuals facing two seemingly opposing cultures are believed to be inevitably led to experience an identity conflict. New hybrid and paradoxical identities are

then created that will satisfy both the needs for fidelity to their origins and for reality corresponding to the social actors of the host society (see Manço,1999) To explain this double ambiguity to which the youth of the second generation is exposed further, we can mention : on one hand – the ambiguity of the ‘culture of origin’ that is de-contextualized to a great extent in a foreign land and more often than not emptied of meaning , but also idealized to the point where it could still offer valid systems of references for values; and on the other hand, the ambiguity of the culture of the host country, which appears to be of heterogeneous character, but is less inclined to provide systematical models of reference. (*Ibid.*)

For Sayad (2014), approaching the question of identity from a point of view of culture is a matter of dissimulating a question of social order with culture. He believes it can furthermore be perceived as an attempt to depoliticize identity (and identity is explicitly political) in the French context – and by doing so, risking to denaturalize the struggle to question principles of national sovereignty. This way, it is cultural differences that are perceived to be obstacles to an effective integration, and only by renouncing one’s belonging to the culture of origin can one fully enter the national community. Cultural differences become the main prism through which identity and belonging are analyzed simply because often they are the most ‘visible’ aspects of one’s social behavior. However, if we were to suggest that ‘Muslim identity’ could be (but does not have to be – and it will depend solely on the individual’s religious affiliation and sentiment) a constitutive sub-identity of an individual’s socio-cultural identity as a whole; maybe we would be able to disassociate culture from politics, in the sense that we would cease to attribute implicit political significance to cultural modes and behaviors. This is not to say that political recognition of cultural difference is not needed, but simply moving the attention to the fact that granting it does not guarantee acceptance and positive reference to Muslim culture in society. Certainly, very often the process of integration is regarded as a ‘zero-sum’ game, and distance from the culture of origin is taken to be a sort of commitment to the French nation. Consequently, by making religion a social identity in itself, to take it to represent the main connection to the ‘origins’ of the second-generation, implies – in order to demonstrate distancing from their origins, to denounce the religion of Islam. (*Ibid.*) However, if there was a less pejorative approach to otherness in social and political space on matters of integration, and if the question of ‘origins’ was approached in a more serene, less biased way – so it would not be contradictory to be and to feel completely French *and* of Algerian origin for example, if the focus is not

constantly on ancestry, France might have a chance for ‘de-colonizing’ its imaginaries and ‘de-nationalizing collective references.’ (Simon, 2005)

What can be witnessed when examining attitudes towards this population is that more often than not, religion is taken as a generating force from which stem and to which are attributed all other cultural differences. (see Sayad, 2014) By perceiving Islam as a determining factor of social identity instead of seeing it as only one aspect of culture among others, Islam becomes the foundation of that social identity, and by consequence is thought to contain all other belongings such as social, national and cultural - rather than being the demonstration simply of a religious belonging. ‘This is a direct consequence of France’s inability to answer the question: ‘How can one be both French *and* Muslim?’ (*Comment peut-on être français et musulman ?*)’ (Leveau & Wihtol de Wenden, 2000) Religion is clearly an important part of culture – but what we can witness through time is that one part of the French public debate is focusing on this particular aspect of culture, and by doing so – it contributes to rendering it a taboo. In this sense, it should be emphasized that the issue itself is not that Islam as a religion is thought incompatible with the Republic (although there is a part of the population that holds this opinion true – mainly supporters of the far-right – which in itself is a contradiction, since the far-right’s values are opposing to the republican values), but that Islam while being present in the public sphere should be confined nonetheless to the republican framework. This is the case, as most ‘French Muslims’ are deeply attached to republican values, and are willful to find their place in society (see Wieviorka, 2005).

The arrival of Islam in France is undoubtedly connected to the immigration wave from the countries of Maghreb (that is to say – the immigration flow initiated by the first generation), as it was the first immigration of such scale that was different than the previous ones namely because of the particularity that was Islam. However, that does not explain why and how this very important trait of culture is automatically prescribed to the second generation, and what this cultural specificity represents for the children of Maghrebi immigrants. Can it be that the place given to religion in the lives of people from the second generation in public discourse is too important? Certainly, if an individual is practicing his/her religion it is probable that this practice will at least in some ways affect other areas of this person’s life; but can we suggest that religion as an aspect of culture unavoidably affects all social behaviors? I suggest that it doesn’t,

especially taking in consideration the Maghrebi second-generation, since religion in their case is more often related to values, and frequently, – defining one’s self as Muslim, is only a declarative statement. Is it possible that while there is a (rather small when compared to the rest of it) part of the second generation that uses Islam as an escape route to what is known as a *repli communautaire*; the majority of second-generation Maghrebi in France only hold what Herbert Gans (1979) called ‘a symbolic ethnicity’ - a form of nostalgic allegiance to one’s origins that was not necessarily manifested in visible ways in the everyday life of the second-generation? This is suggested as well in the abovementioned TeO research (see Simon, 2012) - that the invention of a new “hybrid’ minority identity does not signify a lack of integration (on the contrary, it is created precisely because integration has taken place) but rather the emergence of this ‘symbolic ethnicity’ is a ‘creative process marked by the patterns of stigmatization and exclusion experienced in French society’ (*Ibid.*)

Furthermore, in addition to giving the spotlight to Islam in political debates recently, there is an increasing trend of constructing ‘Arabness’ in the French imaginary inevitably addressing second generation Maghrebi. (see Deltombe & Rigouste, 2005) This ‘Arab identity’ is both imposed and forbidden by French society, and to claim one’s Arab-Muslim identity is to claim one’s own condemnation to a great extent. (see Lapeyronnie, 2005). Here lies the eternal interconnection between questions of immigration, integration, the State and identities – and this proves that one cannot be questioned without questioning all the above mentioned at the same time. Immigration cannot be analyzed differently than through the thought of the State ‘*la pensée d’état*’ – as it is only through categories of the State that it can be addressed, and to analyze it, implies an obligatory analysis of the State itself. (Bourdieu, quoted in Sayad, 2014) The reality holds that stigmatization of the Arab-Muslim identity will probably continue, given the development of many events throughout the world that make it simple to focus on an image of Muslims bordering with radical Islamists, rather than focusing on an Islam as only an aspect of culture. The sense of achievement and liberty of expression that was felt some short time after the March for equality in 1983, has nowadays reversed, and differences that seemed bearable in the past, nowadays appear intolerable.

