"L'ÉTERNEL IMMIGRÉ": IDENTITY AND RADICALISM IN FRANCE SINCE 1962

BY

BRENT MATTHEW ROSENSTEIN

THESIS

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Master's Committee:

    Professor Jean-Philippe Mathy
    Dr. Matthew Rosenstein

Abstract

Following the March 2012 terror attacks carried out by Mohammed Merah, a former friend of his placed more blame on French society for Merah's radicalization than on any external force. This thesis attempts to address that claim by examining the identity crisis in France and its relationship to both Islamist and far-right radicalism. It argues that the lingering legacies of the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) have contributed greatly to the current identity crisis in France, especially with regards to the North African and Muslim communities, as well as the far-right. The political and social issues stemming from this crisis create an environment that is conducive to radicalization in terms of both Islamist and far-right extremism.

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Introduction

In the middle of March 2012, the southern French cities of Toulouse and Montauban were enveloped in a sense of terror. In the space of little over a week, a lone gunman had launched a series of three attacks, killing seven people. The victims of the first two attacks were French soldiers, two of whom were Muslims, and the third was of African descent. The third attack claimed the lives of a teacher and three young children outside of a Jewish school in Toulouse. Initially, he only obvious connection between these horrid strikes was the killer's method. He rode up to his targets on a motorcycle, gunned them down, and sped away. He made no statements after the attacks, and issued no demands.

A few days after the last attack, the gunman was finally identified. His name was Mohammed Merah, a twenty-three year old French citizen of Algerian descent. The police proceeded to surround his apartment, and, over the course of a thirty-hour siege, Merah took credit for the shootings and revealed his motivations. Claiming to have been trained by al Qaeda, he declared that he had selected his targets to protest French military involvement in the Middle East, Israeli settlements in Palestine, and France's 2004 "Veil Ban". On March 22, the siege ended with Merah being killed in a final shootout with the police.

In the aftermath of these tragic events, many questions began to arise that extended beyond the attacks themselves. Why did a young man, born in France, turn against his country so viciously? What motivated him to cut short so many lives in such a brutal way? Perhaps the most troubling response to these questions came from France's

Algerian community itself. One of Merah's former childhood friends, Faoud, told

reporters:

> Our passports may say that we are French, but we don't feel French because we were never accepted here. No one can excuse what he did, but he is a product of French society, of the feeling that he had no hope and nothing to lose. It was not Al Qaeda that created Mohammed Merah. It was France.[1]

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The first time I read Faoud's statement, it honestly stopped me cold. I had to

immediately re-read it a few times, not necessarily for the sake of comprehension, but

because it was just so striking. It is often tempting to blame the radicalization of

disaffected people like Merah on hostile external influences, such as al Qaeda. This is the

more comfortable approach, as it is easier to stop external influences than internal ones.

However, it is essential to explore the possibility that internal factors can play a much

greater role in the process of radicalization. As it turns out, in some cases, Faoud is right.

France's struggles with identity and multiculturalism are no secret, nor are they a

new issue. However, the intensity of the disagreements on these topics and their

centrality in French politics has increased dramatically in the last few decades. Increasing

levels of immigration from France's former colonies following the Second World War,

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[1] Scott Sayare and Steven Erlanger, "4 Killed at Jewish School in Southwestern France," *The New York Times*, March 19, 2012, sec. World / Europe, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/20/world/europe/gunman-kills-3-at-a-jewish-school-in-france.html; The Associated Press, "France: Gunman Kills 2 Soldiers," *The New York Times*, March 16, 2012, sec. World / Europe, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/16/world/europe/france-gunman-kills-2-soldiers.html; Scott Sayare, "French Slaying Suspect Dead After Police Raid Hideout," *The New York Times*, March 22, 2012, sec. World / Europe, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/world/europe/mohammed-merah-toulouse-shooting-suspect-french-police-standoff.html; Dan Bilefsky, "Toulouse Killer's Path a Bitter Puzzle," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2012, sec. World / Europe, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/world/europe/toulouse-killers-path-a-bitter-puzzle.html.

and the socio-political ramifications of the Algerian War of Independence, have fueled a crisis of identity, of who can truly claim to be "French".

One cannot hope to even begin to understand the nature of France's identity crisis without considering the roots of the conflict. In many ways, the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) laid the foundations for France's current identity issues. The all around brutality of the war resulted in the extreme "Othering" of Algerians, and more generally North Africans and Muslims, in French eyes, to the extent their cultures are still perceived by some as being completely incompatible with French society. The loss of Algeria also served as a significant blow to France's already crumbling imperial pride, a factor that weighed heavily on many politicians, intellectuals, and military personnel. This loss, combined with the Othering of North Africans, also established the framework for the eventual return of the far-right to popular politics, something that had not really been possible since the fall of the Vichy regime at the end of the Second World War. The presence of extremist factions on both sides of the war also left an unfortunate legacy of violent radicalism tied to the conflict, further polarizing both sides.

Arising from this legacy, the identity crisis, in its current state, is serving to make many French citizens feel disaffected with the current state of affairs. Many Muslims and French people of African descent have come to feel alienated from French society at large. This is the result of both social and political issues, such as the question of whether or not their ethnicity and religion can be truly reconciled with French identity, as well as more economic issues, like the persistent ethnic penalty they face when attempting to enter the labor market. Similarly, those on the far-right have over time come to perceive immigrants and minority groups as a distinct threat to French identity and values.

However, while the far-right used to feel similarly ostracized from French society in general, it has in the last thirty years come to use the issues of identity and immigration to pull itself into the "mainstream", reaffirming its own "Frenchness" while further exasperating the identity crisis as a whole. The resultant shift towards the right in French politics has contributed to what is perhaps the most dangerous result of France's identity issues. Namely, the environment produced by the identity crisis actually aligns quite neatly with many of the factors and situations that have been determined to be conducive towards radicalization. In this way, Faoud's sentiment is correct – the primary elements that draw people towards radicalism (including a sense of alienation, threatened values, and a search for acceptance and community) are predominantly the result of French society and the French identity crisis, and much less by external factors.

The issues of identity in France are very complex, and there are of course more sides and parties involved, and the interactions between these various groups extend far beyond those discussed in this thesis. However, due to the size of this project, exploring the entire breadth of the identity crisis would be impractical, so it was essential to narrow my focus. As such I have chosen to base my analysis primarily around French Muslims, with an emphasis on those of North African origins, and the more secular far-right, currently led by the Front National (FN). I selected the former out of interest in the Merah case, and the latter because of their focus on the issues of immigration and identity.

<u>A Note on Terminology</u>

With topics as complicated and nuanced as the identity crisis and radicalism, terminology can be rather problematic. Thus, it is important to lay out some working definitions, if only for the sake of clarity. For this project, the term "Algerian", when referring to people in France rather than Algeria, will mean people of Algerian descent in France, and not the French settlers and citizens who lived in Algeria, who will be referred to as the pieds-noir. The term "immigrant" will be used fairly broadly, generally referring to any persons who have immigrated to France, and, for the sake of simplicity, to their descendants as well (e.g. second-generation immigrant). The French word "immigré" will only be used when drawing a distinction between the harkis and other Algerians who moved to France. "Harki" will be used primarily to refer to those Algerians who served in the French military and police forces as auxiliaries, as will be described in more depth in Chapter 1.

When I mention the French "far-right", I will be referring to the largely secular faction of the far-right, as exemplified by the Front National. Classifying the more "mainstream" segment of the French political spectrum is rather more difficult. To keep things simple and clear, I will use the term "moderates" to describe this broad swathe of society, roughly meaning the groups around the center-right and center-left of the political spectrum.

The terms associated with radicalism are also quite problematic, as the topic is highly politicized and carries a lot baggage with it. This makes it all the more important to attempt to establish some relatively neutral working definitions of these terms. "Radicalism" will be used to identify ideologies that can be seen to promote hatred and

possibly incite violence against other political, religious, or ethnic groups. "Islamism" will refer specifically to movements which endorse the use of violence to either promote a more radical version of Islam, or strike out at people and organizations that they perceive to be oppressing or waging a war against the Islamic faith.

Historiography

Issues of identity in France have been widely discussed and analyzed for many years, and so there is a tremendously rich historiography on the topic. The same can also be said with regards to the Algerian War's impact on French society and politics. As such, I will try to focus here on the works that focus primarily on the War's relationship with questions of identity and radicalism. This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive exploration of the literature, as that would be a significant project unto itself, but merely a selection of some good examples of prominent trends in the scholarship.

In his 2001 book *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria*, James D. Le Sueuer argues that the Algerian War has played a fundamental role in the formation of French identity. He says that "[The Algerian War of Independence] […] either forged new notions of identity and nationalism in Europe and North Africa or forced a reconsideration of old ones."[1] Overall, he makes a convincing argument that the conflict's legacy drew people in both France and Algeria into a sort of existential crisis, scrambling to redefine who they were. Le Sueur also rightly points out the extreme level of "Othering" on both sides that resulted from the War, and the considerable impact that this has had on the discourse on identity ever since.[2] The primary downside to Le Sueur's work is that it is focused on the reactions of intellectuals to these socio-political issues. While this is not a bad thing in itself, it does have the

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[1] James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 1.
[2] Ibid., 214.

unfortunate side effect of leaving out how average citizens may have responded. To his

credit, though, he does make a distinction between the concept of "Otherness" as used in

a formal academic setting, and how it was used in popular discourse.[3]

Lizabeth Zack's "Who Fought the Algerian War? Political Identity and Conflict

in French-Ruled Algeria" concurs with Le Sueur's assessment of the Algerian War's

importance, saying that it "made a profound imprint" on both French and Algerian

societies that lasts until this day. However, Zack also notes that despite the wide variety

of approaches that scholars have used to analyze the war, there has been relatively little

attention paid to the actual identities of those who fought in the war. She argues that

overtime, both the historical narrative and the political discourse have simplified the

conflict into simply being "French" versus "Algerian", even though the reality is much

more nuanced and complicated. She also contends that this trend is contributing to a

certain amount of selective memory within the historiography.[4] I do think that she makes

a good point in general, although the questions of the identities of the fighters are starting

to be examined more closely, especially as more attention is being brought to the harkis,

who have been historically underrepresented in the literature.

While much has been written about the harkis' role in the war, much less has been

done to explore what happened to those who were repatriated to France afterwards until

relatively recently. Within the last few years, the topic has begun to shift into focus much

more. A good example of this is Vincent Crapanzano's 2010 article "The Wound That

Never Heals", which explores the lasting anguish that has been caused by the harkis'

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[3] Ibid., 215.

[4] Lizabeth Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War? Political Identity and Conflict in French-Ruled Algeria," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 16, no. 1 (October 1, 2002): 56–7, 91–2.

reputation, and, more importantly, the pain resulting from their own cultural memory of the past. He argues that the harkis themselves came to internalize a deep-seated fear of betrayal and abandonment due to their treatment after the end of the war and before their repatriation to France. Being left largely at the mercy of their former enemies in the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) and its brutal reprisals, many of the harkis adopted a stoic demeanor to deal with the experience, which has contributed to the historical and cultural silence surrounding their stories.[5] This is a very interesting point that does not really seem to have been explored outside of works written by the harkis' children. Most scholarly efforts to address this topic, such as Rosella Spina's *Enfants de harkis et enfants d'émigrés: parcours croisés et identités à recoudre*, have primarily focused on the harkis' descendants and their attempts to integrate into French society. The struggles of the harkis themselves is still largely unexplored due to the aforementioned cultural silence, but it could prove to be a fascinating field for further study.

The scholarship has also widely recognized the important role that the Algerian War played in the far-right's eventual return to prominence. In their similarly named *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present* and *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen*, Peter Davies and J.G. Shields, respectively, have emphasized that the war's cross-party support temporarily pulled the far-right in from the fringe, and arguably laid the groundwork for its major resurgence under the Front National.[6] This is a good point that I think would be rather difficult to contest.

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[5] Vincent Crapanzano, "The Wound That Never Heals," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 30 (January 1, 2010): 57–8, 75.

[6] Peter Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present: From De Maistre to Le Pen* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 123–8; James Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 90–3.

Moving to the identity politics themselves, most scholars examining the topic, especially from outside of France, tend to cling to the universalist[7] aspect of French identity. For instance, in her book entitled *The Politics of the Veil*, Joan Wallach Scott seems to hold up universalism as one of the key factors blocking Muslim integration in France, serving as a convenient shield to cover up discriminatory acts by the French government.[8] While she does make some good points, and her argument is convincing overall, her bias against the law and its proponents is very evident, and so some of it must be taken with caution.

Similarly, Tricia Keaton's article "Arrogant Assimilationism: National Identity Politics and African-Origin Muslim Girls in the Other France" portrays the ideal of universalism as being in conflict with the realities of ethnic and racial discrimination faced by French immigrant youths. The conflict, she argues, does not even necessarily have to arise from any activism on the youths' parts, but can come merely from their presence within the French school system, where their difference in appearance, culture, etc. can be interpreted as a threat to more traditional notions of French identity.[9] This is a very interesting take on the topic, but one that makes a very important point. Despite whatever was originally intended by the idea of universalism with regards to French identity, it can at times be used as an excuse for rejection of anything that does not

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[7] The details of French universalism, and its relation to identity, will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

[8] Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 65–9, 105.

[9] Trica Keaton, "Arrogant Assimilationism: National Identity Politics and African-Origin Muslim Girls in the Other France," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 407.

conform to one's conception of what it means to be "French", especially when ethnic or religious factors are involved.

The study of radicalism and radicalization is a much younger field, relatively speaking. A seminal work in this regard is Marc Sageman's *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Built off of a series of interviews with Islamist radicals, Sageman's book provides a fascinating insight into how Muslims living in Europe and other Western countries get pulled into radical ideologies. He finds that in many cases, questions of identity and belonging play key roles in the radicalization process, as extremist groups offer acceptance and a sense of community that these individuals felt was denied to them by the societies in which they were living.[10] Sageman makes a very compelling argument that these sentiments are truly central tools for extremist recruiters.

This is reinforced by a very similar study entitled *Early Intervention with Violent and Racist Youth Groups*, conducted by Tore Bjørgo and Yngve Carlsson. Examining what draws young people in Scandinavian countries towards far-right extremism, they find that issues of identity and belonging play just as important of a role for extreme-right groups as they do for Islamist groups.[11] Again, as their arguments are based off of interviews with members of radical organizations, their findings are quite convincing.

