

**NORTH-AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN FRANCE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF
SECOND GENERATION FRENCH WRITERS OF
MAGHREBIAN ORIGIN**

Dr. Walter Hugh Parker
Assistant Professor in French,
Faculty of Engineering and
Technology,
SRM University, Bharathi Salai,
Ramapuram, Chennai – 600089

Abstract

Till the 1970s, the majority of people immigrating to France were North-Africans, mainly Maghrebians from the three countries of Central Maghreb, namely Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. It was during this time that tension first began to rise between Muslims, specifically the Arab-French population of maghrebian origin and the native French people, in France. This research paper primarily focuses on maghrebian immigration in France in general, and gives a brief description of the major events which gave rise to the conflict between the two above mentioned populations. This conflict worsened and overtook the second generation of these immigrants, leading to questions about the success of the French assimilation model. An important question in the context of this research paper would be: what makes the later generations of these immigrants different from their predecessors? To answer this question, it is important to go back in time and analyze the background of these immigrants. The silence of the first generation was broken by a few from among the later generations, who chose to write, thus creating a new migrant 'franco-maghrebian' literature. Therefore, what follows in the later part of this paper is a brief history of the origins of a few noteworthy writers, belonging to the second generation of maghrebian immigrants in France.

Keywords: *Francophone, Arab-Maghreb, Beur, Immigration, history, literature.*

Introduction

As part of the French colonial empire, North-Africans began to immigrate to France since the First World War. After the Maghreb countries, namely Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, gained independence, more and more North-Africans flocked to France, attracted by its booming postwar economy from the 1940s until the 1970s. These emigrant workers turned out to be an advantage for the French economy because they took the manual work jobs that most French citizens did not want and moreover, these emigrant workers spoke fluent French (so there was no language barrier). Most of the workers were happy because they found more job opportunities in France than in their own native countries.

The 1970s marked the end of the economic boom in France¹, and the beginning of visibility for immigrants in France. So, this period is critical to understand the challenges of Maghrebian immigrants facing confrontational integration in the French Republican model. It is argued that assimilation has partially failed because of the dual sense of identity that has emerged from these immigrants. Racism, Islam and France's colonial legacy play a role in determining the identities of these immigrants, as well as the influence of the 'native' French attitude.

Maghrebian immigrants in France and the Franco-Maghrebian Conflict

The Evian agreements of 1962² contributed to the economic prosperity in France because it took into account the free movement of people between France and Algeria (Pervillé 2003). In a few cases, these 'new' immigrants have lived in France for decades. During the period of France's growth, these North-Africans were 'invisible', but when the oil crisis erupted in 1973³, and unemployment became rampant throughout France, these immigrants suddenly became 'visible' and as a result, 'undesirable' to the French.

In 1974, rent strikes were held by a group of immigrants against 'SONACOTRA'⁴, as they were frustrated by French policies established to deal with them and, especially with their

¹ 1974-1980: The 30 year post-war economic boom known as the 'Thirty glorious years' ended, as France entered a prolonged economic crisis. Growth slowed down rapidly in 1975. The President of the Republic, Giscard d'Estaing imposed unpopular and rigorous measures to stop incipient inflation and unemployment. A major nuclear power program was designed to save on energy imports.

² The Evian Agreements include a treaty that was signed in 1962 in Évian-les-Bains, France by France and F.L.N. (Front of National Liberation). The Agreements put an end to the Algerian War with a formal cease-fire proclaimed on March 19th and formalized the idea of cooperative exchange between the two countries. The final agreement was 93 pages long and dealt with several issues. The central question was the acceptance that the majority of Muslims in Algeria would form a sovereign state. Citizens, defined as 'French' would have a period of 3 years of protection, after they should choose Algerian citizenship, or stay in Algeria as foreigners. Algerian workers in France were allowed to stay there and immigration from Algeria to France to continue.

³ The first wave of the international economic slowdown was brought on by the dramatic rise in oil prices driven by the Arab countries, major oil producers of OPEC. OPEC is an abbreviation for 'Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries'. It is a permanent intergovernmental organization of 12 oil-exporting developing countries that coordinates and unifies the oil policies of its member countries. Cf. www.opec.org/opec_web/en

⁴ 'SONACONTRA' (National Housing Construction Company for Workers) is a national organization that organizes, builds or buys housing for the poor including immigrants and temporarily unemployed people. On

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living conditions (Samek 2010: 11). Strikes would continue to be a popular route for immigrants to express their frustrations, although they tend to be problematic for the economy of France. During the summer of 1981 in Lyon, North-African immigrants looted, stole cars and carried out other stunts to frighten the public and otherwise disturb the peace.