Who are the Beurs of today and how to define them? How to address the remaining discrimination towards an increasing amount of middle-class second-generation who haven’t

grown up in sink-estates and are simply trying to live their lives in French society? What of those who are highly educated and feel proud to be French and at the same time Algerian, Moroccan or Tunisian (for many without ever setting foot in the country of their parents)? Is it realistic to assume that taking another approach of treating cultural differences and similarities, we can hope for an appreciation of differences? This is possible, Bouamama (2004) says, only if the citizens truly feel that society is leaning toward more equality – since equality renders differences pleasant.

III. Research

III.1 Research context and objectives:

This research aims to point out to the different issues relating to questions of identification French descendants of immigrants face in French society today through qualitative interview analysis. In the previous parts, the social position of this population was distinguished from that of their parents through depicting the social and political context that led to their peaceful indignation in the 1980s. The most recent political circumstances in France and in the world involving negative role-attribution and vilification of the Muslim population, furthermore contribute for an increased suspicion towards this population in particular, and therefore should also be taken into consideration. It is of great importance not to overlook this socio-political framework which furthermore proved during the interviews as one important factor that influenced these young peoples' perceptions of themselves and of French society as a whole. In addition, having elaborated on France's immigration history above, I stand to reiterate the importance of colonial history that France has maintained with the Maghreb countries as a contextual factor. There are as well, economical, demographical and psycho-sociological factors that affect this population and that relate to the representations of these young people of themselves and their place in French society. This contributes for a very vast field of subjects one could address separately. For this reason, taking into account the realistic scope of a small research project such as this one, I have decided to concentrate on discourse analysis and identifying the elements that are relevant during identity negotiation.

The goal of this research therefore, is to give the floor to this population that has been slightly overlooked in terms of qualitative research on questions of identity. The research objective is to point out the identity determinants (leading themes) that are most current in processes of self-identification, but as well in perceptions of both the society of origin of their parents and French society, and processes of (re)appropriation of values from both societies. This process is defined by Snow & Anderson (1987) as 'identity work' – necessary to create a sense of Self. Factors that influence this identity negotiation are connected to issues of power in a society, inequality, as well as the stratified nature of modern societies. Consequently, one of the

strategic aims that are of essential value to the actor is the recognition of his/her existence in the social system. (Kastersztein, 1990) Therefore, if this recognition is not accorded, or the individual does not feel it is, one might expect for this person to encounter issues dealing with identifying him/her self in the context of society in which he/she lives. This research does not address the topic from a psychological point of view (as some research until now has done – Amin 2008) – it merely has as its objective to point out the identity categories (determinants) in the discourse of this population when questioned on different subjects of their life in France. From this stems the first aim of this research – to dispel the opinion that there exists an ‘identity crisis’ which concerns the youth of the second generation as a result to the quest of stable points of reference in French society which would allow them to define themselves in relatively stable categories.

These young people grew up in a crossroad of cultures – the culture (or what was left of it) of their parents, and the one of French society. Often, in addition to the fact that they are being attributed the experience of immigration (that was never theirs), they are associated closely to the culture of their parents as *their* culture of ‘origin’ – which similarly, very few of them have truly experienced apart from short sojourns in the respective countries of origin of their parents. This memory of migration and culture of origin despite being to some extent constitutive of their identity, have become ‘imaginary’ or mainly represented through the impact of contact and ‘interaction’ dynamics between the host society, the parents and their children. (see Amin, 2005) This way, these two are fated to be transmitted through representation and the family imaginary. In this sense, children of immigrants are facing a disparity between the cultural system of their parents and that of the society in which their parents chose to establish themselves.

Recent research conducted on identification processes of this particular population until now have demonstrated that these young people don’t belong to only one of the abovementioned cultures, but to a ‘between, hybrid’ *‘entre-deux’* culture, to the intercultural. This hybrid culture furthermore comprises hybrid belonging(s) and hybrid values, which allow individuals to define both themselves and the world that surrounds them through an intercultural prism that juxtaposes the ensemble of cultural absolutes. (see Amin, 2008) Researchers on identity strategies among the second generation have suggested that this particular ‘identity negotiation’ that takes place can prove to be difficult because young people have to put in place strategies of identification

and differentiation with *both* their parents and other members of their culture of origin and those of the host society. (Kastersztein, 1990)

Furthermore, having defined identity as a dynamic category in the previous chapters, we can conclude as Camilleri suggests (2002) that identity construction is a process of negotiation between the continuity of a person during time and the adoption of representations and new experiences, which is never-ending and is ever-changing. This implies in addition, achieving a balance between representations and values – in other words, achieving compatibility between those values and representations through which the individual defines him/her self so that they merge with those which allow him/her to function in the environment. (?) Another important aspect that young people of the second-generation should manage is their self-image or self-representation – their '*image du soi*', especially in a social context where the host society attributes to a certain group characteristics that are most often depreciative and negative. (Malewska-Peyre, 2002) This way, an individual is obliged to consciously or subconsciously put in place identity strategies that would allow him/her to create a relatively stable sense of Self in the society in which he/she lives. Determining these identity strategies that have been elaborated (Camilleri et al., 2002) will not be an objective by itself in this research, however certain theoretical aspects of identity strategies will be used to interpret responses referring to different aspects of the social life and representations of young people of immigrant origin. The second objective of this research is to demonstrate the possible origin of the identity crisis through examples in the discourse of the respondents, and consider the factors contributing to it.

Finally, most substantial research on questions of identity until now focused on adolescents as a group (Ribert 2006; Amin 2008; Qribi et al., 2011), which prompted me to look into the same issue with young adults and adults.

III.2 Methodology:

I conducted seven individual interviews with young people of Maghrebi origin whom I contacted by word of mouth. The research sample consists of persons who are children of immigrants coming from Northern African countries (Maghreb – Morocco and Algeria), and who are either students (or are attending some other type of classes to obtain a qualification), either are in a working relationship, aged from 25 to 35 years old. By choosing them this way, I was hoping to address a part of the population that defies the common perception of young people from the second generation coming from the sink-estates. In addition, I was hoping to give importance to this youth with immigrant origins which is I find, underrepresented in research, especially on questions of identity and belonging. In the research sample there is no representative from the second generation descendants of Tunisian immigrants, since I encountered difficulties finding such a person through the method I used. The most common origin is however Moroccan (five interviews conducted with descendants of Moroccan immigrants) and the rest of them is Algerian (two). The shortest interview lasted 35 minutes, while the longest one – 1h25min. The interviews were recorded with a permission given by the person interviewed. I met each person individually in a place they or I suggested – most of them informal (but two interviews were conducted in the working places of two individuals during lunch break; one of which influenced the behavior of the person interviewed, as there were often people entering the room where the interview was conducted).

