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FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
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The New French: A Focus on the Children of Algerian Descent in the Classroom

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The New French

A Focus on the Children of Algerian Descent in the Classroom

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Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA Program

Supervisors: Professor Philippe Couton and Professor Marie-Blanche Tahon

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Library and Archives
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395 Wellington Street
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Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61343-6
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61343-6

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Abstract: The purpose of this thesis is to elucidate the connection between the institution of the French educational system and its effects on the new French population (predominately children of Algerian immigrants). This thesis makes the connection between the high school or *lycée* and the social barriers its “minority” students experience within the school system. By focusing on two broad dimensions of the French school system; its structure and values, this thesis argues that the system produces inequalities amongst its students primarily because of its failure to recognise the multiethnic classroom. By contextualising colonial France in Algeria, this thesis shows the connection between France’s unique history and its educational institution as it relates to present day French culture. This thesis shows that the French educational system is so well established in its secular traditions that it no longer meets the needs of its students and consequently produces and reproduces exclusion and otherness.

Acknowledgements: I would like to express my appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Marie-Blanche Tahon for sharing her vast and invaluable knowledge on the historical and contemporary connections between Algerian, France, and the effects of the “second – generation” in Western Europe. I would like to thank Dr. Philippe Couton for his expertise on ethnic relations, integration and for reading through countless versions of this thesis. Lastly, I am grateful for the feedback provided by my committee members Dr. Ann Denis whose background in women’s issues and Dr. André Tremblay whose knowledge of education enriches this thesis.

For Rachida

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Introduction

In every country that receives significant numbers of immigrants, the question of the so-called “second generation” usually becomes highly significant; France is no exception. It has experienced waves of immigration over the past 50 years, and the children and grandchildren of these immigrants are now an important part of French society. The social and economic attainment of the children and grandchildren of immigrants has become a political issue and it has entered into the French media’s spotlight. On a more significant level, this social and economic attainment will have a durable impact on France as a whole. Nowhere has this new French population’s presence led to more debates than in the educational system; in fact, the schools have become important sites of political and religious debates alike. The educational experience of immigrant-origin, school-aged children in the French school system is the focus of this thesis.

This section of the thesis draws on France’s immigration history, particularly the pre-World War II influx of Algerians, and it provides insight about the ‘immigrant condition’ during that time and subsequently. The goal of the introduction is to set the tone and establish the context for the rest of thesis and to provide the necessary information for a better understanding into the group in question and the significance of history and the school system.

Chapter 1, the literature review and hypotheses, is meant to explore further the current debates and provide possible hypotheses. The literature review discusses the historical context of the immigrant, the “second generation” and the importance of nationalism and republicanism within France and within the school system. It continues

by discussing approaches to integration including France's preference for assimilation. By problematising the educational system, the chapter addresses gender issues that arise in a secular system with multiethnic classrooms. Lastly, chapter 1 provides research hypotheses explaining if and why the French educational system is failing a significant portion of its young people.

Chapter 2 offers an explanation of the methodological approach and operationalising key terms and concepts. Chapters 3 and 4 are analytical. They are separated into the themes of structure and values respectively and address key issues around the French school system and its students of Algerian origins. Lastly, chapter 6 concludes the arguments and provides recommendations regarding the research in question and the next steps that may be taken to rectify outstanding issues.

In this first section of the thesis, and in the same fashion as authors such as Abdelmaklek Sayad and Gérard Noiriel (1996), I will discuss the historical relationship between immigrants and France as I draw on contemporary accounts of Algerians and comparable groups. A description of the experiences of immigrants and their French born children will reveal the intricacies and nuances of French life. While maintaining an emphasis on Algerians, this chapter will draw on the works of sociologists and historians such as Michèle Tribalat and Gérard Noiriel for an analysis of the relationship between "white" France, its first generation, postwar immigrants and their French born children. This introductory chapter has three major parts: the historical context of immigration, the historical context of the education system, and contextualising the children of immigrants. These sections reflect the historical significance of both education and those with Algerian roots residing in France.

Historical Context of Immigration

Since colonisation, France has been accepting foreign workers and immigrants mostly from Western Europe and North Africa. The importance of history lies at the root of France's immigration trends and its policies regarding integration. The impact of large-scale immigration was further magnified by family reunification and the emergence of a "second generation" of French born children. This is the group of interest for this thesis because of its historical and contemporary importance in the development of France and the challenges posed to institutions such as the educational system.

In general, the difficulties encountered by immigrants and those with immigrant origins are not a new phenomenon; the issues concerning immigrants and their children derive from a combined history of colonialism, political agreements, wars and integration ideologies. However, from the beginning of the Third Republic in the 1880s, immigrants and immigration became a social and political issue in the public sphere (Schor 1996: 13). This history explains how current issues regarding immigration and integration maintain their importance in France's political debates.