In 1989, three Muslim girls were banned from school because they insisted on wearing the Islamic headscarf, or the 'hijab'⁵. This issue became the first in a series of incidents called the 'affair of the headscarves' by the French (Samek 2010: 12). Popular urban riots erupted in March 2005 on the outskirts of most major cities across France, which represented a major upheaval for French society. These immigrants went to the streets and burned cars, among other things, to protest against the poor housing given to them in the suburbs.

In the 1980s, the 'SOS Racisme'⁶ and 'France Plus'⁷ groups participated in the 'March for Equality and Against Racism' (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 26). During this entire historical period, the various associations created by Maghreb immigrants contributed to the affairs that disrupted French society.

Today, France has a significant Muslim minority population with many immigrants from former French colonies in North Africa. With immigrants from North Africa, France also welcomed sub-Saharan Africans, Turks and Eastern Europeans.

"According to the Institut National d'Études Démographiques⁸, in 2007 there were 7,877 new immigrants from Eastern Europe compared to 83,606 from Africa (By year, nationality, and continent, 2009). The Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques⁹ gives more specific data by country. In 2003, there were 28,554 new immigrants from Algeria, 22,339 from Morocco, and 9,425 from Tunisia, bringing the North African total to 60,318 (Flux d'immigration permanente par motif). There were also 8,613 entrants from Turkey and 26,923 immigrants from non-Maghrebi Africa." (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 27)

The BBC online channel estimated that in 2004 there were between nineteen thousand two hundred, sixty-four and six million Muslims living in France, which included approximately

January 23, 2007, the organization changed its name to 'Adoma'. *Ad* comes from Latin and means 'to' and *domus* means 'home'.

⁵ The word 'hijab' comes from the Arabic language and means 'veil'. It is used to describe scarves worn by Muslim women. The most commonly worn type in the West is a square scarf that covers the head and neck, but leaves the face clear.

⁶ 'SOS Racisme' is a French organization created in 1984 to fight against racism.

⁷ 'France Plus' which is presently called 'La Mutuelle de France Plus', is an organization that guarantees access to care for all without selection, without discrimination, without medical questionnaire, without exclusion whatever the age, the state of health or the level of income. It contributes to the social protection of populations throughout life.

⁸ The National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED) has, as its main mandate, the study of the national and international demographic situation and its evolutions. The vocation of the Institute is multidisciplinary. His areas of expertise cover both the study of demographic phenomena proper - nuptiality, fertility, mortality, migration - and demography applied to social life, the economy, public health, human geography, the history, etc. Cf. www.ined.fr/fr/institut/presentation_ined/

⁹ The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) collects, produces, analyzes and disseminates information on the French economy and society.

8% of the total population (Muslims in Europe 2005). France currently has the largest Muslim minority in Europe in terms of percentage of total population:

“The French Muslim population is the largest in Western Europe. About 70% have their heritage in former North African colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. France favours integration and many Muslims are citizens. Nevertheless, the growth of the community has challenged the French ideal of strict separation of religion and public life. There has been criticism that Muslims face high unemployment and often live in poor suburbs. A ban on religious symbols in public schools provoked a major national row as it was widely regarded as being a ban on the Islamic headscarf. Late 2005 saw widespread and prolonged rioting among mainly immigrant communities across France.” (Muslims in Europe 2005)

In 2006, Laurence and Vaisse¹⁰ estimated that France had five million people of Muslim origin, with a total of 61 million people living there (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 27). Over time, the number of immigrants from North Africa has systematically grown, as the percentage of immigrants composing the total population of France. While the numbers vary enormously according to the definitions of terms such as 'immigrant' and if indeed the estimates of illegal immigrants are included, the consensus seems to be that the rapid growth of the 1970s and the 1980s has slowed to some extent.

“While the persistent influx of North African immigrants may be viewed as purely negative in nature, the reality is that immigration does play an important demographic role in France as in several other European states like the UK and Germany. In the years to come, low birth rates amongst those of European descent will cause population growth to stagnate or become negative. France will continue to require some immigration for its economy, but to a lesser extent than other European states because of its comparatively higher birth rate.” (Muslims in Europe 2005)

Since immigrants tend to have higher birth rates, and help the population of Europe to grow, thus facilitating economic growth too. The French seem to believe, as indicated by public opinion and protests, that immigration threatens their very identity. The fact that so many immigrants are Muslims has been one of the most difficult issues, as it tends to contradict the French notion of 'secularism'.