The interview analysis was done through content-analysis of discourse of the interviewees. The questionnaire was designed in such a way to initiate a spontaneous expression on relevant subjects affecting processes of identification. It consisted of open and semi-open questions that were not asked in any particular order, contributing for each interview to have a different flow. In addition, this contributed for a feeling of an informal discussion and rendered the atmosphere more pleasant. However, all interviews started with the same open question: ‘Tu es qui en France?’ – following the example from the theory of identity strategies employed in the study of Amin (2008) , itself based on the test ‘*Qui suis-je?*’ by Malewska-Peyre and Taboada-Leonetti. This open question proved to be ideal for starting the interview as it left enough possibilities for the person him/her self to present their own perception of themselves and allowed for free expression. This question allowed furthermore, for cultural and social

identifications to surface in the discussion. The rest of the questions were semi-open, aiming to arouse the emergence of identity indicators that will demonstrate the connection of different values such as: customs, memory, family, language, religion, friendships, etc. The interviewees were equally asked to share what they know about the immigration experience of their parents – this question at once revealed different possible directions of answering which itself showed connection to questions of memory, customs, relationship with the country of origin of their parents, economic and social context, and family relationships. The interviews were analyzed by determining the leading themes that emerged – I was looking for elements that demonstrated the different ways of relating both to France and to the country of origin of their parents. In this sense, analyzing the attitude these individuals hold for these two societies, was revealing to a great extent of their personal identifications and the way they managed the cultural duality.

In addition, an observation in this sequence which concerned the results is necessary – several interviewees upon the completion of the interview, off the record explained that what sparked up their curiosity on this subject and motivated them to accept to be interviewed was in part the fact they believed that as a foreigner, I could share a more objective, unbiased approach to these matters. Moreover, this attitude could have resulted in the interviews with a more free expression, and ultimately proved to be beneficial for the information shared, and for an overall spontaneous and non-self-censored use of terms.

Nevertheless, despite the aforementioned opinion of Sayad (2014) – that approaching questions of identity from a cultural perspective could prove as a threat to depoliticizing identity matters, most respondents evoked culture as the main variable that distinguished them from their French ‘de souche’ counterparts. Whether this is an interiorized perception reflected to them from French society is to be debated – and regardless of the fact if it is real or presumed, culture nonetheless demonstrates itself as a source of possible conflict and was often evoked by the respondents themselves as what they perceive is an obstacle to be perceived as equal members of society.

Below are presented the interviewees in a chart describing their origins, age and place of residence.

Name	Age	Origin	Parents	Occupation	Place of residence
Addi	25	Morocco	Father Moroccan, mother French	Communication officer in a company	Paris
Fatima	26	Morocco	Both Moroccan	Master 2 student in English language and literature	Paris
Naima	25	Morocco	Both Moroccan	Court clerk, apprentice	Paris
Rachida	25	Algeria	Both Algerian	Work/study training program (contrat en alternance)	Grenoble
Dalila	33	Morocco	Both Moroccan	High school teacher in a specialized high school	Paris
Soraya	35	Algeria	Both Algerian	Town hall administration officer	Lille
Sarah	25	Morocco	Both Moroccan	Master 2 student	Lille

III.3 Analysis

III.3.1 Declared identity

This first part refers to the first answers the respondents gave when the question ‘*Tu es qui en France?*’ was asked. The answers were very different, however, there can be perceived a general thematic division, confirming the different structures of defining oneself by Amin (2008), with the exclusion of one – defining oneself solely to the culture of origin of his/her parents. The four remaining structures of answering were all present, and often – two different structures of defining oneself were followed one by the other in one sentence. This proves that identity is multiple-layered, but that it is as well the result of an interaction (Kasterstein, 2002), and it is lived as a coherent and integrated unity (Manço, 1999)

- Defining one’s belonging by doing an intercultural synthesis accepting their two cultures in contact : ‘*Je me sens autant Française que Marocaine*’ (Fatima); ‘*quand je suis en France je me sens plus Française, et quand je suis au Maroc, je me sens plus Marocaine*’ (Naima) ; ‘*je suis une citoyenne comme une autre, déjà, dans un premier temps, avec la particularité d’être.. d’avoir des origines étrangères*’ (Sarah) ; ‘*Je suis Algérienne et Française*’ (Rachida). This way of defining oneself taking both references is this way taken as a whole, and not as two fragmented elements.
- Defining oneself by stating an exclusive belonging to France and the French culture: ‘*je suis Française, à part entière, parce que je suis née là*’; ‘*je suis un Français en France.. un Français.. à Paris. je suis Français de plein droit*’ accompanied by
- an identification referring to personal, professional or psychological characteristics : ‘*Jeune cadre, pas tout à fait dynamique, je cherche ma voie..*’ (Addi) ; or ‘*je suis une jeune maman, enseignante, d’origine... avec une double culture*’ (Dalila) ; ‘*Je suis une personne ouverte, qui aime beaucoup voyager*’
- an identification that puts an accent to the fact that one has immigrant origins, with immediate reference to their parents: ‘*Je suis Rachida Bouhleb, je suis la fille de Fatima et Abdelkader*’ (Rachida), ‘*Je suis Soraya déjà, c’est moi ! et puis.. la fille de Rabat et Fatima, mes parents sont arrivés tout petits en France*’ (Soraya).

On the other hand, in only one of the seven interviews there was what could have been perceived in first instance as the negation of immigrant origins: *'je suis pas un enfant né dans une famille d'immigré, qui aurait quitté le Maroc pour venir travailler en France.. mon père il n'est pas comme les immigrés, parce qu'il n'est pas venu en France pour travailler, il est venu par amour'* (Addi). This last statement represents rather a negation concept of the immigrant worker as perceived by French society than it is a negation of his origins. However, it confirms the need to distance one's self from being associated with the image of a child of immigrant parents in the context of French society.