The major gap in the historiography of these topics that really stuck out to me is that, despite all the discussions of identity in France, and all the evidence suggesting that issues of identity can play a central role in radicalization, there have not been any efforts

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[10] Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 65–8, 105.
[11] Tore Bjørgo and Yngve Carlsson, *Early Intervention with Violent and Racist Youth Groups* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2005), 21.

that I have seen to examine the relationship between these fields in an in-depth, specific

context, like that of contemporary France. As such, I feel that this study can make a

significant new contribution to the narrative on these topics.

Chapter One: The Legacy of the Algerian War

While it is true that all post-colonial relationships tend to be complicated and sensitive, the history of interactions between France and Algeria has been particularly bitter. In many ways, this can be attributed to the lasting legacy of the Algerian War of Independence, which was waged from 1954 to 1962. Though it was primarily a struggle for Algerian self-governance, it was also a very metaphysical conflict in the sense that its greatest legacy was arguably much more symbolic. As scholars have noted, the war ended up being just as much about identity – who could and could not call themselves "French" or "Algerian" – as it was about who governed Algeria.[1] As such, to fully understand the intricacies of current identity politics in France, it is necessary to look at the repercussions of the Algerian War, and the impact that it left upon the French national psyche. The perceived importance of Algeria raised tensions surrounding the issue considerably, pushing people on both sides of the debate to extremes. This struggle left the Algerian community in France strongly divided, and somewhat resentful of their treatment by the French state. The war also took its toll on the government of the French Republic, leading to the collapse of the Fourth Republic. From this, though, the Fifth Republic emerged, stronger and more able to draw the conflict to a peaceful resolution. By contrast, the issue of Algerian independence served to resurrect the French extreme right, and set the stage for its resurgence two decades later. The war also had the calamitous effect of tying many aspects of the conflict to radical extremism, setting a precedent for future violence.

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[1] Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, 1–3; Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?," 56.

<u>The Importance of Algeria</u>

The thought of losing Algeria was a difficult concept for many in France to palate, for a variety of reasons. One of the most prominent may be that Algeria was much more than just another colony. After being formally annexed by France in 1830, Algeria was governed by the French Interior Ministry, not as a colonial asset.[2] It really was seen as being part of France itself, not some far-flung imperial holding. Algeria's proximity to France likely played some role in this, but perhaps not as much as one might think. Morocco and Tunisia, both bordering Algeria, had opened self-governance talks with France during the 1950's, and both achieved independence in 1956, while the Algerian War was still escalating.[3] The fact that Algeria's calls for independence were met with a military crackdown instead of negotiations shows that there was something more at play.

It has been argued that the initial resistance to Algerian autonomy, and the subsequent brutality of the conflict, stemmed from the painful loss of Indochina, which also occurred in 1954. Such sentiments may have been exacerbated by the superficial similarities between the two wars, with Algeria presenting "a replica of Indo-China in confronting the French army with a mission to subdue forces implacably bent on national liberation."[4] While the situation was undoubtedly more complex than this, such reasoning may indeed have played a role in strengthening the resolve to retain control of Algeria, especially amongst military officers and those with more conservative political leanings.

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[2] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 90.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present*, 123; Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 91.

That is not to say, however, that this idea appealed only to those on the right

wing. Many people across the political spectrum were opposed to Algerian independence,

especially in the early years of the war. For instance, then Minister of the Interior

François Mitterand, who would go on to become France's foremost leftist leader, said in

1954 that "Algeria is France. And France will recognize no authority in Algeria other

than her own."[5] Likewise, many moderate intellectuals, both left and right leaning, were

tremendously reluctant to believe that the Algerian people did not want to remain French,

a position that did not soften until the harsh realities of the conflict became better

known.[6] That such a broad swathe of the political spectrum was unwilling to accept the

idea of relinquishing Algeria further reinforces the idea that it was something of a special

case, that it meant more than France's other colonies. Sadly, this early dedication to

retaining control led to a tremendous amount of violence and hardships, which would

color French and Algerian relations up to today.

<div align="center">Repercussions for Algerians in France</div>

Perhaps the most immediate and polarizing aspect of the war for Algerians living

in France was the rift between those often referred to as immigrés, or regular immigrants,

and the harkis. Originally, the harkis were groups of civilian militias that ended up

becoming auxiliary units in the French army. Many possible reasons have been discussed

for their willingness to fight alongside the French. As Jacques Duquesne summarized,

they may have been driven by:

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[5] Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, 28.
[6] Ibid., 17.

The will to remain tied to France, perhaps. Or the pay, which was not insignificant. Or the trust put on a man, a French NCO exercising responsibilities in the region. Or the certainty that the army, better equipped, would end up overcoming the rag-tag resistance of the FLN. Or the fear of being executed by them because they gave up, under torture, the names of their brothers and that they had, consequently, gone to the other camp, 'flipped'. Or even by local rivalries.[7]

In short, the reasons were as varied as the individuals themselves. While some criticism could be directed to the more mercenary *harkis* only in it for the money, it is difficult not to feel some sympathy for those who fought for the French because they truly felt that they were doing the right thing, or who only sought to protect their families. There is also some question as to how many *harkis* there actually were, with estimates ranging from around 58,000 up to 200,000.[8] For the purposes of this discussion, the exact numbers are not really important, except to note that while the *harkis* were certainly a minority, they were not an insignificant segment of the population.

In any case, the *harkis* played an important role in the conflict. Given their local knowledge of the land and its people, they proved very useful in helping to police difficult areas. Perhaps even more importantly, they stood a better chance at effectively countering the guerilla tactics of the FLN than the regular French forces. On the political battlefield, it was hoped that the successful use of *harki* units would help the French to

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[7] Dalila Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), 10. "La volonté de rester lié à la France, parfois. Ou la solde, non négligeable. Ou la confiance mise en un homme, un gradé français exerçant des responsabilités dans la région. Ou la certitude que l'armée, mieux équipée, finirait par venir à bout des maquisards loqueteux du FLN. Ou la crainte d'être exécuté par ceux-ci parce que l'on a lâché, sous la torture, les noms de leurs frères et que l'on était, dès lors, passé dans l'autre camp, «retourné». Ou encore des rivalités locales."

[8] Leïla Sebbar, *The Seine Was Red: Paris, October 1961* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 112–3; Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, 9.

[8] Leïla Sebbar, *The Seine Was Red: Paris, October 1961* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 112–3; Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, 9.

win over more Algerians to their side, in addition to supporting the theory that many Algerians did not really seek independence. [9] The success of these initiatives is a matter of some debate, but the political side, at least, seems to have fallen flat.

As one might expect, the harkis' loyalties put them at odds with many other Algerians, both in France and Algeria. Many saw them as traitors, people who sold out their country to the French imperialists.[10] Such sentiments were further reinforced in 1959 when Maurice Papon, chief of the Paris police, formed a unit of around 400 harkis to serve as auxiliaries to the police.[11] Unfortunately, this proved to be their most enduring legacy, so much so that to this day, their descendants born in France are still widely referred to as harkis.

There was one other major event in France during the war that has had a lasting and divisive impact upon the relations between the French and French-Algerians. In October 1961, in response to a series of shootings carried out by the FLN (largely against police targets), Papon established a curfew on Parisian Algerians in order to restrict the movements of FLN agents and collaborators within the city. Sparking outrage amongst the Algerian populace, la Fédération de France du FLN organized a peaceful march for October 17th to protest the curfew. [12] Beyond this, the facts start to become less clear, and some are still debated today. Depending on the source, anywhere between 30,000 and 50,000 Algerians participated in the March. As for the police, some have claimed that

[9] François-Xavier Hautreux, "L'engagement Des Harkis (1954-1962). Essai de Périodisation," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue D'histoire*, no. 90 (April 1, 2006): 35–8.
[10] Ibid., 33; Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, 13–4.
[11] Sebbar, *The Seine Was Red*, 113; Lieutenant-colonel Montaner and Jacques Valette, "La manifestation du FLN à Paris Le 17 Octobre 1961: Le témoignage du Lieutenant-Colonel Montaner," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* no. 206 (April 1, 2002): 89.
[12] Montaner and Valette, "La manifestation du FLN à Paris Le 17 Octobre 1961," 89.

around 7,000 policemen were deployed to "'stop' the progression towards the center of the capital and to 'disperse'" the protesters, though one police captain has said that the number was actually closer to 1,300 officers.[13] Either way, it would appear that the police were woefully outnumbered, which, to be fair to them, may have caused some to panic, leading to the tragic events which followed.

According to police captain Montaner, some of the protesters began to surround and overwhelm the police barricades at around 7:30 PM, apparently getting too close for the usage of tear gas to disperse them. At some point following that, police allegedly began to fire into the crowd. It is estimated that two hundred to three hundred Algerians were killed in the ensuing chaos, and around 2,300 were wounded. Perhaps most upsettingly, many of the dead were simply thrown into the Seine.[14] This understandably left a lasting scar upon the French-Algerian psyche. From their perspective, a peaceful protest had been become a massacre due to the brutality of the French police. Additionally, the role of the harkis in this event, sixty of whom were deployed as police interpreters, was not forgotten. This is reflected in Leïla Sebbar's 1999 novel *La Seine était rouge*, when an Algerian man explains to his daughter during the march who the harkis are: "Those men are enemies, they watch us, they inform on us to the police, they kill us. Be wary of them, never speak to them, if you see one, stay away, they are a plague, you understand, a plague."[15] Besides having already sided with the French, the

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[13] Ibid., 89–91. "de «stopper» la progression vers la centre de la capitale et de «disperser»".

[14] Ibid., 91; Sebbar, *The Seine Was Red*, xiv.

[15] Leïla Sebbar, *La Seine était rouge: Paris, Octobre 1961* (Paris: Magnier, 2003), 43. "Ces hommes-là sont des ennemis, ils nous surveillent, ils nous dénoncent à la police, ils nous tuent. Méfie-toi d'eux, ne leur parle jamais, si tu en vois un, éloigne-toi, c'est la peste, tu comprends, la peste."

fact that some of them participated in such an atrocity further cemented the animosity between the two groups, marking them distinctly as the enemy.

For what its worth, Captain Montaner, who happened to be the commander of the police harkis, has expressed sorrow over the violent outcome of the protest. He largely blamed the FLN, who he said had stirred up the otherwise peaceable Parisian Algerians and effectively forced them to march.[16] While it could be argued that the FLN did indeed have some ulterior motives in organizing the protest, this explanation falls somewhat flat. Though it is sympathetic to the French-Algerians, it more-or-less strips them of all agency, saying that they only participated because more radical elements forced them to. In reality, it seems more likely that the marchers were legitimately upset with the loss of their rights due to the curfew, and wanted to protest it peacefully.

Yet, despite the hardships and tensions in France, many Algerians could not really return to Algeria. For some, moving back was just not a viable option, no matter how much they may have wanted to. This was especially true for the harkis, who would have likely faced brutal retaliations at the hands of the FLN and its supporters, including being tortured and executed, possibly in front of their families.[17] In such cases, a difficult life in France was probably more preferable than a painful death in Algeria. For later generations, however, the prospect of moving to Algeria did not even end up being very appealing. Bouzid, an author and activist of Algerian descent, described how he did not really feel at home in Algeria. Having grown up in France, all of his childhood memories tied him there, while "In Algeria, I don't have any memory, I don't recognize

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[16] Montaner and Valette, "La manifestation du FLN à Paris Le 17 Octobre 1961," 89, 92.
[17] Crapanzano, "The Wound That Never Heals," 59.

anything."[18] Even though he identifies himself as Algerian, he does not really feel any deep connection to the country itself, like he does with his childhood home in France. This type of sentiment could have proved to be a major block on those wishing to move across the Mediterranean.

Overall, the war left the Algerian populace in France in a very bad position, socially. Due to tensions rising from the conflict, and the FLN's violence, they had to face police prejudice and social alienation. Additionally, they found themselves divided between immigré and harki, a distinction that only fueled more social unrest.

Repercussions for Moderates in France

Over the course of the war, the more "mainstream" French opinion towards Algerian independence changed dramatically. At the outset of hostilities in 1954, it rejected the notion of granting self-governance, instead hoping to find a method of reconciliation and reform that would make everyone happy while keeping Algeria a part of France. Unfortunately, this was not to last. Escalating violence on both sides, accompanied by the FLN's increasing use of terror tactics and subsequent French reprisals, quickly led to a more martial approach. Le Sueur points to the FLN's attack on Philippeville on August 20, 1955 as one of the key turning points in this change. In the attack, "The FLN killed 123 people in and around Philippeville, 71 of them Europeans; among the Muslims were several Algerian politicians."[19] This of course triggered a French reprisal, in which, according to the FLN, 12,000 Algerians were killed.

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[18] Bouzid, *La Marche, Traversée de la France profonde* (Paris: Sindbad, 1984), 36. "En Algérie, je n'ai aucun souvenir, je n'ai rien reconnu."
[19] Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, 30.

Unfortunately, this cycle of violence became characteristic of the conflict, polarizing both sides and eventually crushing the chances of a peaceful reconciliation. [20]

One particularly curious aspect of this process is the fact that throughout it all the French government refused to recognize the situation as a "war", despite the fact that French troop levels in Algeria increased by five hundred percent from 1954-1956. Even more absurdly, Jacques Soustelle, then Governor General of Algeria, made the claim that the conflict was merely a "very particular state of things".[21] The insistent refusal to acknowledge it as a "war" comes across as denial, or even willful ignorance, and while that may be true to an extent, there was likely more to it than that. The most likely explanation is that calling it a war may have given the rebelling Algerians some appearance of legitimacy, thus strengthening their cause.

Despite the confidence, the conflict weighed heavily on the Republic. Bolder actions by elements of the extreme right, including attempted coups in Algiers and terrorist attacks against prominent leftists and moderates, began to foment fears of civil war. Amidst the tensions, Charles de Gaulle forged connections with politicians and military leaders in both Paris and Algiers, securing his position as prime minister. This was followed by the drafting of a new constitution and the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1959, which had a significantly stronger executive branch. As president of this new French government, de Gaulle continued the war, but also began maneuvering for peaceful negotiations to end the conflict.[22] This narrative is primarily centered around de Gaulle, but the fact that he was able to accomplish such a feat and bring the idea of

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[20] Ibid., 30–1.
[21] Ibid., 33.
[22] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 92–3.

negotiation back to the table shows that other parts of the French government were willing to go along with it. This suggests that more moderate opinions towards the war were changing again.