Immigration in France until the early 20th century included groups, mostly of men from Italy, Poland and Belgium. Later in the century, France saw more men from Portugal and North Africa, followed by immigrants from Turkey and other countries (Schor 1996: 5). After the setbacks of the Second World War, France maintained its colonial control in Algeria, while experiencing a drastic flux in immigration to support the economy of the "trente glorieuses" (1945-1975) (Tribalat 1995 : 18; Schor 1996: 192). However, it was after Algeria's independence and during the late sixties through to the eighties that Algerian migration to France was at its peak (Tribalat 1995: 18 and

Table 1).

The question of the “second generation” is rooted in France’s historical relationship with Algeria, unlike its relationship with other European countries, and in prevalent ideological approaches to the resulting cultural diversity of the country. The next section provides an overview of the parents of the “second generation” and later their French born children. Although the parents are treated as the “Other” during times of economic instability, they did integrate into the workforce, particularly during the postwar period of rapid economic growth (Sayad 2004). On the other hand, the immigrants’ French born children have yet to have this successful labour force integration experience and depend on the school system as their vehicle to become active citizens. This description sets the stage for a contemporary explanation of the working of the school system.

The Importance of Algeria and Immigration in France

The advent of colonialism and the importing of European civilisation, marked by significant destruction and reconstruction of the Algerian “culture” including a reorganisation of the existing settlement patterns, transforming the culture’s fundamental structures and systems (Bourdieu, Sayad 2004: 17). In addition, because of the colonial ties between France and Algeria, Algerian immigrants were a large part of France’s immigrant population representing 7% of the total population becoming French citizens during the interwar years (Schor 1996: 81). In fact, in 1930, France had become the number one country in the world, surpassing the United States, in accepting immigrants (Schor 1996: 6). After 1946, droves of Algerians, mostly men, entered France at the rate of 30,000 a year (*Time Magazine* 1953). The relationship between Algeria and France is

complex and fraught with tensions, reflected in the often difficult relationship between the Algerian men immigrating to France and their society of adoption.

The Algerian – French historical ties as we perceive today, began at the beginning of colonialism in 1830, a period that ended in 1962 when, after a bitterly fought war led by President Charles de Gaulle, independent Algeria was born. Searching for work and a higher quality of life in the 1960s, large numbers of Algerians began crossing the Mediterranean on their way to France (INSEE: 2005). The immigrants' situation during that period was a paradox because they fit into a specific low-skilled, low income, almost invisible working class but were valued for those characteristics (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 24). The reason for this stems from the assumption in the host society that male immigrant workers would always be available and willing to work under any conditions. Immigrants saw the promise of social mobility for themselves and for their children dissolve when, in 1973, Algeria decided to no longer send workers to France because of racist incidents, and in 1974 France experienced an economic downturn, thus slowing down immigration (Tribalat 1995 : 19). Immigrant integration was clearly problematic during the second half of the seventies. However, as Sayad argues, the newcomers' integration was relatively successful in the working class because they worked in closer contact with French society (Sayad 2004: 47). At the same time, any issues arising around the fact that immigrants were contributing to the nation's economy were overlooked (Sayad 2004: 31). The documented accounts discussed below help us better understand the perspective of immigrants. This is an excerpt of an Algerian worker expressing his feelings regarding his experience as an immigrant in France:

. . . a foreigner is a foreigner; skilled or unskilled, you are always a foreigner . . . There aren't many of us [*ouvriers qualifiés*; skilled workers], but there are still too many of us as it is: our place is in the immigrant jobs, as they put it, all the filthy jobs where you lose your health and perhaps your life (Sayad 2004: 49).

The importance of the Algerian community also shows in its sheer numbers; almost exclusively male until 1945, Algerians have been one of the largest groups of immigrants in France from the 1960s to 1999 (Sayad 2004 and Table 1). The 1970s, in many ways, marked the end of the migration of the first generation of North African immigrants. Over the following decades, their children emerge as an increasingly important segment of French society.

Contextualising Children of Immigrants

An estimate of the French population in 1996 reveals that about 20% of the French population born in France has a foreign lineage from the previous century (Schor 1996:6). This reveals how France as a country has had a long history of immigration not only from Algeria, but from a variety of countries including Belgium, Italy and Portugal. According to January 1 2008 figures, the population of France, including the regions located outside of continental Europe, is estimated at 63,8 million (INSEE 2008). However, since 1872, it has been almost impossible to track the actual numbers of children of immigrants in France. At this time, a law was passed stipulating that the census cannot identify people based on their religious affiliation and their ethnic origin (Gilbert and Lahouri 2003). However, estimates based on immigration trends show a relatively strong presence of young people with Algerian origins compared to other young people with North African origins or a lineage from other European Union countries (Table 3). Consequently, this is challenging France's perception of its national

identity, citizenship and institutions such as the school system. Estimates for the immigrant population and their French born children in 1999 place the Algerian first and second generations born in France at 14,2% and 6,0% of the total first and second generation population within France (Tribalat 2003: 68 and Table 3).