The declared identity corresponds to the immediate conscious representation of the individual of him/her self, that is on first view more accessible in research on identity than the unconscious elements. (see Malewska-Peyre, 2002) Furthermore, identity is the result of relationships between the individual, the group and the society. Despite its dynamic nature however, Malewska-Peyre (*Ibid.*) suggests that ethnic and cultural values are inherent categories of the identity of a person, and she furthermore defines them as generally stable. This leads to the conclusion that there are some more central and stable elements of identity that are less prone to changes, and those that are more peripheral that can be more easily affected by perceptions. I focus on pointing out the general tendencies defined by family and society that constitute the whole of a person's identity.

However, a difficulty that arises when studying matters of identity is that often an identity can be unsaid *'l'identité non-dite'*, since it is evident for the persons in question and they were not challenged to put it into question. (see Ribert, 2009) – *'Je suis Français, je me suis jamais posé la question, et on a jamais remis en question le fait que j'étais Français.'* (Addi) A person can on the other hand start making formulations of their identity if he/she starts asking him/her self questions concerning their belonging and if they desire to give content to it (*identité formulée*). Ultimately, an identity can be declared (*identité proclamée*) when at a given moment one presents an image one has of him/her self as an individual or part of a collective. (*Ibid.*)

III.3.2 Symbolic ethnicity, knowledge and fidelity to origins

A declared fidelity to family origins can also have the role of a symbolic belonging and ethnicity (a concept defined in the previous chapter), an affirmation to emphasize one's loyalty to the culture of origin of their parents, as a conscious or an unconscious choice. It can, but does not have to, inspire actions to truly get to know the culture of origin of their parents, as is depicted below (sometimes it can remain only as a declarative statement). The fidelity to family origins is demonstrated mostly through the visible aspects of culture such as religious practice, an initiative to learn the native language of their parents, or taking part in associations that promote their parent's country of origin. In this sense, just as Ribert's research (2009) on the second-generation adolescents demonstrated, the connection felt with the country of origin of their parents cannot be defined as national. The connection is rather sentimental, and marking a family fidelity.

The case of Addi - who for example emphasized the reasons for which he does not see his story as that one of the 'classical immigrant child', is even more interesting as despite the rejection of the attributed 'immigrant child' identity (which in itself could have resulted with certain denial of his origins due to the distant and complicated relationship with his father) – chose nonetheless as his specialization for his Master degree – 'Monde arabe': *'Mon père me dit toujours.. il faut que tu t'intéresses au Maroc! Et c'est pour ça je pense que j'ai voulu faire un Master à l'IEP sur le monde arabe, pour m'intéresser à ces questions là, pour essayer d'apprendre.'* Addi's desire to learn about the Arabic world can be interpreted in this sense as an attempt to approach the culture of his father, to show certain fidelity. Ultimately, Addi estimated that his project was very ambitious, and decided to abandon it, which might be due to the disappointment he experienced going to Morocco the year after his study-abroad program in Lebanon. Hoping that this experience would bring him closer to the culture of his father, he didn't hide his disillusionment of not being able to feel close to the Moroccan culture: *'je me suis senti un peu plus proche, pas de la culture, mais des gens'*. Regardless of the final outcome and result of their attempts to express an understanding and fidelity to their origins, this section deals with the desire to demonstrate it.

On the other hand, often the symbolic attachment to their parent's culture of origin is in the form of only a declarative statement concerning for example the performance of religious

acts with no extensive knowledge, and implies a rather superficial understanding of the customs. In this sense, just performing religious acts such as fasting and respecting interdictions regarding food is considered to be rather part of demonstrating a certain loyalty to their origins than expressing real interest for religion. (see Tribalat, 1995) – as in the case of Fatima: *‘une fille voulait absolument savoir pourquoi on ne mange pas du porc. Et j’essayais d’expliquer si bien que je pouvais.. parce que je ne suis pas non plus.. je n’ai pas un savoir religieux extraordinaire quoi’*. Fatima was fasting as well and working during Ramadan, and in this case was describing her annoyance for having to explain to her colleague the details of religion: *‘je n’ai pas tout le savoir du monde’*. A similar logic of doing symbolic gestures to demonstrate cultural allegiance can be applied on the subject of the veil, such as in the case of Naima: *‘déjà je ne porte pas le voile [...] sauf parfois, quand je vais en mosquée, pour des occasions particulières, des mariages, ou des fêtes, voilà. Ou quand je vais au Maroc, ce qui n’est pas obligatoire, mais comme quand je vais là-bas je me sens Marocaine.’*; here fidelity is expressed in the act of wearing the veil on particular occasions, fasting during Ramadan, but she didn’t comment on her religious stance, and how she lived her religion apart from fasting and wearing the veil occasionally.

To continue, it is not uncommon for individuals of the second generation to associate rather touristic representations of the country of origin of their parents, which evokes partial and superficial knowledge, images of warm weather, good food and holidays – Rachida, who visited Algeria only once when she was eight years old, and does not speak Arabic, evokes her memories from this visit when explaining her desire to move one day to Algeria and start a life there: *‘J’en garde de très beaux souvenirs [...] du hammam ; du beau temps qu’il avait là-bas.. la nourriture [...] mais au final, je connais pas grand-chose.’* Similar images are evoked by Soraya as well, on the question whether she imagined herself moving to Algeria one day: *‘non, je ne pourrais pas vivre là-bas, pour les vacances, oui.. mais pas pour y vivre. [...] Et pourquoi pas à la retraite ?. Pourquoi pas. Profitez du soleil tous les jours, manger bien’*. Evidently, this corresponds to the distance from the reality of the country of origin of their parents – the inability to create a realistic perception of the country, despite the affirmed attachment and sometimes desire to settle there.

Symbolic ethnicity or the demonstration of belonging to a group by an increased use of ethnic symbols, 'did not herald a reversal of the processes of integration, but was rather the product of an increasingly upwardly mobile second and third generation choosing easy and intermittent ways of expressing their ethnic identity *precisely because* they were so well integrated.' (Simon, 2012) In this sense, some choose to affirm their ethnic origins by performing symbolic gestures that demonstrate cultural and/or religious belonging, and others engage in activities which, in the quest of getting closer to the reality of the culture of origin of their parents, allow them to a certain extent to break away from the guilt of growing distant from this culture, and by doing that, growing distant from their parents and their family history. Whether that group has chosen in a certain context to demonstrate an affiliation through using visible markers that would situate them in a social group (for example, the group of Muslims), by demonstrating their ethnicity through fasting during Ramadan, or wearing the veil – the intention remains the same – maintaining the memory of a history and culture, and showing loyalty, appeasing themselves and calming the cultural discord.