The war finally drew to a close in 1962 with the drafting of the Evian Accords. Drafted in March of that year, the Accords included a cease-fire between the French Republic and the FLN, and provided elements for the establishment of a sovereign Algerian state.[23] The agreement was then put up to a referendum in both countries. Unsurprisingly, the referendum passed definitively in Algeria, with a resounding ninety-nine percent of voters in favor of independence. Perhaps more unexpectedly, the vote also easily passed in France, with eighty-six percent of voters approving the terms of the Accords.[24] These results are quite revealing. They suggest that by 1962, the citizens of France were either very tired of the war, or truly believed in allowing the Algerian people to govern themselves, or perhaps both. Whatever the reasons may have been, they declared that the Algerian War was no longer a fight worth fighting, and that it was time to put that period of French history to rest.

It is somewhat difficult to say how the war affected the French "mainstream" overall. It is possible to argue that they were somewhat weakened by the struggle against the FLN and the loss of Algeria, but that does not seem entirely accurate. A better stance would be that, while it was a difficult period, the Republic emerged stronger overall with

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[23] "Algeria: France-Algeria Independence Agreements (Evian Agreements),"
International Legal Materials 1, no. 2 (October 1, 1962): 214.
[24] Commission Centrale de Contrôle du Référendum d'Autodétermination, "Proclamation Des Resultats Du Référendum d'Autodétermination Du 1er Juillet 1962" (Journal Officiel de l'État Algérien, July 6, 1962); Conseil Constitutionnel, "Décision N° 62-7 REF Du 13 Avril 1962," April 13, 1962, http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/acces-par-date/decisions-depuis-1959/1962/62-7-ref/decision-n-62-7-ref-du-13-avril-1962.108934.html.

the institution of the Fifth Republic. Furthermore, the peaceful conclusion of the war, and overwhelming support in France for Algerian independence, suggests that the moderates did end up triumphing over the voices of the extreme right.

<u>Repercussions for the Far-Right</u>

If any group in France can be said to have come out "ahead" after the war, it would arguably be the far-right. Following the fall of the Vichy regime in the Second World War, the remaining members of the extreme right were pushed to the periphery of French politics. After the liberation of France, patriotic sentiments had more or less become the reserve of "the Resistance and the Republic". This caused the far-right to become outsiders in their own country, which would ultimately become a point of pride for parties like the Front National. [25] That was not the case in 1954, though, and the extreme right sought a way to escape "fringe" status. The Algerian war gave them that chance.

On the point of Algerian independence, the far-right discovered that they no longer stood alone. They found new allies in the "mainstream", most importantly in the military and amongst the pieds-noirs (French colonists in Algeria), leading to the formation of the Algérie Française movement. Its constituent groups were united by nationalist and imperialist sentiments, and, especially in the case of the former, the belief that the Fourth Republic was too weak and impotent to keep Algeria. The military in particular also felt betrayed by the French government, perceiving the loss of Indochina and other colonial possessions as the work of civilians selling out French pride. This

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[25] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 90, 128.

dissatisfaction amongst many soldiers, primarily members of the officer corps, led to three separate attempted coups in Algeria from 1958 to 1961.[26] Though these attempts all failed, the fact that it was tried multiple times, for different reasons, shows how strongly the far-right opposed Algerian self-governance. Unfortunately, the mixing of extreme right politics with the disgruntled military also led to the founding of the Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS) in 1961, a very active and violent extremist group that carried out assassinations and bombings throughout France and Algeria, even making multiple attempts on de Gaulle's life.[27]

The pieds-noirs also came to adopt more hard line politics, though that was not always the case. Being French citizens who considered Algeria to be their home, it is fairly understandable that they would be hesitant to accept decolonization, especially given that they enjoyed many special privileges and rights that the Algerians did not, despite making up only around ten percent of the population in 1954.[28] However, as the decade wore on, the pieds-noirs' stance became more ultra-nationalist, closer in line with the broader Algérie Française. Again, they perceived the Fourth Republic's attempts at peaceful negotiation to be a sign of weakness, and pied-noir rhetoric became increasingly composed of "braggadocio, […] absurd threats, [and] the absolute refusal to consider anything but their own predicament".[29] In general, compromise ceased to be an option for them, and they would struggle, violently at times, to maintain the system to which they

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[26] Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present*, 124–5.
[27] Ibid., 125–127; Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 93.
[28] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 90.
[29] Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present*, 125–6.

had become accustomed. Their dogged refusal to accept a change even led de Gaulle to quip that they were stuck in the "Algérie de papa".[30]

Ultimately, however, the Algérie Française movement failed. The Evian Accords were approved decisively by the French populace, harkening a return to the more moderate and leftist politics, returning the far-right to the fringe. Algeria was lost, and the dreams of French imperial glory with it. In spite of this, though, the scenario was not a total loss. Though it was brief, the resurgence of the extreme right was not something that could be undone. While it would not truly return to prominence until the 1980's, the events of the Algerian War laid the groundwork for other extreme right movements, including the eventual rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen and the Front National.

<div align="center">The Legacy of Extremist Violence</div>

Although it eventually came to a peaceful conclusion, the Algerian War left one other dark legacy. Over the course of the conflict, the issues of French vs. Algerian, moderate vs. far-right, and immigré vs. harki became strongly linked to the use of extremist violence on both sides. For instance, while the Front de Libération Nationale was essentially the "face" of the Algerian push for independence, it also became notorious for its usage of terror tactics. Formed in 1954, the FLN originally sought to drive the French out through a guerilla insurgency. They encountered little success against the French military, especially after the deployment of the Tenth Parachute Division in 1957. A unit of veterans from the war in Indochina, the *paras* were "battle

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[30] Ibid., 126.

hardened, fiercely loyal, and well-versed in counterinsurgency fighting."[31] As a result, the FLN increasingly turned to brutal terror tactics.

However, the plan was not really to cause much damage to French infrastructure, but rather to trick the French into defeating themselves. By committing atrocious attacks (including executions by axe, machete, and throat-slitting; mutilation of corpses; and even rape) against the pied-noirs, French civilians, and Algerian collaborators, the FLN sought to provoke an angry, heavy-handed retaliation from the French military, which would only serve to alienate more of the Algerian people, pushing them towards the FLN.[32] Despite the presence of counter-terror experts who knew what the FLN was trying to do, the French army played right into their hands. Besides direct military reprisals, the French also began to engage in the widespread usage of torture and summary executions. Somewhat curiously, there was relatively little effort put into covering it up. Randall Law argues that this was intentional – by letting everyone know what happened to those suspected of assisting the FLN, the French hoped to deprive them of supporters, as well as using fear of torture to make prisoners more willing to talk.[33] Judging by some of the methods that the French soldiers used, he may have a point. In one particularly gruesome case, "after hours of torturing a man who refused to talk, the soldiers brought in his twelve-year-old daughter and forced her to torture her father with electric shocks."[34] It is indeed possible that such horrendous acts were undertaken in order to serve as a deterrent, but even so, that goes beyond the pale. What was even worse was that the

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[31] Randall David Law, *Terrorism: A History* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009), 200–1, 203.
[32] Ibid., 202, 207–9; Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, 30.
[33] Law, *Terrorism*, 205–9.
[34] Tzvetan Todorov and Arthur Denner, "Torture in the Algerian War," *South Central Review* 24, no. 1 (April 1, 2007): 23.

French soldiers knew it. While some did try to justify the torture, saying that it was the only way to get actual intelligence on the FLN and win the war, others, some of whom had been tortured themselves during the Second World War, said that "If one day there's another Nuremberg trial, we'll all be convicted," and "Next to us, the Germans were schoolboys."[35] Even though they knew what they were doing was reprehensible, they did it anyway, because they felt it had to be done in order to give the French an edge over the FLN.

It backfired, spectacularly. This strategy turned "the entire Algerian population into sworn enemies of France virtually overnight. For every man struck down, ten rose up to take his place."[36] Despite the slight hyperbole, this quote sums up the Algerian reaction to French repressive measures very well. Combined with the FLN's mitigation of moderate voices on the Algerian side, this went a long way towards destroying hopes for a peaceful reconciliation.[37] The excessive violence served to deeply polarize many in France and Algeria, and drove the pieds-noirs and some elements of the French military further into the extreme right wing. Not only did these prejudices endure for decades afterwards, they also helped to propagate extremist violence amongst the far-right.

At first glance, the Organisation Armée Secrète bears many similarities to its Algerian counterpart. Besides modeling its structure after the FLN's own, it engaged in bombings and assassinations to try to eliminate moderating voices in both France and Algeria, as well as keeping the French settler population agitated enough to prevent the acceptance of Algerian independence. However, in contrast to the FLN, the details of the

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[35] Ibid., 22.
[36] Ibid., 20.
[37] Law, *Terrorism*, 209.

OAS' overall goals and strategy were largely unknown. Peter Davies attributes this to a lack of clear leadership and sectarian infighting, factors that plagued many French far-right organizations at the time.[38] Broadly speaking, this seems reasonable. Whereas the FLN was a united organization with a clear goal it was dedicated to achieving, the OAS seems to have been more of an angry, reactionary movement, cobbled together from radical elements of the French army, the pied-noir community, and other extreme conservatives, and lashing out at the prospect of Algerian independence and the inability of the French military to fully counter the FLN's tactics. In spite of this, and its failure to retain a French Algeria, the OAS contributed to the legacy of extremist violence with regards to the Algerian situation, further alienating the far-right from more mainstream French society.

<center>Conclusion</center>

The importance of the Algerian War, and the impact it has had upon French identity politics, truly cannot be overstated. The centrality of Algeria to France's diminishing imperial glory served to exacerbate the difficult issues already inherent to the decolonization process. It left the Algerians in France stuck in an extremely difficult position within French society, divided amongst themselves and alienated from the rest of France. Despite earlier difficulties, French moderates managed to reaffirm their dominance of mainstream French politics, though the seeds for future conflicts had already been sown. Finally, even though the far-right lost in this case, the war made them

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[38] Ibid., 211–2; Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present*, 125.

a viable political option for the first time since the fall of Vichy, an opportunity that they

would later capitalize on.

Chapter Two: Identity Politics and French Society

The issue of identity is often contentious, no matter the circumstances. Despite the seeming simplicity of the topic at a superficial level, identity is actually a very complex notion tied into historical, social, religious, political, and ethnic factors, amongst others. Identity can be a unifying force, uniting the "Us" against the world and its challenges. It can also be a source of division and conflict, used as a political weapon to dictate who can and cannot be considered a part of the "Us". Conceptions of identity are also somewhat context specific, with different communities viewing the nature of identity in fundamentally different ways. This is why it is so important to look at it in the most specific terms possible. As such, the purpose of this chapter is to examine identity politics in France since Algerian independence in 1962, and see how these politics have affected French society. Overall, the question of who gets to be "French" is still up for debate. Many North Africans, especially Muslims, largely feel alienated and disenfranchised by the French system. This is primarily due to a combination of the nature of French identity; the changing, but not often positive, perceptions of immigrants amongst the "native" French populace; the recent increases in Islamophobia; and the political maneuvering of the French far-right. Likewise, many on the far-right have come to perceive many immigrants and other groups that they see as "non-French" as a threat to French identity and values, due to a variety of factors. However, they have more recently found broader support over such concerns, and have as a result become more moderate and successful in French politics.

<center>Background on French Identity</center>

Before delving into the more contemporary political issues, it is vital to first take a look at the nature of identity in France, and to try to understand it. The foundation of modern conceptions of identity in France can be traced back to the Universalist ideas of the French Revolution. The general idea is that all citizens of the Republic are equal in the eyes of the state and its laws, "whatever their origin, race, or religion."[1] While this is a noble ideal, the mechanics of actually implementing it are quite a bit more complicated. As scholars have noted, the emphasis on total equality has resulted in the individual becoming the centerpiece of citizenship, with the state being composed solely of these citizens. Though this does provide a good safeguard against one group taking advantage of another, it also leaves no room for any group identification other than that of the French nation. As a result, one cannot be, say, both French and Algerian, or French and Muslim, at least in the public sphere.[2] It is difficult to say how prevalent this type of thinking is amongst average citizens, but it has certainly had a significant impact on French political and academic discourse.

One place the Universalist mindset has definitely manifested itself is in the area of national statistics. In French censuses, the only two categories given for ethnicity are French national or étranger (foreigner). Thus, at least in terms of statistics, there is no official recognition of ethnic minorities within the Republic, only French citizens or foreigners.[3] This notion, while arguably well intentioned, can come across as somewhat

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[1] Ellen Wiles, "Headscarves, Human Rights, and Harmonious Multicultural Society: Implications of the French Ban for Interpretations of Equality," *Law & Society Review* 41, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 702.
[2] Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 11.
[3] Wiles, "Headscarves, Human Rights, and Harmonious Multicultural Society," 705.

unsettling, especially to observers coming from a more multiculturalist perspective. By putting only those two options on the census, the French government is essentially telling those of "ethnic" origin that only the French side of their identity counts in the public eye, a sentiment which could be seen as being rather dismissive of other backgrounds. Additionally, this system robs researchers of valuable insight into the composition of French society.

It is also worth discussing here the role that laïcité plays in the construction of French identity. As proclaimed by the Stasi Commission, a committee created in 2003 and charged by then president Jacques Chirac to examine the applications of the principle in the French Republic, laïcité is the strict separation of church and state established during the Revolution. It is held to be one of the cornerstones of French democracy, ensuring the freedom of belief and the neutrality of the state in religious matters.[4] However, the principle of laïcité is not simply the French version of state secularism. As the concept of French citizenship is built upon the idea of the individual, laïcité also entails protecting the individual from unwarranted or dangerous religious influences, at least in public. This has played an especially important role in the formation of the French public school system. The goal was to establish schools as areas of free thought, untroubled by religion or other outside influences. Of course, some have viewed this in a more cynical light, seeing it as the forge of French Universalism, stripping away other ideas and building up the ideals of the Republic, "a nation one and indivisible".[5] This criticism of French schools serving as a tool for socialization is a bit unfair, as most

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[4] Commission de Reflexion sur L'Application du Principe de Laïcité dans la République, *Rapport Au Président de La République*, December 11, 2003, 9.
[5] Ibid., 2; Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 98–9.

public schools around the world arguably serve a similar purpose, especially at lower levels. Nevertheless, the important point is that French schools are meant to be a safe space for the free formation of the individual, and thus their identity as a French citizen. That, possibly more than any other reason, is why laïcité is so central to any discussion of French identity.