Young people including those from the new French population with Algerian origins tend to have an intensified perception of discrimination and believe they have been ostracised in their schools, by their peers (Galland 2006: 154). Studies have identified a variety of ways young people are ostracised; according to Galland (2006), one young person out of four with a non-European background has experienced poor treatment because of their origins (Galland 2006: 151). It is important to note that boys with African, including North African, roots feel particularly stigmatised (Gallard 2006 : 151). This finding is paradoxical because the same study identifies young girls as being more sensitive to ostracism, however the girls of Algerian origins claim to be less stigmatised than their brothers. These differences will be later discussed in chapter 4 as a possible explanatory variable for some of the issues concerning these students and the schools.

Those with non-European lineage not only experience difficulty in school, but also during the first years after they have finished their studies (Tribalat 1996). The transition to the working world is difficult for all French youth. Economic conditions often play a key role in this poor transition; however the beginnings of the “active life” for those with Algerian roots has proven to be more difficult, especially for the young men (Tribalat 1995: 176). The differences between the young men with Algerian roots and their sisters is important to note, as is the level of education and the work obtained

once their studies are finished. By drawing on various measures including the educational experience of children with Algerian origins, their familial aspirations, the values and structure of the French educational system the success of these students can be explored.

Once students are in the schools, their success depends on how well they utilise their resources, even if these are limited. Although difficult to measure, the number of times a student repeats a year is an important indicator of degrees of success. In France, it is common for students to repeat an academic year or two during their schooling from elementary school through high school and university. The system is organised in such a way that when a student fails a class, the pupil will have to repeat the entire year and not just that particular course. In fact, almost two thirds of students of Algerian origins have had to repeat a year in elementary school, compared to the national percentage of 40% (Tribalat 1995: 146).

Researchers have probed further into the numbers for student graduation and years spent in school. The boys and girls of Algerian descent tend to have a higher rate of repeating a year 1,4 compared to the national level of 1,08 for the boys and 0,96 for the girls (Tribalat 1995: 145). Therefore, the year count is not an indicator of success in the system, it may in fact indicate repeated failures. However, a year count could reflect the value of education in the household and the efforts parents and students alike apply to achieve certain goals. Additionally, if students do not do well in elementary school (collège), they are automatically streamed into either a “professional” or a “technical” school. The purpose of these schools is to provide students with trade or industrial skills. There is good evidence that immigrant-origin children are more likely to be streamed in those areas, with predictable consequences for future careers and earnings (Tribalat:

1995: 146).

While the higher success of girls in school, despite the complex issues raised in a laic system, compared to their male peers tends to be a global trend, it is important to dissect this for a better understanding of why this is happening in France. Not having much of an educational background, the parents coming from Algeria tend not to be able to help their children obtain their desired results in school (Tribalat 1995 : 146). These students tend to take the more technical stream, which means children with Algerian roots are underrepresented in the last years of the more academic and more prestigious programs (Tribalat 1995 : 146). Therefore, for a clearer understanding of the numbers provided by the Ministry of Education, we must consider the stream, number of years each student repeats, the social class and the aspirations parents have for their children.

Although young people with Algerian roots go through the same system as their peers with French origins, there is strong evidence that the boys with Algerian roots repeat grades more frequently than their French origin peers (Tribalat 1995: 145). Young people with Algerian roots are less likely to obtain their high school diploma than the average of those with French origins. Figures 1 and 2, show results from the national exams taken in 1995. The results indicate that 55.7% of the French-origin children achieved grades of 67% and above in mathematics, while only 24.3% of children with Maghrebi (chiefly Algerian) parents obtained 67% and above (Brinbaum 2007: 454).

Interestingly, the same evaluation exam for 1998 in figures 3 and 4, reveal that 26.8% of French origin students achieved grades higher than 67 compared to 12.6% for the 'North African' students (Brinbaum 2007: 454). Some argue that it is the lack of motivation from the new French, or "second generation" that affects the completion and

success of those students (Tribalat 1995: 147). However, these numbers show the most disadvantaged group is children both whose parents are from Algeria, Morocco and/or Tunisia. This thesis argues that the disadvantage comes from a combination of the structure of the system and values produced and reproduced in the school experience.