III.3.3 The need to (re)discover the country of origin of their parents – an unfinished search

Not all the interviewed persons demonstrated a clear desire to move or to simply go back in the search for a part of themselves in the country of origin of their parents – however, all of them emphasized they feel a need to (re)discover their origins in one way or another. For Dalila, it is only recently that she developed a need to say to herself that Morocco is her country as well: *‘J’ai envie aussi de me dire.. de me convaincre que c’est aussi mon pays,[...] j’aime me dire que j’ai un plan B.’* It is particularly interesting since one might get the impression that it is because she feels as if she no longer has a safe place in France that she resorts to finding herself a place in Morocco. This also connects in great deal to how she believes people perceive her in France – *‘Ici, en France, on me renvoie que mes valeurs, ma religion, mon mode de pensée, tout ça, ne correspond pas à la pensée globale..donc il faut bien un autre terrain, il faut bien un autre territoire, on est un peu comme les Juifs et les Palestiniens.’*(Dalila) Morocco becomes her refuge, but not quite, as she seems she can’t find her place either, not because of herself it appears from her discourse, but once again, because of how she feels that people perceive her there: *‘je me sens comment ils nous appellent nous.. une ‘ressortissante’ [...] quand j’y suis j’ai l’impression d’être étrangère comme n’importe quel touriste...’* This is the reason for which the category of (re)discovering is frequently the translation of a need to escape (most often because one does not feel at ease with how he/she is being perceived in French society), therefore in this case it is challenging to separate it from the category of perceptions – however, the category of perceptions will be discussed below more in depth; for now it suffices to mention that they are often connected, but not always.

The interviewees gave different reasons for which they would like to spend more time in the countries of origin of their parents: *‘On a besoin de savoir d’où on vient pour savoir où on va [...]j’aimerais retourner à mes racines et devenir quelqu’un en Algérie et apporter quelque chose à l’Algérie’*; *‘j’aimerais bien un jour me percevoir comme une vraie Algérienne en tant que telle, parce que justement, c’est mes origines.’*(Rachida); *‘plus*

j'avance en âge, plus j'ai l'impression que j'ai envie à retourner à des fondamentaux, ce qui est ma culture d'ori.. ce qui est ma culture, mais plus que ma culture !' (Sarah)

The desire to visit Algeria was a strong driving force in the life of Soraya, who only visited it for the first time when she was 28 years old, and since then she goes there twice a year – to visit her family, to meet her cousins and to stay in her parents' village: *'J'avais toujours ce petit besoin de découverte [...] pour ce pays.. pas d'adoption, mais qui fait partie de moi. Et quand on pose le pied sur le sol algérien, on est quand même pris par une chose qu'on peut pas expliquer.'* Soraya applied to receive the Algerian nationality, and nowadays votes in the Algerian elections as well. Even though she can't imagine starting a new life in Algeria, she reports: *'je sens que là.. c'est un besoin pour moi d'y retourner, pour retrouver mes racines, en fait.[...] et après, je sais que mon souhait serait aussi d'être enterrée en Algérie aussi'*. This indicates a profound attachment not only to the country of origin as an idea, but as well to the land, which was an exception from all the other conducted interviews. In addition, Soraya was the only one not to have reported a negative feeling from the way people in Algeria perceived her. Furthermore, Soraya was the only interviewee who insisted upon her respect of French values, and her obligation to be a responsible French citizen; she acknowledged that even though sometimes she feels discriminated: *'j'ai vécu beaucoup de discrimination meme dans mon travail! [...] je suis fonctionnaire et parfois, le public qu'on reçoit.. on me l'a dit plusieurs fois, hein ? c'est une Arabe qui nous reçoit.'*; for her it is of ultimate importance to respect France both as a state, and as a land: *'on peut pas.. à la fois, être né en France, et avoir aussi.. dès fois de la haine, envers ce pays [...] le devoir aussi du citoyen c'est son devoir.. et puis à chacun sa place ! [...]Je suis née sur le sol français, j'ai des valeurs républicaines auxquelles j'y tiens fortement, la liberté, l'égalité et la fraternité et je me sens complètement concernée par mon pays !'* This might be one of the reasons for nurturing such positive feelings and truly investing herself in the social and political life of Algeria and claiming her Algerian citizenship as well. It appears that for Soraya, not harboring feelings of marginalization and victimization in France, results with her having a more dedicated and deep relationship with Algeria as well.

A similar deep connection to the country of origin of her parents reports Sarah, when talking about Morocco: *'j'ai un attachement, c'est le cœur qui bat quand je parle du Maroc,*

je suis tout ce qui se passe ! – Sarah has been going regularly to Morocco every year since she was little and reported never to have broken the connection with the country because of the frequent visits - *‘quand je retourne là-bas, je me sens chez moi’*. However, Sarah as Dalila, mentions that one of the reasons for her desire to go and live in Morocco is to escape the atmosphere in France she finds oppressing: *‘L’environnement dans lequel on vit en France devient de plus en plus hostile [...] qu’on est obligé à toujours se justifier sur des choses qui n’ont pas lieu d’être’*. Similar is the case for Rachida: *‘je pense pas avoir de place dans la société française, compte tenu du contexte, je dirai.. anti-maghrébin [...] et j’aimerais même partir le plus vite possible quoi, je suis néé ici, mais pour moi ça veut rien dire’*.

The desire to (re)discover the country of origin of their parents was present mostly with those interviewees whose both parents visit often their country of origin and whose desire is to go back and grow old there. It could be argued that the parents might be experiencing the ‘myth of return’; however, what is transmitted to their children from this desire is but the memory of a project that disappeared, and as Desmoulin (2009) suggests it – talking about it and reliving it becomes a meeting point for communication (*un lieu de communication*) between the parents and their children. – *‘mon rêve encore aujourd’hui est d’aller s’installer en Algérie et j’en ai parlé avec mes parents.. j’ai encore aujourd’hui besoin de connaître mes origines [...] mes parents, ils essayent de me motiver, ils disent, ben c’est très bien et tout ’*. (Rachida) For Rachida, as much as she speaks with enthusiasm about discovering Algeria and starting a life there, it remains however in the domain of the imaginary, and as she puts it, a dream. Thinking of all the adjustments she believes she needs to do in order to live there, she immediately rejects the feasibility of the project: *‘la réalité c’est que si aujourd’hui je vais en Algérie et je m’installe là-bas ; il va falloir que je me marie, il va falloir que je porte le voile et que j’intègre la religion à ma vie et.. ça pour moi c’est des choses hors de question [...] donc je pense pas que c’est un projet réalisable’*. Even though Rachida’s family context is one of practicing religious parents, and she reported that her father is strict when it comes to respecting religious values and rules, one can ask whether this exaggerated perception of Algerian society that she presents, is not merely a way of justifying herself to ultimately not go there.