<div align="center">Terminology and Self-Identification</div>

One of the things that makes discussions of identity so difficult is the issue of terminology, especially with regards to self-identification. Whether in an academic or political context, it is vital to clearly define the groups being discussed. This is usually more easily said than done, particularly in cases like those of second generation immigrants in France. For example, when Azouz Begag, a French author and politician of Algerian heritage, sought to illustrate how disjointed the terminology can be in one of his books, he identified thirty-six different labels that he has seen used to refer to this social group. These range from the more commonly used, like "seconde génération" ("second generation"), "jeunes issus de l'immigration" ("youths from an immigrant background"), or "Beurs" (a term used to refer to any second generation immigrants from the countries of the Maghreb); to some rather offensive titles, such as "zonards" ("thugs/hooligans"), "lascars des banlieues" ("rascals from the projects"); to some nearly bordering on the absurd, such as "jeunes issus des minorités visibles" ("youths from a visible minority background"), "descendants de colonisés ("descendants from the colonized")", and

"jeunes d'origine difficile" ("youths from a difficult origin").[6] A large part of the problem with this set of terms is that some of them may be used fairly interchangeably, even though they could refer to people coming from radically different origins and social circumstances. Lumping them in together does not benefit either them or the discourse, especially when the people being referred to reject the labels being placed upon them.

Bouzid, writing in the 1980's, a time of some progress for civil rights in France, provides some interesting insight into this. For one, he rejects the term "jeunes de la deuxième génération", questioning why they were the only generation of immigrants to be given a number, and seeing it as an attempt to keep them at the reduced social status of their parents' generation. Similarly, while he sometimes uses it for the sake of convenience, he finds the term "Maghrébin" rather bizarre.[7] Perhaps this is due to the fact that in Arabic, the word "al-Maghreb" (المغرب) refers specifically to the country of Morocco, while the French term "Maghreb" is applied to the entirety of northwest Africa. This may not have been his intention, but it is interesting to see the disconnect in meaning between the two languages. For his part, Bouzid instead prefers to identify simply as an "Arabe", or, if more specificity is needed, "un Arabe du Sud".[8] This is very interesting. His preference for being referred to as an Arab comes across as a rejection of a universalist identity, choosing being Arab over being French.

Seeing how complex the terminology can be for even one person shows how important it is to lay out working definitions. As such, for this discussion, I will primarily stick with the terms I have laid out in the introduction.

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[6] Azouz Begag, *Ethnicity & Equality: France in the Balance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 19–21.
[7] Bouzid, *La Marche, Traversée de la France profonde*, 14.
[8] Ibid.

<u>Reasons for Immigration</u>

One area that has had a significant, yet somewhat overlooked, impact on the identity debate over the years is the changing reasons behind North African immigrants coming to France. From the late 1940's to the early 1970's, the majority of Algerians and other North Africans entering France were men that came alone as migrant workers. However, somewhat surprisingly, the notion of immigrant labor was not very politicized at the time, and thus played a relatively small role in the identity debate. Immigration from France's colonial holdings, while already present to an extent, dramatically increased following the end of the Second World War. As was the case for most of the belligerents at the time, France found itself facing the issue of severely depleted labor markets. To bring the workforce back up to strength, it began to promote large-scale immigration from its colonies. As it turned out, migrant labor also served to provide solutions to other post-war economic woes. Immigrant workers could be hired for much lower wages than their French counterparts, whose rates had increased by fifty percent in some sectors by 1944 as a result of the labor shortage. Likewise, the non-unionized migrant workers provided employers with a significant counter to the power of the French trade unions, giving them a better bargaining position.[9] These factors made migrant labor invaluable to the post-war French economy.

The necessity of migrant workers was extended into the 1960's due to the newly expanded employment and educational opportunities for French women and teenagers,

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[9] Khursheed Wadia, "France: From Unwilling Host to Bellicose Gatekeeper," in *The European Union and Migrant Labour*, ed. Gareth Dale and Mike Cole (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 1999), 176–7.

who resultantly began moving away from low prestige, low paying careers. These jobs were then left open to migrant workers who were willing to take them. However, the issue of migrant labor began to become more complicated in the following decade, when the onset of a recession and increased levels of unemployment started to politicize it.[10]

Another important thing to keep in mind is that, from the late 1940's to the early 1970's, there was a widespread perception amongst both the general French citizenry and the migrant workers themselves that this influx of immigrant labor was a temporary phenomenon. Scholars have recognized that the European states that encouraged the practice of migrant labor in the post-war period only intended for it to last as long as was necessary to rebuild their economies, after which the foreign workers would go back home.[11] It would appear that many of the immigrant workers themselves had similar ideas. Looking at Algerians specifically, the men who came to France in the 1950's and 1960's usually worked in rotation, meaning that they would work there for a certain amount of time, and then return to Algeria so that someone else could take their place in France.[12] Similarly, interviews conducted amongst non-harki Algerians in France in May 1962 showed that " almost to a man, the Algerians look forward to an early return; a collective homesickness has taken hold of the exiles."[13] This sense of a lack of permanence could go a long way towards explaining the general absence of contention over the issue. If everyone believes that it is a temporary measure, then it becomes much

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[10] Ibid., 178, 188–9.

[11] Maria I. Baganha et al., "International Migration and Its Regulation," in *The Dynamics of International Migration and Settlement in Europe: A State of the Art*, ed. Rinus Penninx, Maria Berger, and Karen Kraal (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 20–1.

[12] Wadia, "France: From Unwilling Host to Bellicose Gatekeeper," 177.

[13] Schofield Coryell, "Victory: Algerians in Paris Speak Their Minds," *Africa Today* 9, no. 4 (May 1, 1962): 11.

easier to overlook some of the cultural and political tensions that can come along with migrant labor, particularly the question of integration.

This sense of impermanence began to fall apart in the 1970's, when government policies shifted towards transforming this largely transient immigrant population into a permanently settled component of French society."[14] A major change came about in 1976, when immigrating for the purposes of "family reunion" became an officially recognized reason for entering France. By the 1980's, this had become one of the primary motivations for North African migrants, and the lone male worker was replaced by entire families coming over to France.[15] It was during this period that immigration started to become a more contentious topic. Once whole families started coming to France and settling down, it became much more difficult to maintain the perception of migrant labor as a temporary feature of the French economy, and issues surrounding integration could not be as easily overlooked.

Immigration for work or familial reasons were not the only things that brought Algerians to France, however. Most notably, the harkis and their families primarily seem to have fled to France to escape the reprisals of the FLN. Following the signing of the Evian Accords, Algeria's new ruling party offered the harkis who remained in the country and returned to civilian life pardons, and said that they would be "considered as brothers". However, beginning in July of that year, the FLN began to systematically torture and execute the harkis, with historians estimating that anywhere between 10,000

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[14] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 202.

[15] Dominique Meurs, Ariane Pailhé, and Patrick Simon, "The Persistence of Intergenerational Inequalities Linked to Immigration: Labour Market Outcomes for Immigrants and Their Descendants in France," *Population (English Edition, 2002-)* 61, no. 5/6 (September 1, 2006): 650; Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 202.

and 150,000 were killed.[16] It thus rapidly became clear that Algeria was no longer a safe place for the harkis and their families. Following the massacres, 11,000 of them traveled to France, following the 10,000 that chose repatriation following the Evian Agreement. An additional 15,000 harkis and their families repatriated in 1963, and 5,340 more in 1964-1965.[17] This was not an insignificant amount of people to try to accommodate in France in such a short period, especially considering that the French government was trying to repatriate the pieds-noirs at the same time. Furthermore, unlike with the other Algerians in France, there were no illusions that the arrangement was temporary – they were there to stay.

As one might expect, the process of repatriating "Les Français musulmans rapatriés" (FMR), or later "Rapatriés d'origine nord-africaine" (RONA), as they came to be known[18], encountered a few difficulties. To deal with the massive influx of people, the army established welcome camps to house the harkis until they could find more permanent lodging. Unfortunately, the living conditions in these camps were not the best, and many had to spend the following winter in them.[19] Unsurprisingly, some of the harkis and their descendants ended up feeling let down by the French welcome. Bouzid, whose father was a harki, says that after the war, "[The French] assured us that these lodgings were temporary, that we would soon be resettled amongst the French."[20] He says that while many of the harkis believed this, they actually ended up being settled in the cités,

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[16] Maurice Faivre, "L'histoire des harkis," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* no. 202/203 (April 1, 2001): 58–9.
[17] Ibid., 59–60.
[18] Ibid., 61.
[19] Ibid., 59–60.
[20] Bouzid, *La Marche, Traversée de la France profonde*, 32. "On nous avait affirmé que ces logements seraient provisoires, que nous serions bientôt répartis parmi les Français."

the ghettos outside of the cities. Bouzid even goes so far as to compare their situation to that of Native Americans being relegated to reservations.[21] While not a perfect analogy, it could certainly evoke images of how the harkis may have felt somewhat betrayed, or "swept under the rug", as it was. Such sentiments may have served to turn many of the harkis in France, and their descendants, bitter with regards to the French establishment.

Additionally, the other Algerians in France did not exactly seek reconciliation. According to some Algerians interviewed following the signing of the Evian Accords, there was a feeling that the harkis were the only ones that did not truly want to return to Algeria, as "'they've done [other Algerians] too much harm.'"[22] Granted, this is coming from immediately after the war, so tensions were still going to be high. However, for many, the animosity never quite went away. In her book *Mon père, ce harki*, journalist Dalila Kerchouche describes how her father's choice to serve as a harki followed him for the rest of his life: "Considered a renegade in Algeria, treated as a pariah in France, he lived in exclusion, paying his entire life for a fault which both camps imposed on him: treason."[23] While it would be wrong to apply his experiences to all of the harkis, it would be somewhat difficult to argue that most did not face similar prejudices. Knowing that the FLN had carried out reprisals on harkis, and that many of their former countrymen continued to view them with suspicion, it makes sense that they would continue to be exiled from the broader Algerian community. Likewise, the fact that they were housed in

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Coryell, "Victory," 11.

[23] Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, 13. "Considéré comme un renégat en Algérie, traité comme un paria en France, il a vécu en exclu, expiant toute sa vie une faute dont les deux camps l'ont accablé: la trahison."

the cités and banlieues like the other Algerian immigrants suggested that the French government did not really see them differently at all.

This burden weighed heavily on Kerchouche's parents. In 2002, at a party celebrating their fortieth anniversary of coming to France, her mother remarked, "I do not want to celebrate the day where I lost my country."[24] This further suggests that after forty years, they still had not come to think of France as a true home, yet still felt unable to return to "their country". Sadly, the alienation was passed down through the generations. For example, after revealing in conversation that she was descended from harkis, Kerchouche has received responses ranging from "Why would you claim to be that? […] It's the past, you must forget it", to the more hostile "Are you proud that your father sold his country?"[25] Even today, the concept of being a harki still carries a significant social stigma.

The lasting tensions between harkis and other Algerian immigrants may have been exasperated by a lack of dialogue on the issue until relatively recently. Scholars have noted that the harkis have been referred to as "les oubliés de l'histoire", history's forgotten, due to both a lack of coverage by academia and the media, as well as the harkis' own collective silence about their experiences.[26] The power of this extended historical and cultural silence should not be underestimated. To use the example of Kerchouche's father, she says that when she used to lash out at him over his past choices, all he would do was "[look] at me sadly shaking his head, without responding, without

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[24] Ibid., 21. "Je n'ai pas envie de fêter le jour où j'ai perdu mon pays."
[25] Ibid., 14. "Porquoi vous le revendiquez? […] C'est le passé, il faut oublier."; "Tu es fière que ton père ait vendu son pays?"
[26] Vincent Crapanzano , "The Wound That Never Heals," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* no. 30 (January 1, 2010): 59, 61.

contradicting me. Why did he not react? What history made my father this submissive

and resigned man, incapable of defending himself?"[27] This description conjures the

image of a man utterly defeated by his past, and the pain it has caused his children. If he

cannot even muster the will to defend himself, or even react, when his daughter called

him a traitor in a fit of anger, it seems unlikely that he would be able to do so in a public

context. Furthermore, while Kerchouche sought to explore her father's story and share it

with the world in order to achieve a sense of understanding and make peace with it, it is

not unthinkable that other descendants of harkis, seeing the anguish the subject brings

their parents, would instead avoid the topic altogether. This may explain, at least in part,

why the harkis' side of the story rarely came to light.

Public perception was also a significant factor in perpetuating the silence. The

children of FLN fighters and supporters have often "mythicized and glorified" the roles

that their parents played in the Algerian War. By contrast, the children of harkis often felt

only shame at their parents' perceived betrayal.[28] With this being the case, many people

may have hidden their harki heritage in order to avoid embarrassment and being

ostracized.

This may have seemed like a long digression for such a small segment of the

Algerian population in France, but it is important to recognize how great an effect the

reasons the harkis had for moving to France had on their psyches and their standing, or

lack thereof, in French society.

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[27] Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, 24. "Il me regardait tristement en hochant la tête, sans répondre, sans me contredire. Porquoi ne réagissait-il pas? Quelle histoire a fait de mon père cet home soumis et résigné, incapable de se defendre?"

[28] Rossella Spina, *Enfants de harkis et enfants d'émigrés : Parcours croisés et identités à recoudre* (Paris: Karthala, 2012), 53.

The Struggle for Recognition

Arguably the greatest challenge that North African immigrants have faced in the last half century has been the struggle for recognition and a place within French society. Facing enduring stereotypes, a strong ethnic penalty in the job market, and a seeming inability to fully fit into preconceived notions of being either fully "French" or "Algerian", for example, many still feel as though they have not fully found a place.