The Ministry of Education in France has conducted studies on the different parental expectations for their sons and daughters' academic success (Brinbaum et al. 2005 : 61). This same research shows that North African parents prefer their sons and daughters to take a general baccalaureate which streams the student towards university as opposed to a professional or technical stream, guiding the students towards more blue collar jobs (Brinbaum et al. 2005). This is particularly interesting regarding their aspirations for the boys. The emphasis on a general baccalaureate is in fact contrary to Brinbaum's other findings where most immigrant parents stress the importance of the technical or professional stream for their sons. However, North African parents from all socio-economic backgrounds tend to push both their sons and daughters towards the accepted highest level of possible education in France. This is a paradox because trends reveal a correlation between level of education obtained by the parents with immigrant origins and aspirations for their children's education; they tend to place more value on "practical" streams such as the trades. There is consequently less of an emphasis on pursuing a university education. However, Chapter 4 discusses in detail how the aspirations of parents from Algeria stress the importance of a more academic stream.

Given the complexity of the current educational system in France, the historical significance of immigrants from Algeria and the clear difference between the new generation's boys' and girls' success in the classroom, it comes as no surprise that many

members of this group have difficulties in integrating into French society. When those students complete their secondary education in a professional stream, they typically attempt to enter a more specialised program for another year or two or they will search for a job. The current economic state of France is not conducive to integrating new employees, especially those coming from an Algerian background, ready to begin their lives as full working participants in France.

At a Glance: Historical Context of the Educational System

The educational system prepares students for their adult lives as French citizens. In fact, citizenship and nationalism have always played a historically significant role in the educational institution. Intertwined with national history and culture, French education and its institutional system have long been a source of national pride. The school system was established in a critical historical moment (the beginning of colonial expansion) and today still maintains the same goals and objectives as its origins, with a heavy emphasis placed on the moulding of good French citizens. In 1806, Napoleon Bonaparte believed there could be “no fixed political state if there is not a teaching corps with fixed principles” (Lelievre 2001: 5). Napoleon’s objectives were to establish a national state in which the citizens would be taught in a way to avoid what he terms as *disorders* and *change*. This trend continued in France and at the time of the Third Republic (1870 – 1940), the Prime Minister Jules Ferry¹ maintained that it is the state’s responsibility to use the educational system as a means to maintain specific moral principles (Lelievre 2000: 6). Furthermore, in an attempt to establish and maintain national solidarity, the teaching of regional languages in schools was banned (Halls 1976: 116) and education

¹ Jules Ferry was the Prime Minister of France from 1880-1881. His accomplishments include advancements in France’s educational system.

became a vehicle of social and cultural homogenisation (Lelievre 2000: 8).

Another key figure in the development of France's educational system is Émile Durkheim. Around 1902, Durkheim began lecturing about moral education (manuscripts are later published). According to Durkheim, the purpose of education lies in its ideology, whereby teachers develop adults reflecting the ideals of society, a "moral" education (Pickering 1979: 104). An example of Durkheim's approach to moral education lies in his explanation of how teachers should make children understand *why* they must have emotional attachments to their family, country and humanity (Pickering 1979: 36). The objective is to develop certain physical, intellectual and moral states, which are determined by society and to be established in that particular milieu: the school. Here, education plays a role of the 'middle man' or mediator between the individual and society (Pickering 1979: 107). In addition, education has a role as a vehicle to gain an occupation and to be prepared for moral life (Pickering 1979: 108). Shortly after Durkheim began his lectures on education, another significant development to the educational system occurred; the still controversial laïcité law. The 1905 law separated the State and Church to lessen the control and authority of the Church in the public sphere and to recognise differences in beliefs (Weil 2004: 142 and Blais et al. 2008). At this time, the public sphere, including the public school system began a new direction in pedagogy (Blais et al. 2008). However, the 1905 law continues to be debated, and has played a central role in controversies surrounding immigrant integration, as will be discussed later in this thesis.

Since Durkheim, the lycée has come to have a national responsibility for reproducing the nation's middle and top management, as well as its future leaders (Lewis

1985: 72). Evidently, the production of an elite class was one of the original objectives of the school system. However, as the pupil population drastically increased, syllabuses started to change and new courses such as economics, social sciences and technical options were introduced to better accommodate the general population and the changing world (Lewis 1985: 76). In 1981, Alain Savary, the French Minister of Education recognised problems within the system and attempted a new approach to the system, creating educational priority zones (zones d'éducation prioritaires or ZEPs) (Lewis 1985: 48). In 1982, the ZEPs were implemented as an effort to help the more depressed areas of the country where 'failure' turned into a cyclical pattern (Lewis 1985: 49; Bénabou et al. 2004: 3). The criteria for 'depressed' areas included underachieving pupils, violence, absenteeism and a high concentration of immigrants (Lewis 1985: 49). The government considered a range of social and economic characteristics before creating a ZEP. Setting aside problems of the ZEP in terms of stigmatisation and labelling, they exemplify the broad changes that have been made in recent decades to this well established institution. Yet, as the next section and the rest of this thesis will discuss, it is clear that France's educational system has not yet resolved issues related to students with foreign origins and their integration.