Addi from his part, emphasized several times that France is his only place to be: *‘si j’ai pas de place dans la société française, je n’ai place nulle part’*, and that he had no other allegiances – however, he found a certain reassurance in the knowledge that if all else fails, Morocco could still represent a home for him: *‘[La maison au Maroc] Quelque part c’est aussi une maison. Je pense que c’est une force de me dire que c’est aussi ma maison. Si j’avais envie, je pourrais venir, je pourrais débarquer là bas’*. He however, does not demonstrate a desire to visit Morocco, not even for holidays.

Language here plays an important role – in addition to making some of the interviewees feel closer to the culture of their parents, it encourages some of them to more easily imagine going back and living for a certain period in Morocco or Algeria. On the other hand, language can be an obstacle as well, for those who never spoke Arabic like Rachida or Addi: *‘c’est difficile, il faut que j’apprenne l’arabe littéraire, mais aussi le marocain, et au delà d’apprendre le marocain, d’apprendre le berbère, puisque.. 60 pourcent de ma famille ne parle que berbère!’* For Fatima on the other hand, speaking Moroccan not only does encourage her to imagine constructing a life in Morocco, it also has an influence on her feeling of belonging: *‘Quand on va au Maroc, j’aime bien le fait de pouvoir parler marocain, comme une vraie Marocaine entre guillemets [...] effectivement oui, au bout d’un moment j’oublie, j’oublie que je suis née et que j’ai grandi en France!’* Sarah for her part, finds her greatest motivation in the idea to start a life in Morocco, so she can improve her Arabic: *‘la langue arabe, c’est la langue de la religion musulmane, et la religion fait partie de moi, et c’est quelque chose qui prime. J’aimerais aller au Maroc et améliorer ces connaissances de langue’*. For her, this need connects as well with the fact that she feels as if Morocco is ‘home’: *‘quand je retourne là-bas, je me sens chez moi aussi. Donc, c’est un autre pays qui m’appartient [avec la France] entre guillemets. Entre guillemets, parce que l’appartenance, c’est un bien grand mot.’*

III.3.4 Perceptions

As the discussion moves to one of its most important categories - that of representations, it is necessary to clarify that there are some difficulties arising from the multiplicity and the grandeur of the category itself. This is so because representations are eminently connected and depend on other categories that contribute for identity formation and negotiation. It involves at the same time the relationship individuals nourish with France, which in itself may be conditioned by experiences of lived or perceived rejection, but as well discrimination - some of the interviewees reported they perceived a rejection based on their physical appearance, their name/surname or religion. In addition, the general self-perception of a person is also influenced by the relationship one has with the country of origin of their parents, dependent as well on the roles they feel they are being attributed and the discrepancy between the attributed role in any of the two societies and their self-perception. All of this makes for a very vast category in which all elements contribute to an important extent, but which is difficult to be divided into smaller categories because of the inter-dependence of them. Moreover, when analyzing the relationship interviewees have with France, several interviewees emphasized that they make a differentiation between the French state (*l'état français*, sometimes attributing it similar characteristics as when talking about French society) and France as the country (the land) to which they have emotional attachment. However, this distinction is not specified each time when interviewees reflect upon their place in French society, which might result with further complexity. Furthermore, as it was stated in the previous chapter, identity and the perception of Self are continuously developed both through the family as a social actor, and through the perception of society in general; and this is a permanent process, depending as well on changes that might take place in a society which can (re)shape the perception of a certain population in the national imaginary (such were as reported, the events of early January 2015 – after which some interviewees mentioned to have felt an aggravation in the way they were perceived in French society). From all the above, it is necessary to emphasize that 'identity is not only a product of individual feelings of belonging and attachment; it is also affected by external perceptions of identity' (Simon, 2012), so whether one is being perceived or not as French, Moroccan or

Algerian is of great importance of how these people will perceive both society and themselves in it. These different sub-categories will be discussed in the order in which they are mentioned above, starting with the relationship interviewees reported to have with France.

Firstly, for pointing out identification choices, analyzing the relationship these young people have with France proves essential. Then one goes into matters of discussing social representations and social categories – the content of these is formed by and evolves through social interaction. Whether these are positive or negative - depends on the relationships between the social groups during the process of social interaction. (see Amin, 2008) The relationship maintained with France differed for each person – sometimes, there was a feeling of being rejected (whether this feeling of rejection is real or presupposed, it ultimately does not determine the internal conflicts they might face), and sometimes interviewees affirm their connection and loyalty to the French values.

The feeling of rejection was often connected to a feeling of inadequacy to be accepted as they are in French society – the image of compartments they feel like they are assigned to in French society was common: *‘Je me sens marginalisée à cause de.. L’état.. par ses lois.. si tu ne rentres pas dans une case, tu as du mal à parcourir le chemin que l’état a imaginé pour toi’* ; *‘quand on me demande mes origines j’ai l’impression qu’on me pose la question justement juste pour me mettre mieux dans la case et m’assigner,’*. *‘Si tu ne rentres pas dans le moule, tu n’auras pas de droit à toutes ces choses là [diplômes, de l’aide pour avancer dans le monde professionnel] ; ‘On est quand même assignés à des rôles, je trouve ; en tant qu’enfant d’immigrés, et dès que tu sors de ce rôle là, tu sens que tu gênes un peu quand même’*.