One of the primary features of this struggle has been the push by many minority groups in France, to overcome the strong stereotypes that have saddled on them in broader French society. Interestingly, many of these stereotypes may seem surprisingly familiar to American readers, as many of them are the same negative preconceptions applied to inner city African Americans in the United States. For instance, even since the 1960's, there has been a perceived "ghettoization" in the cités and the banlieus, places seen "as areas 'outside legitimacy', places of delinquency and deviance, where the police only enter (or are only supposed to enter) with difficulty, often reluctantly."[29] As a result, the people coming from these lower income, largely ethnic neighborhoods are often assumed to be undereducated, underemployed, and drawn towards criminal behavior and radical activism.[30] These unfortunate stereotypes often end up becoming somewhat self-reinforcing, closing off opportunities for people from these areas. Additionally, knowing

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[29] Farhad Khosrokhavar, "L'universel abstrait, le politique et la construction de l'islamisme comme forme d'altérité," in *Une société fragmentée?: le multiculturalisme en débat*, ed. Michel Wieviorka and François Dubet (Paris: La Découverte, 1997), 136. "Comme des territoires «hors légitimité», lieux de délinquance et de deviance, où la police ne pénètre (ou n'est censée pénètrer) que difficilement, souvent à contrecoeur."
[30] Wadia, "France: From Unwilling Host to Bellicose Gatekeeper," 184; Stéphane Beaud and Olivier Masclet, "Des «marcheurs» de 1983 aux «émeutiers» de 2005: Deux générations sociales d'enfants d'immigrés," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 61, no. 4 (July 1, 2006): 818.

that your neighborhood, and by extension, you, are seen in such a way cannot be encouraging for those hoping to integrate further into French society

These preconceptions were so pervasive that even schoolchildren felt their effects. In a couple of scenes in Begag's semi-autobiographical *Le Gone du Chaâba*, his younger self's success in the classroom is met by derision from the other Algerian children, with them claiming that he's not really an Arab, that he has betrayed his people, and that he would rather be French than Algerian.[31] Assuming that these passages were drawn from real life experiences, it would certainly go a ways towards showing how damaging these stereotypes can be. It also reflects that, at least among younger second-generation immigrants, there may have been a notion that being "French" was distinctly different from being "Algerian" or "Arab", and that there was no middle ground. Of course, that cannot be claimed definitively just from this, as it could also be chalked up as simply schoolyard bullying, but it is something to consider.

In some cases, however, these same children could use the perceptions of institutionalized discrimination in the school system to their advantage. Both Begag and Bouzid mention kids blaming poor grades and disciplinary actions on the racism of their teachers. The latter even muses on how he and all of his brothers have used the excuse at least once, and on how his nine-year-old brother could understand the concept enough to use it as a plausible defense.[32] Again, this could be explained by the younger brother following the example of the older brothers, but that this comes about in multiple accounts suggests that there is more to it than that.

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[31] Azouz Begag, *Shantytown Kid (Le Gone Du Chaâba)* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 74–6, 84–5.
[32] Ibid., 82; Bouzid, *La Marche, Traversée de la France profonde*, 31.

In any case, the consequences of these negative stereotypes have manifested themselves in more tangible ways. Namely, through the existence of a significant and lasting ethnic disadvantage that those of North African descent face when entering the French labor market. This disadvantage can generally take a couple of forms. The first is a disproportionate level of unemployment. For comparison, in 2011, non-immigrant French citizens[33] had an unemployment rate of 8.5%, while immigrants overall had a rate of 16.3%. It was even higher for immigrants coming from non-EU countries at 20.3%.[34] By contrast, Algerians living in France in 2008 faced a 28% unemployment rate, while Moroccans and Tunisians saw similar rates of 25% and 24%, respectively. This becomes even more striking when one notes that for Portuguese immigrants, the only nationality that had more active workers in France than Moroccans and Algerians in 2008, the unemployment rate was only 7.5%.[35]

There are a few possible explanations for this tremendous disparity. The more traditional argument states that, besides general discrimination and hostility towards immigrants in the labor market, this imbalance can largely be attributed to them coming to France with lower levels of education and lower social status than their European peers, and with little to no knowledge of the French language, all of which prevents them

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[33]The Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques defines *immigrés* as to people born abroad to foreign parents who are currently living in France, including those who have since attained citizenship, but excluding people born to French parents abroad, as well as those born in France to foreign parents. See: *Fiches Thématiques - Population, Éducation* (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, 2012), 172.

[34] Ibid., 713.

[35] *Population immigrée, population étrangère en 2008* (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, February 2012), Table CD–A2, http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/detail.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=pop-immigree-pop-etrangere-2008.

from achieving full integration and socio-professional advancement.[36] This could

arguably be the case for many first-generation immigrants coming from North Africa,

and even some of the literary works present evidence of this. For instance, in *Le Gone du*

Chaâba, Begag writes his parents' dialogue as French with an Algerian accent, utilizing

non-standard spellings and pronunciations, along with a peppering of Arabic, to reflect

that they did not have a full mastery of the French language.[37] However, this line of

thinking begins to fall apart when applied to successive generations. For those born in

France, who grew up speaking French and were educated in the French school system,

things like the language barrier and lack of educational opportunities should cease to be

issues, at least in theory. This becomes clearer when examining the second major

expression of the ethnic penalty, the earnings gap.

Scholars have shown that, overall, "native" French workers tend to still earn

twenty percent more annually than second-generation immigrants of North African

descent.[38] This is a major difference, and could be chalked up to the same factors

mentioned above. However, when controlling for socio-economic status, the wage gap

drops to a ten percent difference, which shows that only half of the gap stems from lesser

opportunities. Even more damning is that "once parental background and individual

human capital are taken into account, second-generation migrants from Southern Europe

experience a net ethnic advantage" as compared to those of North African descent.[39]

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[36] Wadia, "France: From Unwilling Host to Bellicose Gatekeeper," 186; Arnaud Lefranc, "Unequal Opportunities and Ethnic Origin: The Labor Market Outcomes of Second-Generation Immigrants in France," *American Behavioral Scientist* 53, no. 12 (August 2010): 1877.
[37] Begag, *Shantytown Kid (Le Gone Du Chaâba)*, xvii.
[38] Lefranc, "Unequal Opportunities and Ethnic Origin," 1874.
[39] Ibid., 1877–8.

Basically, with all other things being equal, those of North African heritage in France will still, on average, earn significantly less than their peers of European descent. This strongly suggests that the wage gap is heavily influenced by discrimination, and not necessarily as much by socio-economic factors.

Other research supports this conclusion. Surveys of second-generation immigrants taken five years after completing their schooling (including various levels of education) show that 40.8% of men and 30.6% of women who have at least one parent "born non-French in North Africa" reported that they had encountered some form of discrimination while seeking employment. Unsurprisingly, the top two types of discrimination reported by both genders was on the basis of name and skin color. This evidence is especially compelling when compared with the responses from those respondents with other backgrounds. The only other origin that has reported more discrimination is people with non-French parents from sub-Saharan Africa. Also notable is that those with French parents from North Africa encountered significantly less discrimination that their non-French peers, though this last point can probably be explained by many of them being descended from French settlers in North Africa, so they would not be that different from "native" French people.[40] This data, collected in the early 2000's, shows that many people of "non-French" heritage still feel as if they are subjected to discrimination in the job market based on their ethnicity.

Over the years, such factors have led to many French citizens of North African descent feeling as if they were stuck in an uncomfortable position, which Tricia Keaton

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[40] Roxane Silberman and Irène Fournier, "Second Generations on the Job Market in France: A Persistent Ethnic Penalty: A Contribution to Segmented Assimilation Theory," *Revue Française de Sociologie* 49 (January 1, 2008): 45,89.

describes as "being simultaneously socially excluded and culturally assimilated".[41]

Bouzid expressed a similar sentiment, saying that "In speaking of Algeria, I said 'my country', however, I was French. In theory at least as, in practice, that was another story."[42] Basically, he generally identifies himself as being Algerian, and feels that he is treated as an Algerian, even though he was theoretically French. This led him to muse on being "L'éternel immigré", the perpetual immigrant.[43] He was not alone. Many young people of North African descent interviewed by Farhad Khosrokhvar in the 1990's expressed the sentiment that the process of their own personal integration had "failed" due to having a name like Mohammed or Ali, or because they had a darker complexion, resulting in people not really giving them a fair chance.[44] Generally speaking, there seems to be an enduring sentiment that people of North African descent often feel alienated by French society at large.

This is made even more difficult by the fact that many of these second or third generation immigrants do not feel like they truly fit into the culture of their parents and grandparents either. Alec G. Hargreaves summarizes this really well in his analysis of Beur writers:

> In their daily lives the Beurs have […] been compelled to migrate constantly between the secular culture of France and the traditions carried with them by their Muslim parents from across the Mediterranean. […] Like it or not, every Beur has a foot in two cultures.[45]

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[41] Keaton, "Arrogant Assimilationism," 406.

[42] Bouzid, *La Marche, Traversée de la France profonde*, 31. "En parlant de l'Algérie, je disais «mon pays», pourtant, j'étais français. En théorie du moins car, en pratique, c'était une autre histoire."

[43] Ibid., 35.

[44] Khosrokhavar, "L'universel abstrait, le politique et la construction de l'islamisme comme forme d'altérité," 136.

[45] Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction: Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 1, 26.

Similar sentiments also appear in Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*. The character Amel discusses how her mother and grandmother will speak in Arabic when they talk about things that they do not want her to know, and are also very reluctant discuss their past hardships with her.[46] For households that really did function this way, it is fairly easy to see how the younger generations could feel a distinct separation from their elders, as if they were somehow cut off from part of their own heritage.

The children of harkis face a similar, though slightly different problem. Both Kerchouche and Bouzid say that, at various points in their lives, they had felt resentment towards their fathers' choices. Neither one spoke about their past, and the subsequent lack of understanding on the part of their children turned to bitterness when the latter encountered hostility towards their inherited status as harkis.[47] Again, this created a sense of separation between the generations, with the children having a hard time even understanding, let alone fitting into, the culture of their parents.

The Issue of Anti-Muslim Sentiments

One element of the identity debate that has become increasingly prominent over the last few decades is the presence of anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamaphobia. This has had significant effects on nearly every segment of French society. Put simply, the growing Islamophobia in France has led to many Muslims feeling alienated by French society, and, at times, even targeted for exclusion and oppression.

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[46] Sebbar, *La Seine était rouge*, 15–6.
[47] Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*, 14; Bouzid, *La Marche, Traversée de la France profonde*, 32–3.

Arguably, the central element in this issue is the perception of Islamic culture being inherently incompatible with French culture and society in some way. This is a somewhat difficult notion to deal with, as the exact meaning of it can vary from person to person. One broader explanation of it comes from de Gaulle, who stated in 1959: "We are, above all, a European people of the white race, of Greek and Latin culture and the Christian religion…the Muslims […] You can clearly see that they're not French! […] Arabs are Arabs, French are French."[48] It should be noted that this statement was made during the height of the Algerian War, when tensions were still very high. Even so, it still reflects the perception of there being a fundamental difference between French Christians and Arab Muslims. This quote also provides an example of how, in many cases, the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" are used interchangeably, even though they are not synonyms. There are indeed many non-Muslim Arabs, and arguably even more non-Arab Muslims around the world. As such, conflating these terms reflects either a lack of understanding, or a willful disregard, of the realities of the situation. Of course, this is hardly a uniquely French issue, and one could probably hear similar sentiments in many European and North American countries.

It should also be mentioned that, historically, Muslims have not been the only group perceived in this way. For instance, following the French Revolution, Jews were initially unable to receive French citizenship, as it was believed that the nature of their religious identity made it impossible for them to fully integrate into French society as an individual.[49] This was during the extremes of the Revolutionary era, however, and, despite lingering anti-Semitism, the position did soften somewhat overtime. Besides

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[48] Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 61–2.
[49] Ibid., 117.

gaining the right to citizenship, provisions were put in place in 1905 to accommodate certain aspects of Jewish religious law within the body of French civil law. Based on this precedent, the Stasi Commission refuted the idea that Islam was inherently incompatible with French society, and suggested that a similar compromise might be reached between Islamic and French law.[50] Granted, said compromises may very well be less fair than such wording might suggest, but this shows that, at least more recently, there has been some official recognition that Islam is not fundamentally irreconcilable with French society and values.

The path to any such compromise, while constantly struggling against anti-Muslim sentiments, has also faced some serious setbacks. The Iranian Revolution (1978-9) bolstered many pre-existing concerns about Islam in France. The sensationalized extremism and militancy portrayed in media coverage of angry crowds marching through the streets led to a surge in distrust of Muslims in many countries, including France, which in turn led to broad generalizations and further misunderstandings, including fears that a similar uprising could occur elsewhere. This process has been credited by some as reinforcing the perception of Muslims as a homogenous mass, constructed as a counterpoint, or even a foil, to Republican France.[51] It does seem somewhat unlikely that everyone would go to such an extreme, but it is not difficult to see how the Revolution had a negative impact on the relations between French Muslims and French citizens of other faiths. A similar, though arguably much more damaging, effect occurred following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. The known involvement of North Africans in

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[50] Commission de Réflexion sur L'Application du Principe de Laïcité dans la République, *Rapport Au Président de La République*, 16.
[51] Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 69–71.

both the 9/11 attacks and other plots in subsequent years, including some in France, led to

massive spikes of Islamophobia. Additionally, the new War on Terror and its

accompanying jumps in security and anti-terror legislation made the situation hit much

closer to home.[52] The increasing association between Islam and radicalism during this

period, and the struggles of those trying to refute such associations, has made the subject

of Muslim identity very difficult to navigate, and has seriously hindered the ability of the

public to engage in constructive dialogue.[53]

These tensions came to a head in France in 2004, with the passing of the so-called

"Veil Ban". On March 15th of that year, a law was passed that forbid any "conspicuous"

displays of religious affiliations in public schools.[54] While this technically applied to all

religions, and other symbols like yarmulkes were also forbidden, it was widely accepted

as being targeted specifically at the hijab, which had come to be seen by some as a blatant

rejection of French identity.[55] As one might expect, the law stirred up a tremendous

amount of controversy. The state defended itself in part with the findings of the Stasi

Commission, which concluded both that laïcité was fully compatible with religious

freedom, and that the state had the ability to restrict said freedom if it was judged that the

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[52] Alison Pargeter, "North African Immigrants in Europe and Political Violence," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 8 (December 2006): 731–2, 735.

[53] Jytte Klausen, "Muslims Representing Muslims in Europe: Parties and Associations After 9/11," in *Muslims in Western Politics*, ed. Abdulkader H. Sinno (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 96–7.