A Description of the Contemporary Educational System

On a macro level, the French educational system is distinctive compared to other European Union countries and Canada. Administratively, France has 30 'academies'

covering the ‘départements’ representing the regions in the country. Each academy is an administrative constituency or district headed by an appointed rector (M.E.N. 2006a). The responsibility of the rector is to organise all aspects of the elementary and high schools from pedagogy to any type of construction done in the schools. The rector also manages the teachers and other personnel in the schools, as well as the training of the teachers. The requirements to become a teacher entail the successful completion of three or four years at university, the completion of additional examinations and winning competitions. Candidates must attend one of the state-run *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres* (IUFM). The content of the IUFM program includes further courses dedicated to specific subject-knowledge and preparation courses for recruitment into teaching with a *Certificat d’Aptitude au Professorat de l’Enseignement du Second degré* or CAPES (Brisard, 2003). Although the system is centralised, the departments have administrative responsibilities, such as the partial management of certain personnel in the school, the allocation of students, *la vie scolaire* including the students’ experiences within the institution and the organisation of exams and competitions (M.E.N. 2006a).

The nature of the centralised French school system relies heavily on bureaucracy and democracy. The term democracy in the context of the French administration refers to the power deriving from the central government, itself democratically elected (Halls 1976: 38). Chapter three discusses in more detail how the current educational system is based on five major principles inspired by the first Revolution in 1789 and laws which were democratically passed in 1881 and 1889 (M.E.N. August 2006). *La liberté de l’enseignement, la gratuité, la neutralité, la laïcité* and *l’obligation scolaire* uphold the

system's Republican tradition of equality within the nation.

When further probing into the notion of equality in the schools, it becomes apparent that equality as defined by the French school system often perpetuates inequalities amongst the students. Researchers such as Noiriel (1996) have not fully examined how the French school system constructs differences and creates tension between different groups. To fill this gap, Khamès and Paoletti (1993) and Derderian (2004) elaborate on the role of schools in the *banlieue*². These authors argue that xenophobic tendencies relate to policies created by and applied to specific institutions, disabling the full participation of individuals. The ability of students to fully participate in social and educational affairs reflects how the state either helps or hinders the collective integration process. For example, French school attendance has become obligatory and the school day has become longer. The schools have taken on the responsibility of representing values perceived as being collective and in a social hierarchy while contributing to the homogenisation of the country (Bordes-Benayoun and Schnapper 2006 : 62). A system organised to value the equal treatment of its pupils misses numerous other variables in a student's life, which may help or hinder their academic success.

The organisation of the school system is based on egalitarianism, full participation and it is structured to assimilate students (Lelievre 2000: 8). The assimilation approach, later discussed in chapter 1, derives from the French model of focusing on the value of individual merit and egalitarianism, the formal, legal and political equality of all citizens (Lelievre 2000: 8). According to Dominique Schnapper, the school system's policy

² The *banlieue* in France tends to house groups of lower socio-economic status and immigrant or immigrant origin inhabitants. Ghettos are often located in this part of France's cities, markedly Paris.

towards taking immigrant children focuses on assimilating foreigners, and has integrated “populations that were heterogeneous in their regional, social and national origins” (Lelievre 2000: 8), but this record of successful integration seems to be faltering.

The current educational system in France does not help students’ social mobility, nor is it the one answer to families’ socio-economic difficulties. In fact, Pierre Bourdieu believed that French schools, as presently organised are not liberating. He also believed that schools are reproducing inequalities and that these inequalities arise from social ‘acts’ which are seen as natural by the elite who benefit from it (Halls 1976: 165). In other words, the school itself does not bring a more equal society as such, but it is schooling that brings a better equality of “democratisation” (Halls 1976: 165). The democratisation is more limited in the classroom and the French example illustrates how “democratisation” plays a role to universalise historical norms “of a learned culture” (Halls 1976: 165). This learned culture originates from the social elite whose emphasis on high culture mitigates the success of educational reform (Halls 1976: 165).

France’s educational system has reached many achievements since its establishment yet it also faced many challenges. The reasons why it does not seem to be adequately meeting the needs of immigrant-origin students are complex and rooted in historical, ideological, and structural processes. Chapter 1 provides an explanation of the historical importance and affects on the current educational system, nationalism, integration and gender.

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Hypotheses

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of issues around children of immigrants in French schools. The literature illustrates how nationalism, integration, and citizenship continue to have a strong historically rooted influence on the contemporary French educational system. There is a discussion of key themes and possible hypotheses as an explanation to why students with Algerian roots are not faring as well in school as their non-Algerian rooted peers.