“In truth, it is not easy to provide a satisfactory definition of secularity, although several definitions already exist. Of course, it can be said that it consists in the separation of the state and religion or in the neutrality of the state in religious affairs.” (Barbier 1995: 88-89)

Due to the fundamental differences in religion, culture and other characteristics, Maghrebian migrants have more difficulty assimilating into French society than other groups of immigrants, such as Eastern Europeans. As a result of immigration, Islam has now become the

¹⁰ Jonathan Laurence, Associate Professor of Political Science at Boston College, researches and writes about European politics, transatlantic relations, and Islam in the West. Justin VAÏSSE is a French historian, who is currently the Director of Personnel Policy Planning at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They published together *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*, a book named "2007 Outstanding Academic title" by the American Library Association, and subsequently translated into French. Cf. www.brookings.edu/experts/laurencej; <http://www.brookings.edu/experts/vaissej>

second most prominent religion in France, which means that it will only continue to be a problem in the future. The conflict between Islam and the secular French state fuelled two conflicts that are fundamental to a discussion of immigration in France: the problems of the suburbs and the affair of headscarves.

The suburbs are often overloaded and tormented by “a mix of everyday violence, gang-type social systems, an indigenous code of conduct and honour, the assertion of ‘masculine’ identity, and an emphasis on territoriality.” (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 36)

The issue of the suburbs is linked to the headscarves affair. The headscarf ban affects less than 2,000 young women in France today, but is yet another reminder of the struggle between Muslim immigrants and secularism. Many of them choosing full coverage are second generation immigrants or new converts to Islam.

Immigration to France also has a fundamental economic component. Immigration is often stimulated by the demand that the economy has for labour, and when this demand cannot be fulfilled by native workers, the need for immigration increases significantly. Without enough population to fill the jobs required, the French economy could not support stable growth. This unfortunate situation is a common feature of many economies in Europe, which is a result of being highly developed and having a home population that is reluctant to perform certain jobs. Immigrants are often more than willing to accept unwanted employment, as the discovery of any job at all is highly advantageous to them.

Second generation French writers of Maghrebian origin – worlds of experience

The population movements in which Arab-Maghrebian writers have their geographical and historical origins can be traced back to the colonial period, when North-Africans first began immigrating to France. For many decades, these men have been overwhelmed by immigrants of European descent, but the balance began to change after the Second World War. In 1946, Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians included less than 3 percent of the immigrant community in France. By contrast, in the 1982 census, the figure was close to 40 per cent. Algerians are now the largest single national group among the foreign population in France (The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies 1994).

Initially, almost all North Africans came to France on a temporary basis. They are workers whose families have remained in their country of origin, to which the breadwinners returned after a few years. Since the 1950s, however, an increasing number has been joined by their families, and has become more settled in France. The relatively high birth rate in these families, within a generation, has transformed the North-African immigrant community. Dominated in the past almost exclusively by workers, this community is today characterized by a very high proportion of young people of both sexes. Most first-generation immigrants were illiterate when they left their homeland, and their mastery of the written French language remains unstable to this day. On the other hand, the children they raised in France all went to school naturally, learning to read and write. Here lie the seeds from which a new generation of writers has emerged.

In a majority of cases, first generation immigrants were unskilled workers occupying the lowest ranks in French society, as indeed they did in their home country. They came mainly from rural areas, most notably Kabylia, a mountainous region east of Algiers. Unable to endure a life there, they sought employment in the industries extending from metropolitan France. What they

found was invariably the dirtiest, the most dangerous and the least well paid jobs – the ones the French themselves did not want to do¹¹.

The family origins of some of the writers whose novels are included and not included in this paper reflect broad historical trends. Most of the selected novels are written by Algerian authors because of the absence of a large number of works by Moroccan and Tunisian authors. The following parts of this paper include a few excerpts from the book, *Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction - Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France*, written by Alec Hargreaves, which is one of the few narratives on the history of these second generation French writers of Maghrebian origin in France known as the 'Beurs'.

