

INTRODUCTION



Why This Question?

FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF, France, like the United States, has been a major country for immigration. And as in the United States, France's citizenship policies have been largely shaped by the principle of *jus soli*, or birthright citizenship (Noiriel 1988). France has received wave after wave of immigrants from eastern Europe, Italy, and the Iberian peninsula. Since World War II, France has also received immigrants from Algeria, soon followed by immigrants from other countries of the Maghreb and the rest of Africa, not to mention immigrants from Southeast Asia. In 1999, the number of people in France with an immigrant background was estimated at 13.5 million: 4.3 million immigrants, 5.5 million children of immigrants, and 3.6 million grandchildren of immigrants. These people make up 23 percent of the total population of metropolitan France.*

Immigration in France comes mostly from southern Europe. This includes 5.2 million individuals (2.6 million from Italy, 1.5 million from Spain, and 1.1 million from Portugal), or 40 percent of the total population of France that has some kind of immigrant background. Of people in France with an immigrant background, 13.4 percent, or 1.8 million, trace their origins to other countries of the European Union (typically Belgium). The most diverse category includes the

* [This term is used to describe the French territories that are in Europe, including the nation of France and the island of Corsica.]

2.5 million individuals (18.6 percent) related to older periods of Polish and Russian immigration and a more recent trend of immigration from Asia and the former Yugoslavia. Immigrants of Turkish origin in France number 322,000 people (2.4 percent), and 679,000 have origins in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, “those with a Maghrebin immigrant background belonging to the three generations studied here make up only about 3 million people, or 22 percent of the total population with an immigrant background” (Tribalat 2004a, p. 67).

Today the integration of these populations with an immigrant background is under debate. In an environment of international terrorism, or even (as some would say) a clash of civilizations, in which the republican model of France is under strain and tensions are building between ethnic, racial, and religious groups, France* is questioning its ability to restructure the social contract and create the “daily plebiscite” that Ernest Renan described as French citizenship. The days seem long ago when France, in the enthusiasm of the 1998 World Cup, boasted of its pluralism. These questions are not new: some were saying as early as the 1930s that the Italians were too different to be capable of integration and that they were coming to take the jobs of the “ethnic French.”† Today this stigma now targets a different population: those who immigrated or are the descendants of immigrants from the Maghreb, other countries of Africa, and Turkey. The following assumptions are commonly made about this population:

They are Muslim. “*This population (some think) wants ‘to Islamicize French society.’*” Yet its relationship to religion in general and to Islam in particular has never been explored.

* [Throughout this translation, the term “France” is occasionally used where the more precise term “*Hexagone*” (hexagon, the six-sided landmass between Spain and Germany, as opposed to the entire Republic of France, which includes overseas territories) may be used in the original text. Where “*Hexagone*” is important for understanding what specific territories the authors refer to, it is replaced with the English “Hexagon.”]

† [The term “*Français de souche*,” while common in French parlance, is not neutral. Its exact definition may depend on the context, but it generally suggests that there is such a thing as an indigenous French person, as distinct from, say, a great-grandchild of Algerian immigrants. There is sometimes a racial connotation (white), a religious connotation (Catholic or indifferent to religion), and/or an “ethnic” connotation (which may be someone of European ancestry in some contexts or someone with no retained family history of immigration in others).]

They are conservative. *“This population’s values are opposed to the liberalization of morals. They maintain that women ought to be in a subordinate role in a society (France) where equality of the sexes is recognized by everyone and where discrimination between men and women no longer exists.”* Not a single systematic study, however, examines whether the majority of individuals who make up this population with African and Turkish backgrounds agrees with the conservative opinions defended by some Muslim organizations.

They are *communautaire*. *“Communautaire, or becoming so, this population pulls itself away from the rest of society. It sometimes goes so far as to develop an ‘ethnic’ political program, with electoral slates like Euro-Palestine and the creation of the Muslim Party of France.”* What do we know, however, of this population’s relationship to politics? What do we know of these people’s political preferences? How many of these “New French” feel more Maghrebin, or more Muslim, than French? Yet again, we do not have reliable data.

They are poor. *“This population benefits from the French social support system and is in France only to ‘get a hand on government cash.’”* And yet the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies showed in a recent study¹ that the social situation of immigrants and their children is changing: their level of education is increasing, the number of manual laborers is decreasing, and they want to “make it on their own.”² Their values are not, perhaps, those that are ascribed to them. We still lack crucial empirical data on their values.

What to say, finally, of the children of immigrants, born in France and therefore French, whose parents and grandparents (or perhaps only some of their ancestors) come from abroad? Do they share the

¹ For a summary, see Tawan 2005.