Literature Review

Historical Context and Concepts of Nationalism

Scholars such as Gérard Noiriel (1996), Abdelmalek Sayad (2004) and Dominique Schnapper (1991) have discussed the importance of immigrants' economic contributions, their social integration and the direct relationship between the two. These three authors in particular reveal the need for further research for a better understanding of contemporary issues regarding French nationalism and citizenship in the "second generation" context. French citizens with foreign origins are often not considered a part of the "authentic" nation. The children of immigrants, particularly of Algerian origins, are a part of the political discourse and are depicted as a national problem posing a threat to France. I am referring to this political discourse to illustrate how the "foreign invasion" is a strategy reflecting a certain social acceptance of creating the "other" with nationalistic undertones. This divide is a key element in legitimising the struggle or loss of social standing (Noiriel 1996: 202-203). In the same vein, the creation of myths contributes to the notion of immigrant or foreigner delinquency (which may also refer to

French born children with foreign origins) and affects perceptions of their integration.

Noiriel explains how nationalism is a process in France originating in a political agenda. He asks, “is the disquieting progression of intolerance a premonitory symptom of social and political evolution comparable to the one experienced by Europe fifty years ago?” (Noiriel 1996: 189). In a strong and disturbing connection to atrocities from World War II, Noiriel addresses this question further by identifying three distinct moments in “modern” history where hatred of foreigners is exemplified. The Dreyfus Affair in the 1880s, the Vichy regime and the “problem of the second generation starting in the 1980s. According to Noiriel (1996: 190), the common thread in these three moments in history is economic crises and social change; where there is economic instability and a heightened social change, xenophobia increases.

Historically, the role of the state is to create a cultural unity, accompanied by political and cultural decisions for the national population. This cultural homogeneity has been presented as a necessary condition to form a democratic nation (Bordes-Benayoun and Schnapper 2006 : 30). However, researchers such as Noiriel identify the historical problem of “being French” and how, for over a century, concepts of “Frenchness” and nationalism have changed according to economic stability. As economic stability affects different areas of the social world, the media’s representation of immigrants in specific areas such as the *banlieue* are negative and are reinforced by some politicians. Positive or negative representations of the Other consequently affects perceptions of how the Other is integrating and his or her role in French society as citizens.

The Debate about Integration

The term integration is problematic and much discussed in the social sciences. As a term used by the elite to achieve their own interests, “integration” has become divisive in nature, because it is inherently unclear yet loaded concept of negative connotations focusing on difference (Noiriel 2005: 9). However, the term “integration” can reflect the participation of a variety of daily activities such as economic, social, cultural and political activity.

The literature on the concepts of integration and its relationship with citizenship primarily focuses on immigrants and not their children. Although a relatively new phenomenon (Crul, 2003: 965) the literature on integration of the “second generation” is limited (Thompson and Crul, 2007: 1025). The literature addressing the “second generation” and integration in either Europe or North America easily becomes entrapped in the same discourse for the group’s immigrant parents or grandparents. This short-term perspective reveals the importance of acknowledging that even the theories regarding integration are not fully compatible with the “second generation”, yet we are forced to consider those available sources while considering the difference between immigrant and French born child.

The fluid nature of the term integration allows for a variety of measurements for its success or failure. Considering the complexity of the term, integration refers to the structural aspect of the concept via educational status and success as well as the more value-based concept such as identity and citizenship (Thompson and Crul, 2007: 1025). The level of integration of children with Algerian roots may be broken down into three major types of variables: historical, family values, and mobility through institutions.

In historical terms, the colonial relationship France had with Algeria may

continue to impact the perceptions of Algerians and consequently those with Algerian roots (Simon 2003). When migrants from North Africa were granted the right to stay in France (laws eased in 1984), French society pushed for the migrants' children to automatically become French without considering the effects of colonialism (Weil 2005 : 8). It is argued that this rapid change in policy and process affected the children of Algerians in France because there was a disconnect between being colonised and being French (Weil 2005: 8). The social stigma of having roots from a colonised country also affects the possibility of integrating young people with Algerian roots (Simon 2003, Thompson and Crul 2007: 1034). Too often stereotypes of the poor immigrant affect how the rest of society perceives the second and subsequent generations; consequently, these attitudes affect how those generations perceive themselves.

On the other hand, it is argued that the ex-colonial relationships may have unintended positive consequences for immigrants and their children. Sharing a similar language, educational system and history could be perceived as positive factors for better integration (Thompson and Crul 2007: 1034). However, Algeria's institutions did not develop to reflect the well established system in France. The Algerian civil war (1991-2002) affected the country's establishment of institutions and Algeria is still significantly behind France in many measures of educational attainment. In fact, by the year 2000, from a population of over 30 million, roughly 8.2 million Algerians had attended primary school and around 4.7 million had attended the equivalent of secondary school or pursued higher education (Kateb 2003: 3). The differences between male and female enrolment in schools in Algeria have declined, but still denote marked differences with French society. Over 7 million people are considered illiterate in Algeria and women are

affected twice as much compared to their male counterparts (Kateb 2003: 3). Here we can see how the pre-migration conditions are an important part of how well immigrants and their families will later integrate into that new society (van Niekerk 2004: 164).