'Beur' is a name popularly given to the sons and daughters of immigrants from North Africa, especially the three countries of the Maghreb¹², Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Messaoudi 2004). A longer established label is that of 'second generation immigrants'. Adopted as a self-designation by young North Africans in the suburbs of Paris in the 1970s, the 'beur' neologism made its first appearance in the public domain in 1981, with the creation of another media born in this milieu, namely 'Radio Beur'. Young people from immigrant backgrounds who adopted this name sought to get rid of the pejorative connotations that the word 'Arab' had permeated during the colonization of the Maghreb by France. Relayed from 1983 by the big media, the word 'beur' quickly entered the current language of the French. Then began talk about a 'beur literature', a 'beur cinema', and more generally about a 'beur culture'.

"In France, most of the commercially published Beur writers are without exception of Algerian descent. As the settlement of Moroccans and Tunisians was a relatively recent phenomenon in the 90s, their children were not yet sufficiently matured to have produced a comparable body of work." (Hargreaves 1997: 11)

Several writers of 'beur literature' may trace ancestors behind the early stages of the North-African presence in France. A great-uncle of Mehdi Lallaoui, for example, was among the Algerians enlisted in the French armed forces during the First World War. Lallaoui's maternal grandfather, born in Kabylia in 1904, spent much of his life working at a glass factory in Levallois, a suburb northwest of Paris, where he died of lung cancer in 1947 (Hargreaves 1997: 11).

Abdelkader Lallaoui, Mehdi's father, first worked in France during the 1930s and did forced labor for the Germans during the Occupation. After the war, he returned to Algeria and got married. His wife Zohra remained in the homeland when he returned across the Mediterranean again in search of work. Abdelkader spent several years in France alone, making occasional visits to his family, when he could afford it. At the time when he decided to bring

¹¹ The best example can be found on the following page - Kamal Zemouri's father.

¹² The Maghreb, an Arabic word meaning 'where the sun goes down' or the West, whose equivalent in French is 'Le Couchant' as opposed to the Machreq meaning 'where the sun rises' or 'Le Levant', is a region strictly comprising, until 1989, the three states of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia colonized by France before the formation of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in the year over unifying five countries - Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania to the far west, and Libya to the far east of North Africa, under a common market, and under what is currently known as the Maghreb region. Since my study focuses only on the immigrant population of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and when I refer to the term 'Maghreb' in this paper, it only means the three countries mentioned above, known as the 'Little Maghreb' or 'Central Maghreb'.

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them to France in 1955, three sons had already been born in Algeria. A fourth son was born shortly after their arrival. Their fifth son, Mehdi, was born in Argenteuil, not far from Levallois in 1957. And six more children followed. They were supported by what their father won on the assembly line of the 'Simca' car factory in Poissy, further west and later in a metalworking company in Argenteuil (Hargreaves 1997: 12).

The oldest author's father, Kamal Zemouri, left his village in Kabylia during the 1920s. He initially worked at a coking plant and later helped to find the railroad track in the Marseille region. Exceptionally, during the period, he was joined in France by his wife. They settled in Saint-Denis, another industrial suburb just north of Paris and had three children. The youngest of them, Kamal, was born there in 1941. Kamal's father was employed for a short time in a sewage treatment plant. His last job was at a silver mill, which his family blamed for the cancer that killed him in 1961 (Hargreaves 1997: 12).

Jean-Luc Yacine's father, Saïd, is also from Kabylia. He was just fourteen when he arrived in the north of France with his own father in 1932. The pair of them worked in the coal mines there. Saïd had a period in the French army in World War II, at the end of which he married a French woman, Madeleine Istace and settled in Arras. Jean-Luc, the third of their six children was born in Arras in 1950 (Hargreaves 1997: 12).

Another Franco-maghrebian writer who must be mentioned in this paper, Ahmed Kalouaz, is the son of Abdelkader Kalouaz, who left his house near Oran, Northwest Algeria, to join the French army in 1937. After his service in World War II, Abdelkader returned to Algeria in 1945. Like Lallaoui's father, he married there and returned to France to find a job, visiting his wife, Yamina when the money he earned as a miner near Grenoble permitted it. A few months after the birth of their second child, Ahmed, in the city of Arzew in 1952, Abdelkader brought the family to France, where nine more children were born. Ahmed's father moved from mines to work as a laborer on hydroelectric dam sites near Grenoble, and his professional life ended at a plastics factory there (Hargreaves 1997: 12).