Furthermore, their name and physical appearance were sometimes depicted as elements that ‘betrayed’ their origins in society, and each person who suggested this dealt with it in different ways. Dalila for example, reports her refusal to comply with certain rules in the school where she teaches – on the question whether she feels like she fits in her working environment, she answers: *‘tu as vu la tête des profs, tu as vue la mienne (she laughs) est-ce qu’on se ressemble?’* ; this statement at once implied her feeling of being marginalized in the school where she works because of her beliefs, specifically laïcité (a subject discussed previously in the interview), but as well because of her looks. Dalila has been a teacher for

more than five years and changed several Parisian schools, and reported to have had more than a few times problems and heated discussions with the management of the schools where she was teaching: *'chaque année quand je vais dans un nouvel établissement, on m'envoie une inspectrice [...] c'est parce qu'effectivement, je ne corresponds pas au modèle typique de prof, d'enseignante'*. Dalila dealt with this feeling of being marginalized sometimes in a violent way, quitting her job, and changing schools, whereas Addi took another approach. He decided to be creative and to take pride in his origins when applying for universities, being conscious that both his name and last name will indicate them. He chose an original way of presenting himself: *'dans ma lettre de motivation à l'époque, j'avais mis .. et je l'avais assumé, parce que de toute manière je ne pouvais pas me cacher, 'né au confins de montagnes de l'Ardèche et des montagnes berbères'* but as well mentions that luckily, apart from his name that 'betrays' him, *:'je me suis dit : Je m'appelle Addi Harrak et je ne changerai pas mon nom pour vous.'*, he takes his looks from his mother, who is French: *'Tu peux te dire, il y a un truc, mais.. je pourrais très bien être.. Bosnienne, ou, Portugais'*. This suggestion of Addi's in return might imply that in the French context, he considers that having Bosnian or Portuguese origins is less frowned upon. In addition, it didn't seem that Addi was rejecting or denying his father's origins, nor did he report that he ever felt discriminated against or excluded – however, he did seem relieved that his origins are not as apparent physically.

Naima as well makes the comparison between her name and her looks, but contrary to Addi – while her name does not suggest directly the fact that she might have Maghrebi origins, her looks do: *'notre nom de famille [...] c'est pas le nom vraiment typé quoi. [...] mais quand ils te voient toute de suite ils comprennent. Et là, il y a quelque chose qui est.. changée, dans le regard.'* Whereas Addi's and Naima's statements do not suggest the ways in which their perception of themselves is influenced, Rachida internalizes it: *'La seule chose qui me fait me sentir algérienne c'est ... mon prénom, mon nom, .. et.. mon apparence physique quoi, mes cheveux, ma couleur de peau'*. Rachida doesn't report any attachment to France as a country, nor as a territory, but as she finds it unrealistic to find refuge in Algeria as well, she ultimately contents to conclude: *'Je suis Algérienne et Française mais sans être ni l'un ni l'autre., [...] je peux pas dire j'ai telles origines.. et les reconnaître ou j'ai telle nationalité et puis la mettre en valeur comme ça.. je suis.. citoyenne du monde.* (she laughs)

je préfère me percevoir comme ça, c'est beaucoup moins compliqué.' This way of dealing with her internal conflict, for Rachida, does not erase however the discomfort she feels nonetheless as a young woman with Algerian parents in France: *'moi je la considère [cette perception] comme un attentat à mes origines et à mon droit d'être en France,'* – but as she reports to feel displaced in French society and feels no particular belonging to France, she also feels different than other young French people with no immigrant origins: *'J'ai peut-être moins de raisons d'être là qu'eux'*, and finally, concludes that if France cannot become her country, then Algeria has to play that role. That way, the refusal of membership to the national community she feels in France, obliges her to look for other points of reference.

Some respondents when analyzing their relationship to France made the distinction between the French State and France as a country – in this sense, the process of categorization and the feeling of uneasiness experienced, often stemmed from their perception of the State and how they perceived its attitude towards the youth of the second generation. France as a country however, and the importance of the French land in other words, was identified as 'home'. *'Moi j'ai pas un problème avec la France, moi j'aime la France. J'aime la France, j'aime ce pays où je suis née'*; *'La maison reste la France.. et ma France !'*; *'moi je suis née en France, et ça compte énormément pour moi, la France !'*. Despite the reported feelings of discrimination and exclusion due to the fact they are perceived as 'immigrant children', most of the interviewees nonetheless mentioned to have ignored those statements and to have 'risen above the situation', as greater feelings of respect were evoked as reverence for the republican values, and love for the French land: *'j'estime que je suis intégrée, fin je respecte les lois de la République, je respecte la société, je respecte tout le monde [...] et si être Français et patriote c'est se maquiller en bleu blanc rouge le soir du foot, je suis désolée, je ne suis pas Française, point. Si tu veux dire que je suis pas Française, je n'ai strictement rien à faire'*. In addition, the need to distance themselves from being associated with the immigration of their parents was common as previously mentioned, but it appears that it is rather the term *'issus de l'immigration'* that some refuse to accept: *'Le terme me gêne même si c'est une réalité ! quand ça va cesser ça ? [...] mes parents sont aussi d'immigration, hors moi, je suis Française, à part entière !'*.

Addi, while recognising the fact that his father is Moroccan, cannot seem to define himself even as part Moroccan: *'si on me dit.. t'es pas Français, ça peut pas.. ça peut pas coller en moi, parce que je suis rien d'autre à côté [...] de fait, de droit, je suis Français'*.

A reason often evoked by the interviewees which explains according to them the fact that they are considered in French society as a population with difficulties to integrate is religion. Several mentioned that somehow the immigration of their parents was different than the Polish or Italian ones – and Islam was, they thought what set them apart in a negative way from the other young people with different immigrant origins. Regardless of the way each interviewee lived his/her religion, whether they declared themselves as purely spiritual and not practicing, or mentioned the importance of practicing Islam in their life, they all noted they are aware of being perceived as Muslims in France, and for those who don't practice Islam, this was an obstacle. Dalila, even though she declared she did not experience herself as a Muslim, reported not to approve of the French system of *laïcité*: *'je suis contre la laïcité [...] Je suis contre le deni d'identité au profit d'une culture qui voudrait.. bannir la religion des signes.'* On the other hand, for Soraya it is possible to be both a practicing Muslim and live accordingly to respect the republican values: *'Moi, ma religion, je la vis très bien. Parce que je respecte les valeurs du pays dans lequel je vis [...] il faut respecter là où on est'*.