² The story of Aziz Senni, who became a corporate manager despite the geographic, social, and ethnic discrimination he experienced, can be cited as an example (Senni and Pitte 2005).

same values as their ancestors? Do they have the same relationship to religion, to politics? How do they manage their double culture?

THIS STUDY is essential if we wish to respond to all these questions. We surrounded ourselves with a team from CEVIPOF,* including in its ranks some of the best specialists on political sociology, value systems, and religious affairs. We did not limit ourselves to examining naturalized immigrants but also included the children and grandchildren of Maghrebin, African, and Turkish immigration—a first in such French immigration studies. We refer to this population as the *New French*: all French citizens, these individuals have either immigrated from these three regions or are the descendants (children and grandchildren) of at least one immigrant from the Maghreb, other countries of Africa, or Turkey. The multiple dimensions of this study and the diversity of opinions examined and questions asked are without comparison among the fragmentary data that already existed. Our study makes it possible to evaluate French debates on subjects as diverse as *communautarisme* and integration, the connection between religion and *laïcité*, and the relationships those with immigrant backgrounds have with politics and other minorities. Finally, rather than start from the “principle” (which has no other foundation than current media consensus) that this New French population is a priori different, we chose to systematically compare it with a survey of the overall French population. We are thus painting a *double portrait, that of French citizens who immigrated from the Maghreb, Africa, and Turkey, as well as the children and grandchildren of at least one immigrant from those regions; but also that of French society in general, with all its desires, apprehensions, and questions, on the eve of May 29, 2005.*

Survey studies on the New French certainly exist, whether they focus on immigrants, the descendants of immigrants, or Muslims, but these studies are far from methodologically satisfying: they include significant selection bias and sometimes unjustified premises (Kaltenbach and Tribalat 2002; Dargent 2003), not to mention their small sample size. For the first time, we have created a representative survey

* [The Political Research Center at the Institute for the Study of Politics (l’Institut d’Études Politiques), also known as Sciences Po.]

(1,003 respondents) of this population with French nationality (which Michèle Tribalat estimates at 1.2 million individuals). It was not easy: close to 28,000 people were contacted throughout metropolitan France so we could create a representative sample. It is also the first survey study that draws on the scholarship of *A History of Families** to determine the quotas that are necessary to create representative samples.³ Throughout this book, the survey of the population we describe as the New French is referred to as RAPFI survey,[†] and the survey that represents the whole of France is referred to as the “mirror” or “control group” survey.

THE APPROACH taken by preexisting surveys was anything but systematic: the New French were questioned only on certain issues (the funding of mosques, the wearing of the veil‡ at school, the creation of private Muslim schools, or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). That was not the goal of our project. Of course, we polled on these questions, but we did the same for the mirror sample. Most important, our study includes traditional CEVIPOF survey indicators on social and political opinions, value systems, and social issues—questions for which the New French have never been surveyed.

Thanks to this study, we can give a voice to the “silent” majority, go beyond the spokespeople and leaders of various organizations, and understand this population in all its diversity. This also allows the widening of university research, which, often for lack of funding, has not been able to go beyond interview data or the studies of elites who either immigrated or are the descendants of immigrants. Our study is part of this essential accumulation of knowledge begun by researchers

* [See the appendix, note 2.]

† [This term comes from the original title of the project, *Rapport au politique des Français issus de l’immigration*, or “Attitudes toward politics of the French stemming from immigration.”]

‡ [The term *voile*, or “veil,” is regularly used in French to describe the square of fabric worn by some Muslim women to cover the hair (to various degrees) and may be pinned under the throat. The Arabic term is *hijab* (which also connotes “modest dress” in general), or *higab* in Egyptian Arabic; it is also regularly referred to as a *foulard*, or “scarf,” in France.]

³ For more details on the survey, see the appendix on methodology at the end of the book.

such as Vincent Geisser on elites, Camile Hamidi on social mobilization, and Gilles Kepel, Rémy Leveau, and Jocelyne Césari on Islam.⁴ It is finally possible to improve our understanding of France in all its diversity. We would have liked to extend this study to all of France's contemporary migrant groups, but with a survey of 1,000 people, that would not have made much sense. We have not abandoned the possibility of realizing this project in the future. All the same, as the reader will see, it will be necessary to repeat this study to better understand the social and political dynamics at work among the New French.

THE RELATIONSHIP to *citizenship* is the primary interest of our research. This is clearly a multifaceted phenomenon. We examine its political dimensions: political integration, political orientation, and evaluation of governmental policies. But our research cannot ignore the effect of nonpolitical variables that give sense to, for example, religious affiliations and practice, sociopolitical values, education level, or socio-professional status.