[54] *Loi N° 2004-228 Du 15 Mars 2004 Encadrant, en application du principe de laïcité, le port de signes ou de tenues manifestant une appartenance religieuse dans les écoles, collèges et lycées publics, 2004-228*, 2004, http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000417977&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id.

[55] Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 35, 2.

religion's goals or values threatened public order or rights protected by the state.[56] Rhetorically, this makes sense. The wearing of headscarves, or theoretically even giant crosses, was seen as threatening the atmosphere of secular freedom of thought and belief protected from outside religious influences that French public schools sought to foster. There is not necessarily anything really wrong with this in principle, as long as it is enforced fairly and universally. If it is, then no one group is having their beliefs oppressed, and the students' freedom of expression is no more restricted than under any other school dress code. The real problem is ensuring that it is fairly enforced.

Supporters of the law also held it up as an act in defense of the rights of young Muslim women, who they saw as being oppressed under the antiquated, misogynistic garment, robbing them of freedom and individuality. Critics flatly rejected this, pointing out that such logic completely removed all agency from the girls, besides the fact that many freely chose to wear headscarves for a wide variety of reasons and with no pressure from their families.[57] The critics seem to have more of a point in this regard. While minors are generally not given full decision-making rights under the law, and you could still argue that it may be forbidden within the confines of public classrooms, the justifications used to defend this legislation effectively tell these young girls that their choices of individual expression are not really valid, and that they do not truly know what is best for themselves, but the state does. This seems to be a case of the defense causing more trouble than the law itself.

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[56] Commission de Réflexion sur L'Application du Principe de Laïcité dans la République, *Rapport Au Président de La République*, 20–1, 25.
[57] Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 129–30, 136–150.

The real controversy underlying all of this was that, despite the efforts to make it as fair as possible, or to dress it up as a matter of civil rights, the law still generally came across as strongly Islamophobic. Joan Wallach Scott, while being quite openly biased against the law, makes a fairly convincing argument that the hijab was merely a target of convenience. She points out that, according to a 2003 poll, while fifty-one percent of Muslim women in France claimed to be actively practicing their religion, only fourteen percent of them said that they wore a headscarf. Based on that, it is not really a matter of numbers, of schools being flooded by girls wearing hijabs. Rather, she argues, it is merely the most visible public manifestation of Islam in France, and as such, it was specifically targeted in order to exaggerate the differences between the cultures. Scott gives a couple of possible reasons for this, though they are by no means mutually exclusive. One is that overstating the cultural gap supports the narrative of Islam's incompatibility with French society. The other possibility she puts forward is that the "Veil Ban" came about as a reaction to the growing supranational authority of the European Union. That is, highlighting a clear "Other" and forcing them to assimilate into the mainstream identity served to reaffirm France's own national sovereignty in the face of external encroachment.[58] This is a very intriguing line of thought. Taking both factors into account, the 2004 law provided French policymakers the chance to reel in Muslim cultural influence and reaffirm the state's sovereignty in a single move. If that was indeed the rationale, it was a very clever, if controversial, political maneuver. Unfortunately, without internal documents detailing the policymakers' thought process, this theory should not be taken as solid fact.

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[58] Ibid., 3–7.

Beyond legislation, one of the most tangible ways in which anti-Muslim sentiment in France has been felt is in the labor market. One particularly disquieting study, published in 2010, sent out multiple CVs to French companies that were "identical in form and content (except for the religious identity signals)". The CVs attributed to one "Marie Diouf", a more French sounding name, received a twenty-one percent positive response rate, while the CVs for "Khadija Diouf", a more Muslim sounding name, only had an eight percent positive response rate. This shows that in France, a Muslim job candidate is "2.5 times less likely to obtain a job interview than his or her Christian counterpart."[59] Just having a Muslim sounding name was enough for a candidate's positive response rate to drop by thirteen percent. This must be a discouraging statistic for French Muslims trying to enter the job market, and could be interpreted as evidence of a block on socio-economic advancement.

A certain amount of anti-Muslim sentiment is not a new aspect of French politics and social dynamics. However, it is an issue that has been increasingly thrust into the spotlight in recent decades, due to both the issues of immigration and identity becoming more central, as well as large spikes in Islamaphobia following events like the Iranian Revolution and 9/11. The atmosphere of distrust and discrimination as led to many Muslims in France feeling as though their faith has been singled out and targeted by French society, which promotes a sense of alienation and disaffection.

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[59] Claire L. Adida, David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort, "Identifying Barriers to Muslim Integration in France," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107, no. 52 (December 28, 2010): 22387–8, 22385.

<u>The Far-Right and Identity Politics</u>

The state of the French identity debate changed drastically in the 1980's with the return of the far-right as a significant political player for the first time since the end of the Algerian War. The key party in this resurgence was the Front National. The FN was created to modernize the far-right, and make its platform palatable to a much broader audience. Despite its enthusiasm, the party remained on the outskirts until the European Parliament elections of 1984. The FN, by then under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen, secured nearly eleven percent of the vote, earning the party ten of France's seats in the EP. This victory ended up giving the FN the boost it needed to enter the mainstream, and it has subsequently consistently earned around ten to fifteen percent of the votes in French national elections, culminating with Marine Le Pen receiving 17.9% of the vote in the 2012 Presidential election. The party's success has continued to grow into 2014, when, during the local mayoral elections in March, FN candidates won control of eleven towns, smashing past their previous record of four.[60] This trend suggests that the far-right, at least as exemplified by the FN, is truly no longer a faction that can be written off or forced to the sidelines.

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[60] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 169,192–3; Wadia, "France: From Unwilling Host to Bellicose Gatekeeper," 190; Norwegian Social Science Data Services, "Dataset: France: Presidential Election 2012," *European Election Database*, accessed March 29, 2014, http://eed.nsd.uib.no/webview/index.jsp?study=http%3A%2F%2F129.177.90.166%3A80 %2Fobj%2FStudy%2FFRPR2012&mode=cube&v=2&cube=http%3A%2F%2F129.177. 90.166%3A80%2Fobj%2FCube%2FFRPR2012_C1&top=yes; "French Socialists Suffer Major Blow in Local Elections," Text, *EurActiv,* March 31, 2014, http://www.euractiv.com/sections/elections/french-socialists-suffer-major-blow-local-elections-301233; Alissa J. Rubin, "National Front Wins Support and Elections," *The New York Times*, April 1, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/02/world/europe/moderation-pays-off-for-a-far-right-party-in-france.html.

The reason that the FN's breakout onto the French political scene is important in this discussion is because the party built its platform on identity and nationalism. During its rise in the 1980's and 1990's, the Front National built itself up as a fringe party, emphasizing its outsider status in contrast to the corrupt insiders of the established political order. And, as scholars have noted, at the time it "invariably thrived on the role."[61] The fact that this party persona worked so well for them suggests that many on far-right in France felt the same way, that they were outsiders specifically excluded from French politics. This is a very interesting parallel to the minority immigrants in France that they tended to rail against.

In 1989, the FN assembled an entire lecture series on identity issues, focusing on those that affected the well being of the nation as a whole. Specifically, this included talks on the questioning of identity, the rights that go along with identity, and European versus French identity.[62] This suggests that the FN was aware of the growing identity crisis in France, and was seeking to capitalize on the more widely held concerns. By the early 1990's, these topics had largely coalesced into the question of immigration. In 1992, the FN announced that the "invasion" of immigrants (especially Muslims) posed a "terroristic" threat, stating that:

> The presence on our territory of more and more ethnic groups […] poses a
> problem for civil peace. […] There have already been numerous ethnic and racial
> conflicts in the cities: French against foreigners, Blacks against Arabs, Jews
> against Blacks […] Turks against Kurds […] could you imagine a better
> demonstration of the risks involved in a multiracial, multicultural society?[63]

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[61] Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present*, 136.
[62] Ibid., 137.
[63] Ibid., 136–8.

This quote really speaks volumes about the FN's perspective of immigrants at the time. It is interesting to note that there is a distinction between "French" and "foreigners", while the other oppositions are presented as specific ethnicities, implicitly suggesting that whoever is not "French" by their definition is foreign, and that none of the other groups mentioned appear to be included in the former. Beyond that, the quote effectively says that multiculturalism is inimical to peace and order. While many people in France likely shared some concerns over immigration and its resulting questions, the FN's hostile rhetoric shows that the party itself was still on the extreme right.

The surprising part is that the Front National's radical stances struck a chord with the voters. Polls taken during the 1990's showed that forty-six percent of French citizens who identified themselves as being on the political right said that they agreed with some of the FN's ideas. Shockingly, twenty-four percent of the supporters of the Parti Socialiste and the Parti Communiste Français also said that they agreed with the FN's stance on immigration.[64] Such cross-party support is very revealing. It could simply speak to the strength of Jean-Marie Le Pen's charisma, but it seems more likely that the issue really was becoming more of a concern to many voters, and they began to find the FN's questioning of the issue preferable to some of the alternatives.

This shift in opinion provides an excellent example of how the Front National managed to capitalize on the topics of immigration and national identity to rise to even greater prominence, and, in doing so, brought much of the French far-right with it. The process began in the early 1980's, when the FN found itself without any major competition amongst the far-right, which allowed them to consolidate their base and draw

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[64] Wadia, "France: From Unwilling Host to Bellicose Gatekeeper," 191.

in a diverse range of supporters from across that end of the political spectrum.[65] This not

only gave the party more power in the polls, but also arguably allowed it to speak for and,

more importantly for this discussion, be heard by more people.

As scholars have pointed out, this swell in support both within and outside of their

party gave the FN the ability to set the political agenda on immigration. This, in turn,

helped them to pull more moderate votes away from the at-times disorganized center-

right parties, further enlarging their base.[66] Interestingly, however, this influx of moderate

support arguably had a greater impact on the FN than vice-versa. Just because they were

able to win the voters with their positions on immigration, does not mean that they would

be guaranteed to keep them, especially once the center-right parties began to adapt. As a

result, the FN became much more moderate over time. For instance, compared to the

rhetoric from the early 1990s discussed above, by the early 2000s, the FN had "moved

beyond the simplistic equation between immigrants and unemployment, and the

systematic repatriation of legally resident and legally employed immigrants no longer

features expressly in its programme."[67] As the FN has come to be the most prominent,

and possibly most diverse, party on the French far-right, this broadening of the FN's

platform and softening of some of its policies has had the curious effect of pulling the far-

right and center-right closer together as both sides struggle to win over the voters. As

noted by one commenter after the FN's electoral victories in March 2014, "The big

mistake of the French right is that each time the National Front wins votes, the right

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[65] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 196.
[66] Michelle Hale Williams, "A New Era for French Far Right Politics? Comparing the FN under Two Le Pens," *Análise Social* 46, no. 201 (January 1, 2011): 683; Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 36–8.
[67] Shields, *The Extreme Right in France*, 315.

adopts the National Front's themes."[68] Additionally, in the political reshuffling following

the Parti Socialiste's losses, President François Hollande named Manuel Valls, "the most

rightwing figure in the upper echelons of the French Socialist party," as the new prime

minister.[69] While this is not an adoption of the FN's policies, it does reflect that Holland

and his party feel that they must start leaning more towards the right if they are going to

maintain their political position.

This process of "mainstreaming" is in many ways exemplified by Marine Le

Pen's current leadership of the party. Taking over in 2011, she has presented a much

more polished and intellectual appearance than that put forward by her father with his

reputation as a "bruiser". Since then, the younger Le Pen has put a tremendous effort into

cleaning up the FN's image. This has taken the form of both the actual softening of

policies regarding immigration, identity, Islam, etc., as well as actively distancing the

party from its more extreme past. Compare, for instance, Jean-Marie's infamous referral

to the Holocaust as "a mere detail of history" to Marine's description of it as "the

ultimate act of barbarism."[70] While it is possible that this is more of a political tactic than

a genuine shift in opinion (especially given some of Marine Le Pen's other comments[71]),

it does show that the Front National's leadership is aware that the elder Le Pen's rhetoric

is not going to grow their support much. A good example of this awareness is Marine Le

Pen's response to a controversial law banning hate speech. Referring specifically to the

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[68] Rubin, "National Front Wins Support and Elections."

[69] "Hollande Dares to Turn to the Right," *Financial Times*, April 1, 2014, http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/0ac75c94-b98a-11e3-957a-00144feabdc0.html?siteedition=intl#axzz2xySITMcK.

[70] Celestine Bohlen, "Marine Le Pen Struggles With Father's Legacy," *The New York Times*, January 13, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/14/world/europe/marine-le-pen-struggles-with-fathers-legacy.html.

[71] See page 71-2.

case of the highly controversial comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala and his anti-Semitic remarks, she strongly denounces the censorship enabled by the law while simultaneously putting as much space between herself and the FN, and Diedonné, who also happens to be a close friend of her father's.[72] This shows the recognition that an association with the comedian and, to an extent, Jean-Marie Le Pen is politically toxic.

Overall, the process of moderating and "mainstreaming" the French far-right has paid off for them. Besides the growing electoral successes, the presence of the far-right, as well as the center-right's efforts to reclaim some of their lost votes, has resulted in an increase in more right-leaning legislation and government policies. One of the more prominent examples of this is the alleged efforts that have been made to manipulate the historical narrative to something more favorable to their platform. Perhaps the most controversial example of this is the law passed on February 23, 2005. This legislation, whose purpose was to bring long overdue recognition to the sacrifices and suffering of those involved in France's colonial wars in North Africa did contain some positive provisions. For instance, Article 5 expressly forbids discrimination or defamation of anyone based on their "real or supposed" status as a harki.[73] This seems to be a step in the right direction, as, no matter what one's opinions of the harkis may be, their children and grandchildren should not be judged and discriminated against because of the side they chose in the past. However, the law also included the now infamous Article 4, which states, in part:

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[72] Ibid.

[73] *Loi N° 2005-158 Du 23 Février 2005 portant reconnaissance de la nation et contribution nationale en faveur des français rapatriés,* http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000444898&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id.

Scholarly programs must recognize in particular the positive role of the French presence overseas, notably in North Africa, and accord to the history and the sacrifices of the combatants of the French army coming from these territories the distinguished place to which they are entitled.[74]

To be fair, any possible positive effects of the French influence in North Africa should be given acknowledgement within the historical narrative. However, the fact that the same requirement for recognition is not extended to the negative consequences of colonization is a glaring omission, and one that raises some serious red flags.