An additional difficulty which young adults of the second generation face in the process of negotiating stable references for the feeling of Self, is the perception of themselves they are being reflected when they visit the country of origin of their parents. This is a common element discussed in studies on identity strategies that influences undoubtedly the ability to relate to the country of their parents, but as well to develop a sense of having a place in that society. There are different ways of dealing with the internal conflict of being 'rejected membership' in both countries of reference that sometimes can result with a crisis of belonging. This group of interviewees (with the exception of Rachida as she hasn't had the opportunity to go to Algeria as an adult), all reported that despite the prejudice and discomfort they sometimes feel when visiting Morocco and Algeria respectively, but as well in France, they nonetheless have a strong feeling of belonging to these countries, most accurately depicted in the following statement: *'je pense que nous ; toutes nos vies on sera dans ce déchirement [...] on va se retrouver face à des entre guillemets 'vrais Maghrébins' qui vont nous dire vous êtes pas des vrais Maghrébins ; et face à des vrais entre guillemets*

Français qui vont nous dire, vous êtes pas des vrais Français [...] mais moi je me sens Française et Marocaine et point. Sometimes, they make an effort of blending in, such is the case of Naima, that often doesn't have the desired result: *'Même si devant eux j'essaie de faire des efforts pour m'habiller comme eux [...] Il y a quelque chose qui me trahit, quelque chose dans les manières, dans des regards, dans la façon de marcher dans la rue,*' – which demonstrates a clear will to be accepted as a full Moroccan citizen, and a disappointment this isn't the case.

Furthermore, the notion of 'real' French and 'real' Moroccan or Algerian was repeated in different interviews, as if to establish a distinction between themselves and on one hand the rest of the French population that doesn't have immigrant origins and on the other hand, the people from their parent's countries who never left. There were not real conflicts with any of the two populations, despite a feeling of sometimes being perceived as a tourist, or an immigrant in Algeria or Morocco. However, regardless of reporting a hope to move to Morocco and feeling a strong need to come back to her roots and economically investing there, Dalila challenges the perception Moroccans who live in Morocco have of her: *'des fois ; pour les agacer un petit peu, à la douane, je leur présente mon passeport français [...] ils disent: t'es la fille de qui ? tu es Marocaine, tu devrais avoir un passeport Marocain [...] tu dois être Marocaine, administrativement.. mais socialement, on est pas considérés comme eux, on est des citoyens de seconde zone Marocains.'* The other interviewees seemed to have accepted with resignation the role they were being attributed in Morocco and Algeria, and integrated it in their image of themselves, without challenging it. Nonetheless, the sometimes negative perceptions reflected to them in Morocco or Algeria did not interfere with their feeling of belonging to these countries, as they still mentioned the importance of nurturing this relationship.

III.3.5 Conclusion

Hybrid /double culture

Ultimately, we can conclude that despite the many different social contexts of the interviewees, and the visible diverse identity negotiation and identity strategies they were obliged to put into place to achieve a balanced perception of themselves; the majority appeared to accept both cultures using an integrative approach, without denying their origins, nor their feeling of belonging to the French national community. Reasons and desire to visit Algeria and Morocco differed for each interviewee, and this depended on their family contexts mainly, however there weren't any interviewees mentioning negative feelings for these countries.

The interviewees often evoked the positive aspects of coming or being of two cultures – they attributed their open spirit, their natural curiosity of other cultures and ability to adapt easily to the fact they had what they called a ‘double culture’ – *‘le fait d’avoir en plus des origines.. […]moi en tout cas, je l’ai vécu positivement, ce qui fait que ça permet d’avoir.. une ouverture d’esprit, de l’intérêt pour des gens qui viennent d’ailleurs.’* In addition, some took pride and declared it a privilege to be of two cultures, but as well mentioned that they made the choice to willingly accept and integrate both cultures as constitutive elements in themselves: *‘quand tu es d’une double culture, tu es obligé de fait d’être plus ouvert culturellement, et de vouloir en apprendre sur les deux’*

Contrary to the study of Amin (2008) on the role of the feeling of exclusion and social perceptions of adolescents with Maghrebi origins - where there was a regression to the identity of origin caused by negative perceptions in French society, the interviewees of this study showed predominantly the willingness to remain active actors in French society, and demonstrated as well as an adhesion to French republican values. Interviewees emphasized at the same time their strong attachment to the country of origin of their parents. Fatima depicts this impression to some extent: *‘j’ai un attachement sentimental au Maroc.. j’ai un attachement à la France aussi ! je suis très attaché à là où je suis née ; où j’ai grandi, toutes ces belles personnes Françaises que j’ai rencontrées,’* – this is the case as well for Fatima, Sarah and Naima : *‘ la France est mon pays, j’aime la France ! je suis fière d’être née là,*

mais je suis aussi très attachée à l'Algérie'; 'j'ai mes origines qui sont là [en Algérie] et la double culture, la langue je la parle très bien et j'en suis fière parce que c'est un plus tout cela'. ; 'quoi qu'on dise, quoi qu'on fasse, voilà, on est de deux cultures. Mais quand je reviens dans le nord je me sens chez moi, quand je retourne là-bas, je me sens chez moi aussi.'

This general attitude indicated the complementary nature of the hybrid identity – consisted of two seemingly polar cultural opposites. For this particular group of interviewees, the attachments to both countries were not perceived as an obstacle and were not in contradiction; they were thought to be rather a privilege and served as stable references. It would be useful to conduct similar research with a greater number of interviewees of the same sample group to verify if the implications made in this study correspond to a larger tendency. By using the hypothesis that effective integration has indeed taken place in the cultural universe of this particular group, and by placing the focus on the different ways these adults lived their multiple allegiances, a new avenue of possible research opened – one where difficulties of integration, cultural disparities and an identity crisis do not set the framework of similar studies.

In up-to-date studies (Amin 2008, Ribert 1995, 2005) which have examined adolescent population it appears that young people manifested clear difficulties in achieving a balance doing identity work. In contrast, this research on adults shows more coherent ways of living one's own plural belongings. Most interviewees did not feel the need to 'choose' between their belongings, they demonstrated a rather stable reference to both countries, and appeared to have separated to a certain extent their feeling of attachment to a country from the possible negative perceptions they might be reflected in any of them. In this sense, this qualitative study indicates the identity determinants for adults of the second generation, and suggests focus points for future research, where plural belongings would not be analyzed from a contentious standpoint. Similar future studies on identity patterns and strategies of this population could furthermore contribute for taking a different viewpoint on matters of integration, anti-discrimination and anti-exclusion policies.

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