This study includes three categories of French people with immigrant backgrounds: *immigrants who became French, French citizens born to immigrant parents, and French citizens who have at least one immigrant grandparent*. While the polemics that surround choices of terminology take on a sometimes disproportionate importance, the sense of the words used must be specified.

The category of "immigrants" includes "individuals who came to France when they had a foreign nationality, whatever their age when they arrived in France."⁵ We use the word "immigrant" only in this sense. We are aware, however, that this term has a larger meaning in our society and sometimes includes the children of immigrants. We took this definitional inconsistency into account in the construction of our questionnaire. We keep the term's complexity in mind in our analyses in order to consider the extensive definition associated with the term "immigrant." Our research limits our investigation in two

⁴ See Geisser 1997; Hamidi 2002; Leveau and Kepel 1988; and Césari 2004.

⁵ See Tribalat 2004a, p. 57, and Richard 2004, p. 5: "The use of the term 'immigrant' in reference solely to those people who were originally citizens of a first country and then resided permanently in a second country where they were not born is largely accepted today in France and within the francophone scientific community."

ways: first, geographically—it includes only those with Turkish or African immigrant backgrounds; and second, legally—only those who have become French are taken into account.

Our study not only concerns immigrants from Turkey and Africa who have become French but also examines more widely the French citizen population of (Turkish and African) foreign or immigrant origin. According to Michèle Tribalat (2004a, p. 54), the “population of foreign origin” is the “population composed of immigrants and people born in France with at least one immigrant parent or grandparent.”* In sum, the study concerns French adults of African or Turkish origin, that is to say, the 18-year-old and older French population composed of African and Turkish immigrants who have become French by naturalization *and* the French born in France to at least one immigrant parent or grandparent from Africa or Turkey.

In order to refer to this population, we use several expressions interchangeably: African and Turkish, the New French, the RAPFI population. A reading of the work of J.-L. Richard (2004) on the fates of youths with an immigrant background reassures us that we have made a good choice. He explains in particular that “to speak of ‘young generations with an immigrant origin’ is convenient and conceptually precise due to its reference to international migration.” All the same, it is important to remember that the “origin” in question is not always a geographic one, but often solely cultural or familial. The term “Franco-Algerian,” then, does not indicate for us “French people with a personal or familial history of immigration from Algeria,” but rather refers exclusively to those people who have dual nationality between France and Algeria. The Algerian origin of a French citizen does not at all justify designating him or her Algerian; it is actually legally inaccurate.

Finally, one last semantic note: applying the term “generation” to French people with a personal or familial history of immigration opens

* [Thus, for example, the term “*d’origine Algérienne*” may be translated here as “of Algerian origin” or “with an Algerian background.” Both have the broader connotation of immigrants and their descendants, not just true immigrants (in the pure, legal sense). The “background” phrase is occasionally used by the translator for its more obvious breadth in English (where “origins” might be confused, even after Tribalat’s explanation, with the smaller population of true immigrants) and less foreign sound.]

the door to confusion and prejudice. In demography, a generation is in fact a cohort, that is to say, a group of individuals born in the same year. Applied to politics, the definition changes little and rests on the common historical experiences of an age group (Percheron 1993). What does the expression “first generation” signify when applied to our subject? In the sense of demography, it could mean the oldest immigrants. If we shift the sense somewhat, it could mean the first immigrants who arrived in France. Or if we shift the sense slightly differently, “generation” could be synonymous with “immigrant,” and the term could indicate the first generation of a family to live in France. But the term “first generation” is sometimes applied to those people born in France as well. In this sense of the term, the “first generation” is composed of the children of people who have themselves immigrated to France. The confusion surrounding the definition of the first generation naturally passes on to the second generation. If defined according to when the family arrived in France, the second generation could be the first generation born in France, and the second generation born in France corresponds then to the third generation that has lived in France. Our choice, somewhat subjective, was to keep the fundamental analytical category that of the immigrant, and to complement it by distinguishing the children of immigrants by “generations” according to birth measures in France. The first generation encompasses all the children born in France to immigrant parents. The second generation consists of the grandchildren (born in France) of immigrants, and are thus the children of the first generation of French people descended from immigrants.

ARE THEY as French as everyone else? To be properly answered, this question breaks apart into multiple areas of inquiry: the relationship to religion, integration into the French political system, the relationship to the economy, lifestyles, racism and anti-Semitism, opinions on integration, and identity. At the end of this exploration, we draw conclusions concerning the degree of similarity between the New French and the French population as a whole.