This law was quickly met with outrage, especially amongst historians. Writing in *Le Monde diplomatique*, Claude Liauzu argued that by legally mandating that one side of the story be taught without offering the same protection to the other side, the law was threatening the French people's freedom of thought.[75] This may come across as a bit of an exaggeration, but he does make a good point. While it may not forbid contrary viewpoints, only requiring one side to be taught implicitly labels that as the preferred narrative, as well as arguably giving it more legitimacy in some circles. Similarly, Scott points out the concerns many historians had that the prioritizing of the more "positive" presentation of colonialism would serve only to agitate France's North African immigrant population, causing even more political and social tensions.[76] These were certainly valid concerns. The provisions of Article 4 could easily be read as a marginalization of the hardships faced by France's colonial subjects in favor of the pieds-noirs, a notion that many people of North African descent could understandably find upsetting.

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[74] Ibid. "Les programmes scolaires reconnaissent en particulier le rôle positif de la présence française outre-mer, notamment en Afrique du Nord, et accordent à l'histoire et aux sacrifices des combattants de l'armée française issus de ces territoires la place éminente à laquelle ils ont droit."
[75] Claude Liauzu, "At War with France's Past," *Le Monde diplomatique*, June 2006, http://mondediplo.com/2005/06/19colonisation.
[76] Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 86–7.

In any case, the controversy was strong enough that on February 16, 2006, just shy of a year later, a presidential decree dropped the entire passage quoted above from Article 4.[77] This could suggest a few things. One is that while there may have been enough support to get this law instituted, there was not as much public support for the ideas it contained. It could also be interpreted as a move by President Jacques Chirac, a member of the center-right Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP), to either strike back at some further-right elements, or to try to distance the UMP from said groups. Unfortunately, it is difficult to reach a conclusion on this with any certainty.

There have been other, broader criticisms of the far-right manipulating the historical narrative to suit its political goals. Le Sueur has made such accusations on multiple occasions. Interestingly, he lays the blame primarily at the feet of the French National Archives. He argues that their strict control of state documents has left a large gap in the historiography of the Algerian War and subsequent identity issues, a gap that has given the far-right much more room to create its own version of the story.[78] Assuming this is true, the lack of access to vital documents could indeed be quite damaging to the historical narrative. However, it could also be argued that this goes both ways. Far-Left or even radical Islamist groups could potentially seize upon the opportunity to create their own version of the story, one that suits their needs best.

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[77] *Loi N° 2005-158 Du 23 Février 2005 portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des français rapatriés*.

[78] James D. Le Sueur, "Beyond Decolonization? The Legacy of the Algerian Conflict and the Transformation of Identity in Contemporary France," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 28, no. 2 (July 1, 2002): 279–80; James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 2–3.

Overall, the French far-right, at least as exemplified by the Front National, has in the long run benefitted considerably from France's identity crisis, using questions of identity, immigration, and nationalism to break into mainstream politics. This process has also resulted in both the far-right becoming more moderate and, as a response, the center leaning further to the right.

Progress Towards Recognition

Despite the somewhat dismal picture this chapter creates of the position of Muslims and North Africans in France, especially with regards to identity and recognition, there has indeed been some degree of progress. Arguably the most defining moment in this regard came in 1983. Frustrated by the treatment and perception of Algerians in France, demonstrators organized the "Marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme" ("March for Equality and Against Racism") in order to try to enact a change. Beginning on October 15 over 100,000 people ended up marching from Marseille to Paris.[79] Unlike the tragic outcome of the October 1961 demonstration in Paris, these marchers managed to find success. On December 3, President François Mitterand received a "delegation of eight marchers – four 'beurs', three boys from the Minguettes [lower income area south of Lyon], one girl from Annonay, of Algerian origin, and four young 'French' people." In the meeting, it was agreed that immigrants would begin receiving 10-year residence permits and that the French state would begin to crack down harder on hate crimes.[80] Not only did the marchers make themselves heard peacefully,

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[79] Beaud and Masclet, "Des «marcheurs» de 1983 aux «émeutiers» de 2005," 809, 813.
[80] Ibid. "une delegation de huit marcheurs – quatre «beurs», trois garçons des Minguettes, une fille d'Annonay, d'origine algérienne, et quatre jeunes «Français»".

but the composition of their delegation shows that there was relatively broad support for the movement. Bouzid, who participated in the march, also attests to the diversity of the demonstrators, saying that they were composed of people of all ages and religions.[81]

The importance of this event should not be underestimated. Azouz Begag even went so far as to compare the 1983 march to civil rights movements in the United States in the 1960's, seeing it as both a turning point in the recognition of Algerians in France, as well as a marker of the shift towards more long-term planning in the struggle for wider acceptance.[82] This legacy may have arguably helped to set the stage for later peaceful efforts to achieve social recognition.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The identity crisis in France is an incredibly complex and controversial topic to deal with. North Africans and Muslims in France have been struggling to find their place within French society, only to encounter strong stereotypes and a significant ethnic penalty in the labor market. Such factors have led to them feeling alienated, and even targeted, by French society. By contrast, the far-right, while formerly feeling similarly ostracized, has used issues of identity to escape the political fringe and enter the "mainstream", where their competition with the center-right for votes has ended up blurring the lines between both sides.

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[81] Bouzid, *La Marche, Traversée de la France profonde*, 14.
[82] Begag, *Ethnicity & Equality*, 16–7.

Chapter Three: Identity and Radicalism in France

Attempting to draw any kind of definitive link between the French identity debate and the spread of radicalism in France would be extremely difficult at best, given the lack of hard data available on any such link. However, when one examines some of the commonly identified factors leading to radicalization, many of them seem to be linked to the sentiments produced by French identity politics. Namely, the sense of alienation and a lack of community that identity issues engender amongst both the Algerian (and broader Muslim community) and the extreme right communities in France feed directly into the common recruiting tactics used by radical groups. Additionally, some of the debate's aspects specifically related to the situation in France further exacerbate the issue. Yet, despite the identity politics producing an environment that seems strongly conducive to the spread of radicalism, younger generations are increasingly exploring alternative forms of expression, showing that while they may appear to be prime candidates for radicalization, they are instead choosing more peaceful options.

Common Factors Leading to Radicalism

Examining the origins of radicalization can be difficult as, much like identity, it is a very contextual issue. What draws people towards extremist beliefs in one place and time might not necessarily apply in another. However, there are some common factors found across the spectrum of radicalism. One of the key elements is a sense of alienation from broader society and the resultant search for acceptance in an alternate community. This has been a much-discussed aspect in examining why some European Muslims

turned towards radicalism. In his interviews of Islamist extremists, Marc Sageman found that sixty percent of them were radicalized while living as expatriates, most of which were of middle class, somewhat religious, backgrounds and had gone to Europe as students. Many of them came to feel homesick and distanced from Western society, eventually spending more time at mosques for a taste of the familiar. Unfortunately, more radical members of the community used these relationships to exploit the feelings of alienation in order to spread extremist ideas.[1] In such cases, it is arguably more a case of culture shock, as well as a certain vulnerability coming from the feeling of being alone in an alien place. This offered extremist recruiters the opportunity to step in with offers of friendship and understanding. It is also possible that middle class students may have been more susceptible to this, as they may not have ever felt such a sense of marginalization at home.

Sageman also found that twenty percent of his interviewees were second or third generation immigrants in Western countries, the children of the migrant workers who came to Europe during the period of rebuilding following the Second World War. Unlike the previous group, "They came from a completely secular background and attended secular state schools," were largely lower class, and learned quickly that they were treated differently from their non-immigrant classmates. This understandably bred resentment, which led many of the younger people in this position towards delinquency and crime. Many also sought refuge in religion, hoping to find something more in their lives. Radical elements took advantage of this, again offering them understanding and a community that accepts them, as well as providing them with extremist ideas that feed off

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[1] Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 65, 67–8.

of their criticisms of the society that rejected them.[2] This course seems to give them direction and the chance to defend their newly strengthened faith and strike at their perceived aggressors. The sense of being a part of a global struggle also likely plays a role in this.

Interestingly, Sageman notes that this process of radicalization has had a much smaller effect on women than men. He explains this with the fact that there is a much smaller employment gap between European Muslim women and non-Muslim women than the gap that exists amongst their male counterparts.[3] There is some evidence to support this idea. In examining immigrant labor in France, Meurs et al. found that from 1982-1999, while employment amongst male immigrants dropped by eleven percent, the female immigrant employment rate grew by a staggering forty-nine percent.[4] This alone could explain why fewer women seem to have been drawn towards radical Islamist ideas. Where second and third generation men have been seeing their opportunities shrink, women have found them growing. This greater economic success and opportunity is arguably more conducive to a successful integration (other social issues of marginalization aside), which in turn leaves them less vulnerable to radicalization.

It has been argued that women are less likely to turn towards violent extremism, but that idea generally tends to fall flat. Increasingly since the 1980's, terrorist organizations have employed female operatives and suicide bombers for a variety of reasons, including the fact that women are often less likely to be perceived as a threat.

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[2] Ibid., 65, 68–9.
[3] Ibid., 69.
[4] Dominique Meurs, Ariane Pailhé, and Patrick Simon, "The Persistence of Intergenerational Inequalities Linked to Immigration: Labour Market Outcomes for Immigrants and Their Descendants in France," *Population (English Edition, 2002-)* 61, no. 5/6 (September 1, 2006): 650.

Additionally, the growing presence of female operatives in organizations like the

Chechen Al Ansar al-Mujahideen and the Palestinian organization Fatah's military wing

shows that militant Islamist organizations are more than willing to accept them. Mia

Bloom, Professor of International Affairs at the University of Georgia, has also noted

that, even when not personally partaking in violent acts, women have historically enjoyed

prominent positions in extremist organizations as varied as "the Russian Narodnaya

Volya, […] the Irish Republican Army, the Baader-Meinhof organization in Germany,

the Italian Red Brigades, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine."[5] This

demonstrates that gender alone does not necessarily play a role in one's attraction to an

extremist ideology.

The use of alienation as a recruiting tool is not exclusive to Islamist radicals,

however. The tactic is just as prominent amongst far-right extremist groups, though it

manifests in slightly different ways. In a 2005 study conducted by Tore Bjørgo and

Yngve Carlsson examining youth involvement in racist and xenophobic groups, Bjørgo

and Carlsson argue that the desire to attain social status and find an identity is "perhaps

the most important factor" in drawing young people towards such groups. In many of the

cases that they examined, the young people joining racist groups had few friends and

were often the victims of bullying. By becoming members of these groups, the youths not

only gained acceptance and a group identity, but by displaying visible signs of their new

affiliations (such as shaving their heads if they join a skinhead group), they gained

protection from bullies and in some cases even become feared by others.[6] Much like for

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[5] Mia Bloom, "Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend," *Daedalus* 136, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 94–5, 97–8.
[6] Bjørgo and Carlsson, *Early Intervention with Violent and Racist Youth Groups*, 21.

young Muslims or others drawn to Islamist extremism, those joining racist/xenophobic groups are often attracted by the promise of acceptance, understanding, and even protection from a society that they feel rejects them. For teenagers that feel like they do not belong, such factors can be tremendously powerful motivators.

There are also a couple of factors this study brings up that could be applied to both radical right and Islamist radical groups. For instance, some of those interviewed said that they joined racist or ultranationalist groups primarily out of a sense of youthful rebellion, which more "traditional" leftist movements and ideas no longer evoke: "As one young nationalist activist put it, 'if you really want to provoke society these days, you have to become either a National Socialist or a Satanist!'".[7] When this is the case, it is less a matter of actual hatred or prejudice than it is teenagers trying to get the biggest reaction out of the "establishment" as possible. It is not really that much of a stretch to think that others might adopt radical Islam for the same reason, especially in countries with high levels of cultural and religious tension. This leads to another important point made in the study. When examining why people turn to radicalism, the distinction must be made between those who join radical movements out of motivation, and those who join out of expression.[8] That is, distinguishing between those who become radicalized because they truly believe in the cause, and those who adopt radicalism because they are acting out, or only seeking acceptance that they do not feel they receive in their regular lives. This is an important distinction to make not only for increasing our understanding of radicalization in general, but also because it can potentially help counter-radicalization programs become more effective. If those who do not truly believe in the extremist

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[7] Ibid., 20.
[8] Ibid., 12.

causes can be more readily identified and shown alternatives, hopefully they can leave the radical groups before participating in any violent behavior.

It is interesting to note that such a process seems to naturally occur amongst some far-right radical groups. In places like Norway, which has a relatively small neo-Nazi contingent, many of the smaller youth organizations do not last very long because most of the members leave before they turn twenty.[9] Basically, such groups are not large or strong enough to offer young people more than an outlet for rebellion and attention, and, as such, those who only joined for those reasons tend not to stick around for very long. This stands in contrast with Sweden, which has a much stronger far-right contingent. There, such groups have more influence and social support, and so people stay involved for longer periods of time. Due to this, the youth groups serve more as feeders for the larger, more dedicated organizations, with a higher average membership age.[10] Since these groups are more successful and offer more to their members, people are less likely to leave on their own, at least not before spending a significant amount of time in the organization. These examples also show how important context is in determining the nature and effectiveness of a given form of radicalism.

It must be said that despite the fact that the above studies are being focused primarily on people in their twenties or younger, radicalization is not at all limited to these age groups. People of any age can take up a radical ideology. However, many of the key factors that make people susceptible to radicalization are especially effective amongst younger people trying to find their place in the world.

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[9] Ibid., 13.
[10] Ibid., 12–3.

Islamist Extremism in France

Moving to France specifically, there are many aspects of the French identity crisis that can create an environment favorable to the spread of Islamist radicalism. A major tool of Islamist recruiters is the widely perpetuated narrative of a global war against Islam. This strategy essentially takes the actions and laws of different states and twists their meaning or intention in order to perpetuate the idea that Islam is being specifically targeted.[11] This narrative can also build upon existing feelings of alienation, as it offers an explanation. For example, it could be argued that younger generations of North African immigrants in France are given few socio-economic prospects and are not fully accepted as "French" because they are Muslim, and as such are being categorically targeted and rejected. Unfortunately, some parts of French identity politics have made spinning these narratives too easy for the Islamist recruiters.