Until the 1950s, very few immigrant workers brought their women and children with them from North Africa. When Algeria's War of Independence broke out in 1954, there were only 6,000 families of Algerian descent in France. Among them were the families of five Franco-maghrebian writers: Ahmed Kalouaz (*Point kilomètre 190*), Kamal Zemouri (*Le Jardin de l'Intrus*), Jean-Luc Yacine (*L'Escargot*), Akli Tadjer (*Les A.N.I. du « Tassili »*) and Hocine Touabti (*L'Amour quand meme*, the first Beur novel). Zemouri's parents were one of the few Algerian couples to settle in France during the inter-war period. The marriage of Saïd Yacine to a French woman in 1944 was one such event which was rare at the time. Akli Tadjer's parents moved to Paris shortly after the war. Akli, the fourth of their seven children was born in 1954. Hocine Touabti was born near Sétif, a town just south of Kabylia, in 1949. Together with his two older brothers, he was brought to France a few months later His birth. Two little sisters were born after the family settled in the industrial town of Saint-Chamond, not far from Saint-Etienne (Hargreaves 1997: 12).

A wave of Algerian families settled in France during the Algerian Independence War, bringing the total from 6,000 from its beginning to 30,000 when the conflict ended in 1962. Among them were the families of nine perpetrators: Azouz Begag (*Le Gone du Chaâba*), Farida Belghoul (*Georgette!*), Sakinna Boukhedenna (*Journal. 'Nationalité : immigré(e)'*), Tassadit Imache (*Une fille sans histoire*), Bouzid Kara (*La Marche. Traversée de la France profonde*),

Mohammed Kenzi (*La menthe Sauvage*), Nacer Kettane (*Le Sourire de Brahim*), Mehdi Lallaoui (*Les Beurs de Seine*) and Mustapha Raïth (*Palpitations intra-muros*). Azouz Begag's father, Bouzid Begag, left the village of El-Ouricia, near Sétif, in 1949 to work on construction sites in the Lyon area. It was not until 1955 that his wife and children left Algeria to join him in France. Azouz, the fifth of seven children was born in Lyon in 1957(Hargreaves 1997: 13).

The movements of Mehdi Lallaoui's family, which have already been described, followed a similar pattern, except that they settled in the Paris area. The family of Nacer Kettane followed almost an identical route. Nacer was born in the village of Kebouche in Kabyle in 1953. The boy's father had worked in Paris since the end of the Second World War (during which he had been a French army conscript); the family that eventually counted ten children, joined him there in 1958.

Similarly Mohammed Kenzi was eight when in 1960, he and his mother left the village where he was born near Maghnia (where Mehdi Charef, author of *Le thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed*, was also born), a small town in northwestern Algeria with a long history of emigration, to join the boy's father in Nanterre (Hargreaves 1997: 13). Farida Belghoul's father, Brahim, first came to France in 1947, returning to his native Kabylia four years later. After his marriage in 1953, he emigrated again and was joined in Paris by his wife a year or two later. Farida, the first of their five children, was born in 1958. Tassadit Imache, the daughter of a mixed marriage contracted early in the Algerian War, was born in Argenteuil in 1958. Her Kabylia father and French mother met while working at nearby factories (Hargreaves 1997: 13).

Sakinna Boukhedenna was born in Mulhouse, Eastern France, in 1959. All but one of her six older brothers and sisters had been born before the family left Kabylia; two older children were born later in Mulhouse. Mustapha Raïth, the sixth in a family of thirteen children, was born further north, in Hautmont, in 1960. Raïth's father had left the village of Aïn-Bessem, on the edge of Kabylia, on the eve of the war from Algeria, and was joined in France by his wife soon after. Bouzid Kara was born in a small village near Constantine in northeastern Algeria in 1958. Since his father was a Harki, the family fled to France with the appearance of Algerian independence in 1962. They settled near Aix-en-Provence, where a total of nine children were eventually raised(Hargreaves 1997: 13).

Family emigration from North Africa accelerated further after 1962, but most of the children were of course still too young even at the end of the 20th century to have begun to write seriously. Only two of the writers mentioned in this paper are families who have settled in Europe since that date. Mehdi Charef, who was born in Maghnia in 1952, came to France in 1963. Leila Houari, the eldest of seven children, was born in Casablanca in 1958. Her family moved from Morocco to Belgium in 1965(Hargreaves 1997: 14).

While these writers belong mainly to the very first wave of 'family' immigration, the circumstances of their education and their formative years make them similar to the typical writers of the always-blooming generations of the 1980s and 90s. The families of almost all these writers have their origins in rural areas, and the majority from Kabylia, which was the most important region for Algerian emigration in general. Most of its inhabitants are 'Berbers' (Hargreaves 1997: 14), in short, the northern descendants of the original native population of Africa, before the arrival of the Arabs in the seventh century. In Kabylia, the Berber language is still predominant.