Considering the differences in socio-economic backgrounds, personal histories and coping skills of people in general, we see how integration is not a linear process and therefore individuals and groups may follow different paths of integration (Simon 2003, Thompson and Crul 2007). Young people with Algerian roots may fall into cyclical patterns of reproducing their current socio-economic status and not experience any social or economic mobility. A significant part of this perspective on integration is the family effect. Family values differ widely and influence children's educational experience directly. What Bourdieu would refer to as social capital (1997), the connection between the family, the community, and the rest of society, may in fact be a detriment to the success or integration of the new French. The experience of the new French in the school system consequently bridges the family values and the "real world". In some instances, where the children of immigrants have experiences working with their family-run businesses, the "second generation" may be more compelled to follow the path of aspirations towards economic and social independence (Thompson and Crul 2007: 1028).

The family unit also may influence how well its offspring performs and integrates, based on gender. Some researchers argue that some immigrant families will support their sons' scholarly pursuits than their daughters' thus increasing a distinction between the success of males and females in the school system (Thompson and Crul 2007: 1034). However, globally boys are not performing well and for a better understanding of this global phenomenon, other factors beyond the family unit are

essential for consideration. More specifically, children of immigrants may encounter difficulties in school because of the parents' lack of linguistic skills that would enable their children to complete their homework or to meet with teachers if any issues should arise (Thompson and Crul, 2007: 1028). At the same time, the family influence on the "second generation" may also affect how the children see themselves as a minority. In an assimilation process, the children may not integrate into the rest of society as anticipated because they may create a more bicultural or hybrid identity by marrying their family culture to their educational experiences (Crul 2003: 966, Portes 1993). The results of a bicultural identity may affect the children's relationship with the rest of the community and family; isolation and ostracism is a distinct possibility if the "second generation" attempts a varied path from their community's social norms (Thompson and Crul 2007: 1031).

Focusing more on the societal context of the institution and its role in the integration process, Thompson and Crul (2007) remind us of the importance of the local aspects of the education system. This includes income, the age at which children begin school, the number of hours in the school and the transition into the labour market (Thompson and Crul, 2007:1032). Given the above listed factors of consideration in the school system, the state's institutions can be designed to better integrate its students. The educational system is a good vehicle to increase the social mobility of youth and consequently, the rest of society. In the case of students with Algerian roots, social mobility may occur because of education and access to better economic opportunities compared to their parents' generation (Simon 2003). Through education and ultimately through the workplace, the potential for "formal acculturation" increases (Thompson and

Crul 2007: 1029).

However, the informal experiences outside of the institutions or the workplace may be more significant in terms of the “second generation”’s acculturation or social experiences in general (Thompson and Crul 2007: 1029). In addition, the quality of the school system may not always be the deciding factor to the success of children of immigrants. How the system functions may be more important than its material and physical resources. The timing and method of streaming students is a key factor to consider when examining the so-called “second generation”. Students from a particular background may be streamed into higher or lower ability groups and thus children of immigrants may be “pre-selected” for vocational education at a young age (Thompson and Crul 2007: 1033).

Critics of the French school system such as Bourdieu do not believe that the educational system is the answer to national and international issues. Bourdieu argues that institutions like the schools follow a certain *doxa*, which re-enforces the elite’s agenda and does not have room for differences. In fact, a certain level of ethnocentrism is produced in the school system by which the students must adhere to the unchallenged, structured and “natural” interpretation of France’s national character (Bourdieu 2000). This perspective on the role of the school system relates closely to the country’s approach to integrating the general population in terms of equality, assimilation.

Approaches and Alternatives to Assimilation

According to Tribalat (1995), the term “integration” has become sanctified and is a common feature of debates about immigration. “Assimilation” on the other hand

provides an imagery which is a throwback to colonial France. However, depending on space and time, assimilation varies in definitions and explanation of outcomes.

Assimilation could be interpreted as radical where an individual's identity completely disappears in a new society (Grange 2005: 42). It can also refer to changing something to become more similar to the majority. In that sense, it is conformity and an irreversible process (Grange 2005: 42). On a less radical note, assimilation also explains the decline of "particularities" pertaining to groups which are diluted through the mixing of populations and thus changes in behaviour occur (Tribalat 1995: 13). Furthermore, Tribalat (1995:13) adds to the definition of assimilation with the explanation that it absorbs practices of immigrant groups while reducing apparent cultural, religious and social practices.