A key example here is the 2004 Veil Ban. While the *hijab* was not specifically singled out in the law itself, it was generally interpreted as being the primary target. Looking at it from the perspective of an Islamist radical, it is not difficult to construe this as a blatant attack on Islam. Not only does it bar the wearing of arguably the most visible and tangible symbol of the faith in schools, but it also sends the message to young Muslims that their religion is not acceptable in France. By using arguments like these, Islamist recruiters can spin an already controversial piece of legislation into a major piece of propaganda. Marine Le Pen's December 2010 comments referring to Muslims praying in French streets as an "occupation of our territory" and comparing it to the Nazi

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[11] Presidency of the Council of the European Union and EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, *The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, 2005, 8.

occupation of the Second World War could also be used to similar ends.[12] While a supporter of hers could argue that praying of any kind in a public space is a violation of French secularism, Islamists could read it as evidence that the French already see them as an invading enemy. Le Pen's growing poll numbers can likewise be seen as an indication that such views are becoming more widespread in France. While these arguments may not be the strongest, for someone who already feels as though they are rejected by French society, they may be enough.

More broadly speaking, the question of identity in France has left many Muslims in positions conducive to radicalization. As was discussed in the last chapter, identity politics have resulted in many of them, especially of North African descent, feeling like they do not truly belong in either French society or the culture of their parents. Harkis and their descendants bear the additional burden of being ostracized by the rest of their countrymen on both sides of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, many second and third generation immigrants face relatively limited economic opportunities compared to their "native" French counterparts, especially if they are coming from the *banlieues*. These factors can all lead people towards extremism.

For proof of this, one needs only to examine the case of Mohammed Merah. A French citizen of Algerian descent, Merah had become a radical Islamist by the time he turned twenty-four, and made unconfirmed claims of ties to al Qaeda. In March 2012, Merah launched a series of attacks in and around Toulouse, shooting and killing seven people before being killed in a police shootout. His victims included three French soldiers (two of which were Muslim, one of which was of African descent), a Jewish teacher, and

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[12] "Marine Le Pen Loses Immunity as MEP in Racism Case," *EurActiv.com*, http://www.euractiv.com/justice/marine-le-pen-loses-immunity-mep-news-529044.

three Jewish children. Merah stated that his attacks were in response to French

involvement in the Middle East, Israeli settlement in Palestine, and the 2004 Veil Ban.

However, a former friend of his highlighted what may have been the true reasons for his

turn to extremist violence:

> Our passports may say that we are French, but we don't feel French because we
> were never accepted here. No one can excuse what he did, but he is a product of
> French society, of the feeling that he had no hope and nothing to lose. It was not
> Al Qaeda that created Mohammed Merah. It was France.[13]

This sobering statement reveals how big a role that identity politics can play in

radicalization. It is also very telling that those who grew up with him in the same

conditions can completely understand his motivations, even if they find his actions

abhorrent and inexcusable.

Far-Right Extremism in France

While there have been fewer high-profile instances of far-right extremist violence

in France in recent years, especially since the collapse of the OAS, it is still a significant

area of concern. Interestingly, according to data collected by Europol, the larger, more

established far-right groups seem to have little involvement in violent extremism, with

the real threat coming from smaller organizations and lone actors. It is also worth noting

that of the major right-wing terror attacks (or attempted attacks) mentioned in the 2012

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[13] Edward Cody, "Mohammed Merah, Face of the New Terrorism," *Washington Post*,
March 22, 2012, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-03-
22/world/35450206_1_merah-french-soldier-french-council; Sayare and Erlanger, "4
Killed at Jewish School in Southwestern France"; Bilefsky, "Toulouse Killer's Path a
Bitter Puzzle"; Karl E. Meyer, "Who Gets to Be French?," *The New York Times*, April
11, 2012, sec. Opinion, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/12/opinion/who-gets-to-be-
french.html.

and 2013 *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Reports*, none of them occurred in France.[14]

There are a few possible explanations for this. One is that France has simply not reported

some incidents to Europol, which has been a noted problem in the past.[15] However, it

could also reveal something about the nature of far-right radicalism in France. For

example, it could suggest that the French far-right is by and large not radicalized enough

to advocate or utilize violence as a legitimate tool. This idea is supported by the apparent

softening of the FN's platform in recent years, and Marine Le Pen's efforts to distance

the party's image from the more extreme views of her father and his associates.[16] As the

FN is leading the far-right closer to the mainstream, it may very well be having a

tempering effect on groups with more extreme leanings. Likewise, its increasing success

in the polls may be minimizing the feeling of alienation felt by those on the far-right, and

showing that they can be heard through normal political channels without resorting to

violence. There is some evidence of this. When a leftist activist was beaten to death in a

fight with members of some now disbanded far-right groups, the FN denounced the

killing and described it as "appalling".[17] Admittedly, this is far from definitive, but the

possibility is certainly worth considering.

In any case, it must also be noted that far-right violence in France tends to

manifest in different ways than Islamist extremism. Namely, it has primarily taken the

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[14] European Police Office, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2012*, 2012, 28–9;
European Police Office, *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2013*, 2013, 35–7.
[15] EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, *EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy - Discussion Paper* (Brussels: Council of the European Union, May 23, 2012), 5,
http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st09/st09990.en12.pdf.
[16] Bohlen, "Marine Le Pen Struggles With Father's Legacy."
[17] "BBC News - Clement Meric Killing: France Bans Far-Right Groups,"
http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23262406.

form of either personal assaults or violence against public property.[18] While the dangers of such violence should not be minimized, these particular types of violence seem to be more characteristic of people lashing out in anger, rather than the planned, deliberate attacks like those of Mohammed Merah.

Much like with radical Islam, far-right radicals in France have been significantly impacted by the identity debate. Principally, radicalization on the extreme right has been fueled by anti-immigrant, and especially anti-Muslim, sentiments. At least one study has found that in the 1980's and 90's, as many as ninety-one percent of those perpetrating far-right violence claimed that their motivations were defensive. Furthermore, there have been claims that the French have become victims of immigrant colonization.[19] Essentially, the perception exists that immigrants are posing some kind of threat to "native" French citizens, either on a personal or national level. It is also quite interesting that those on the extreme right are construing themselves as the victims of a foreign assault on France and its values. Theoretically, this narrative could help create fear and boost recruitment.

<center>Alternate Forms of Expression</center>

It is essential to note that, while French identity politics do create conditions conducive to radicalization, that does not mean that people will automatically become radicalized. In the last couple of decades, there have been noticeable strides, especially amongst young French Muslims, in finding alternative, nonviolent forms of expression.

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[18] Fiammetta Venner, *Extrême France: les mouvements frontistes, nationaux-radicaux, royalistes, catholiques traditionalistes et provie* (Paris: Grasset, 2006), 476.
[19] Ibid., 467.

Amel Boubekeur has described this as a transition from classical Islamism, which promotes violence against perceived enemies of Islam, to "'cool' Islam, freed from the scars of old Islamist rhetoric".[20] This "cool" Islam has largely taken the form of concerts, theatrical pieces, Islamic cultural festivals, etc. that incorporate elements of Western secular culture with the hopes of reclaiming Islamic cultural identity and separating it from older perceptions of their religion, including radical Islamism.[21] This shows that many young French Muslims recognize the negative perceptions that many people have of their religion, but instead of turning to violence, resort to more positive, constructive outlets.

One of the best examples of this may be the popular rapper Abd al-Malik. Born Régis Fayette-Mikano to Congolese immigrants, he spent much of his youth engaging in criminal behavior. When he was sixteen, he converted from Catholicism to Islam and decided to turn his life around, eventually using music and poetry to confront France's issues of identity, acceptance, and multiculturalism. To this end, Malik's lyrics contain influences from major works in the Western canon, including those by Seneca and Albert Camus, in order to show that the different cultures and their ideas are not so incompatible. Overall, it seems to have worked out for him. He has won three "Urban Music" Album of the Year awards, a prize for political literature, and has been awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters.[22] That Abd al-Malik was able to

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[20] Amel Boubekeur, "Islam militant et nouvelles formes de mobilisation culturelle," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 52, no. 139 (July 1, 2007): 119. "islam «cool», libéré des stigmates des anciennes rhétoriques islamistes."
[21] Ibid., 121–2.
[22] Tobias Grey, "French Rapper Abd Al Malik on Mixing Hip-Hop and Camus," *Financial Times*, December 13, 2013, http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/4c93d632-5b59-11e3-848e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2ul9oU3z6; Scott Sayare, "Abd Al Malik, a Rapper,

achieve such resounding success shows that there is a significant market for his music and writing. This is a hopeful sign, serving as evidence that such alternative forms of expression can indeed get people to listen to peaceful calls for change.

Another rapper, Médine, has expressed similar sentiments. In an article he wrote for Time magazine in 2005, he says:

> But people of my generation are not shy about embracing their heritage, and, far from seeking invisibility, we're standing up to denounce the prejudice and injustice we face. In my case, Islam is an enormous part of who I am, just as being French is. The two aren't in opposition or even mutually exclusive.[23]

Instead of feeling ashamed of or embarrassed by his Algerian heritage, Médine uses his mixed identity as a source of strength and inspiration. Instead of running from the social conflict or confronting it violently, he seeks to take a peaceful stand against it, showing that there is no reason that one cannot be both French and Muslim, or French and Algerian. With the successes of people like al-Malik and Médine, hopefully successive generations will be more inspired to follow similar paths.

Interestingly, it seems that one would be more hard-pressed to find such prominent examples of alternative forms of expression amongst the far-right. There are a few possible reasons for this, but the most likely is that, at least at this time, the French far-right does not really have the need to explore alternative forms of expression. The FN's increasing success shows that they are, by and large, being heard by both their government and their countrymen, even if they remain in the minority. This stands in

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Pushes for a New French Identity of Inclusion," *The New York Times*, August 24, 2012, sec. World / Europe, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/25/world/europe/rapper-abd-al-malik-pushes-for-new-french-identity.html.

[23] Médine, "How Much More French Can I Be?," *Time*, November 6, 2005, http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,1126720,00.html.

contrast to the North African and Muslim communities, who, despite the promising results of the 1983 March, are still generally not being heard by French society at large.

One possible exception to this on the far-right may be the case of the comedian Dieudonné. Citing legislation banning hate speech, the French government moved to cancel several of his shows in January 2014, a move widely decried as an act of excessive and unnecessary censorship.[24] The argument could be made that Dieudonné's act could be seen as an alternative form of expression, as it allows him to express more extreme views and opinions that are not as acceptable in the more "mainstream" image that the FN has constructed for itself and the far-right as a whole. Even if one does take that as the case, though, his act does not carry the same spirit as that of people like Médine, for example. Where the latter promotes understanding and embracing differences, the former primarily seem to promote discrimination and stereotypes.

Conclusion

It can be frightening to see how little it can take for someone to embrace a radical ideology, especially in situations as complicated and, at times, seemingly intractable as racial and ethnic relations in France. Indeed, the environment that this discourse on identity has created for both French Muslims and those on the far-right of the political spectrum appears to be strongly favorable to the radicalization on both sides. Thankfully, though, the situation is not really as bleak as this may imply. While the conditions necessary for radicalization are there, younger generations are increasingly rejecting violent extremism. Instead, they are turning to nonviolent, constructive means of

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[24] Bohlen, "Marine Le Pen Struggles With Father's Legacy."

expression, and pushing for change through performance and peaceful dialogues. The commercial and social success of some members of this new wave of expression seems to suggest that many in France are willing to listen, and this gives some hope for more positive changes in the future.

Conclusion

In an interview with the New York Times in December 2012, Latifa Ibn Ziaten, a Morroccan immigrant, offered a new perspective on the Mohammed Merah attacks. Not long after the tragic shootings, she travelled to a lower-income immigrant neighborhood in Toulouse called Les Izards, where she asked around about Merah. Some of the young men she spoke to sang his praises for having stood up to the French, fighting back against their oppression – until she revealed that one of the soldiers Merah had killed was her son, Imad. The men swiftly apologized, saying that they were merely enthusiastic that someone from the same background as them had taken a stand, that their views were finally being heard. For her part, Ibn Ziaten did not hold a grudge against them or, seemingly, the shooter himself:

> These youth, they feel humiliated. […] They don't know where their place is. […] He took what was dearest to me; he took my son, my friend, my prince. […] But he was a victim of society.[1]

Despite the heinousness of Merah's actions, and the pain it caused for those who lost someone they cared for, there was still a sense of empathy. Another young man from the neighborhood, Younouss Zeroual, said that "Everyone says [Merah] was wrong […] But they understand the message he wanted to get across."[2] It speaks volumes that, while some have held the shooter up as a kind of champion of the downtrodden, even those that condemned his actions could easily see and, to an extent, appreciate his motives.

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[1] Scott Sayare, "After Toulouse Killings, an Area's Anger Runs Deep," *The New York Times*, December 19, 2012, sec. World / Europe, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/world/europe/after-toulouse-killings-an-areas-anger-runs-deep.html.
[2] Ibid.

These sentiments do not really seem so surprising after looking at the identity issues that have plagued France for the last half-century. The Algerian War of Independence left scars throughout French society, heightening the perception of North Africans and Muslims as incompatible "Others". Such perceptions fueled the identity crisis in France, which has led to these groups being alienated and marginalized by France socially, politically, and economically. For younger generations of immigrants growing up in France, this has been compounded by a disconnect from their parents' culture, due to a variety of reasons including pressures from French society and resentment over past choices, as in the case of the harkis. Their disillusionment from the French system has been exasperated by the rise to prominence of the Front National, whose successes have pushed overall French government policies further towards the right, including more anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments. For their part, those on the far-right have come to see the large presence of North Africans and Muslims as a threat to French identity and values.

Unfortunately, radicalism tends to feed off of the sentiments created by these politics of identity, capitalizing on these feelings to pull people into extremist ideologies. Thankfully, there have been some promising trends recently rejecting violent radicalism in favor of more peaceful forms of expression, due to a variety of factors across the political spectrum, from a desire to disprove stereotypes and reclaim Islamic identity from radicals, to a greater success in being heard through standard political means. Nevertheless, the identity crisis continues on, and as long as it does, it is still creating an environment conducive to radicalization. This setting may ultimately be more dangerous to France than any external threat, as the country is, in effect, helping to create its own

internal enemies. The underlying social and political factors of this phenomenon must be

properly addressed, or France may one day have to deal with another Mohammed Merah.

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