One observation, in particular, that has been studied here, with regard to the writers, is that of Leila Houari, which is unusual in this context, due to the fact that she was born in a large North African city, Casablanca. Her father was the son of a wealthy and educated landowner in the city of Guercif in northeastern Morocco. Her origins are, in this respect, not typical of other writers. But family disputes led Houari's father to emigrate in order to earn a living doing odd jobs in Brussels, where the living conditions of his family corresponded to those of the immigrant community in general. His children were ridden in typically detailed reporting parts of the city inhabited by large numbers of foreign workers and their families.

Research findings and conclusion

Although the focus is on the Maghreb in particular, in this paper, any Arab-Muslim immigrant can be included in this context, in terms of their identity and the perception of North-African Muslim youth in France, due to parallel colonial histories, and racial and cultural stereotypes that extend to all Arabs, without distinguishing their country of origin. This analysis is based on part of the history of France with Algeria, but extends to almost all people of Arab-Muslim origin in France today. This research paper has focused predominantly on the second generation descending from migration and colonial history with North Africa, in particular the three countries Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.

“Many of the ‘second generation’ children have French nationality, if these young people are born in France. They benefit from the double right of the soil from their birth if they were born in the metropolitan territory, for parents born in Algeria, before January 1st, 1963, meaning in any of the French states; for the others, they enter into the common law of the nationality code, modified by the ‘Guigou’ law of 1998 and acquire French nationality at the age of eighteen in France, in the years preceding their majority. They can even have this option at the age of thirteen, if they already meet the conditions of five years of uninterrupted stay in France. But they also have Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan nationality because Muslim countries grant nationality by descent. Only the children of the Harkis (whose population, parents and children included is estimated at half a million), have only French nationality because their parents, auxiliaries of the French army during the war of Algeria had to opt for the nationality if they had been repatriated between 1962 and 1967.” (Wihtol De Wenden 1983: 71-72)

But many of them have never migrated or experienced the status of foreigners. Since the census of 1968, it is no longer possible to know the religion of the population, which makes it even more difficult to know the religion of the ‘second generation’. Only in the naturalization statistics, the approach has been largely defused since the Algerian crisis of the 1990s and the absence of massive returns allow for some evaluations. These are:

“[...] for those who, born foreigners, became French by naturalization, marriage or reinstatement in French nationality (a procedure limited to those, whose ancestors already had French nationality, which was far from the case for all ‘colonial Algerian natives’, which has been abolished for West Africa since the Pasqua-Méhaignerie Act of 1993). Thus, in the 1999 census, 208,000 Algerians had become French by acquisition: this is the nationality most concerned for the three Maghreb countries, also because of the increase in mixed marriages among them.” (Wihtol De Wenden 1983: 71-72)

However, the second and third generations are still stigmatized in French society and deal with the imposed identity of being an ‘Other’ and a foreigner, and often face the issues of poverty, unemployment and racism inherited from their immigrant parents or grandparents. The question usually asked is: those of us born in France, how can we talk about integration? We are French: we do not need to integrate. So France must not forget her children.

Those who were born in France (most likely without citizenship as part of the second generation) or immigrated as small children, only have memories of France as their native country, but they face the much stronger stigmas in France as foreigners, at the same time that they are not considered as part of the country from which they came. Moreover, they are not automatically citizens of France and must deal with the legal and cultural ramifications of being a foreigner without the legal rights and privileges of French citizens. They do not belong anywhere. Finally, those who come as adults or teenagers never fully assimilate and struggle between an identity rooted in their native culture, language and history and the desire to become a part of their new country.

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Bio-Note

Dr. Walter Hugh Parker has a Doctorate in French from Pondicherry University, India. His area of specialization is Francophone literature, in particular migrant literature, and literary works in French by writers of Maghrebian origin. His Ph.D. thesis titled, ‘*La crise de l’identité et l’exclusion sociale chez les Beurs – Étude thématique à travers une sélection de romans beur*’ in French is a thematic study of identity crisis and social exclusion in ‘Beur’ literature, which is French writing by second generation authors of Maghrebian origin. His major research interest is on the identity of second and third generation children, born of Maghrebian immigrants in France, their literature, culture, language, and other modes of expression, by which they make themselves visible. His other research interests include the identity and ethnicity of the Anglo-Indian community in India and abroad. He is currently an Assistant professor in French in SRM University, Ramapuram at Chennai, and can be reached at walterhp4@gmail.com.