On the other hand, comparative education specialist Christina Allemann-Ghionda (2001) addresses how the concept of cultural identity is unreflective and uninformed (2001: 5). In this case, the notion of cultural identity expresses a national and cultural perspective forcing us to consider cultural diversity as a factor of increasing or reducing discrimination (Allemann-Ghionda 2001: 5). The notion of cultural diversity also questions whether immigrants can successfully integrate while preserving their culture of origin (Noiriel 1996: 146). On the one hand, according to Khamès and Paoletti (1993), there are a variety of ways to encourage the integration of immigrants and consequently their children. Two options Khamès outlines include the collective integration, where the goal is multiculturalism on a societal level. The second possibility of a group's "particularities", may result in a more plural society whereby groups are interdependent to be fully functioning. Countries have the choice between both options to implement

specific integration policies (Khamès 1993 : 62). On the other hand, Noiriel's ideal type of integration is a social formation combining "a full-fledged nation (rooted in history, with a homogeneous population and a rigid political framework) with a history of self-induced massive immigration that fundamentally transformed the initial makeup of its population" (Noiriel 1996: 258). Therefore, Noiriel argues that France could be perceived as the first model of a modern form of immigration where the purpose is not for population control, but for economic reasons (1996: 263).

As immigration affects how countries define and approach citizenship, it becomes a concept expanding from legal to social meanings (Hicks 1999: 81). Immigrant groups challenge existing definitions of citizenship while building new communities as they enter the labour force and schools (Hicks 1999: 81). Chantal Bordes-Benayoum and Dominique Schnapper (2006) explain how two types of democratic societies can differentiate between their approaches to citizenship. The first is a democratic society founded on the principle of having a universal vocation where citizens are prepared through common schooling, and thus share a same internalisation of norms and ideals. Secondly, there are plural societies, founded on unequal political statuses which runs contrary to the modern democratic logic where the principle lies in "openness" for all, from this perspective, equity appears as a priority (Bordes-Benayoum and Schnapper 2006 : 62). These two perspectives reflect how immigration influences citizenship definitions and policy. When addressing integration for children of immigrants, the discourse often fails to shift from the traditional immigrant/integration to integration into a pluralistic society.

It is argued that the French Republic is a paradox. Ideologically, it is centered on

the notion of equality, unification, tolerance of diversity and difference. In practice it is not equitable and enforces a code of “invisibility on specific and constructed groups of individuals (homosexuals, disabled, migrants, ethnic and racial minorities, women) in the name of a so-called Jacobin universalism” (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 24-25). An example given by Weil (2005: 8) is the cultural diversity France is experiencing from immigrants and consequently their children. Weil believes the current immigration rules are dated and have not changed to reflect France’s basic principles of equality. In fact, there is a possible connection between the very principles of equality and the development of two major definitions of citizenship that Joppke outlines; one being that of a legal status and the other as a means of identity (Joppke 1999). Chapter 2 will later describe the scope of citizenship referring to a perception of identity within a national context.

Joppke’s description of Brubaker’s *citizenship traditionalism* shows how modern states are associations of members that are bound in different ways, depending on national traditions (Joppke 1999: 630). He explains how France is an example of a country where the boundaries of citizenship as a legal status are more fluid than those in neighbouring countries, however, that the social citizenship here is a model of *ultrastability*, which is historically rooted in tradition and lacks malleability (Joppke 1999: 630). In the case of France, we see the face of the inhabitants change, but the actual perception of citizenship and identity are stagnant. Here, the question of citizenship has become more of a question of *closure* where new members of the group are pressured into the old traditions. In general, social and economic problems such as housing and employment are treated globally without making a distinction between immigrant and ‘citizen’.

Nationalism and the Educational System

As the French educational system was established on the premise that it would be a tool for the State to mould *good citizens*, the school system from the end of the 19th century became a vehicle of national culture (Bordes-Benayoun and Schnapper 2006 : 32). As the church and state separated, the need to work (through teaching) towards the goal of homogeneity by going beyond any religious and political symbols and slogans became a priority (Pickering 1979: 159). This priority is to ensure all students receive the same quality of education, including an understanding of what is acceptable French culture, and to become a part of the collective.

The Durkheimian perspective on the purpose of the educational system emphasises that it should prepare young adults with the accepted and appropriate skills for a functional, successful adulthood. This approach to teaching would warrant the successful integration of the young adult from school into a productive individual within France. It is also possible to interpret Durkheim's educational ideology as a means of assimilating individuals into society. For Durkheim, the emphasis is on the collectivity, and how society imposes the way in which the individual lives.

French academic and educational bureaucrat in the late 19th and early 20th century, Ferdinand Buisson explains that the school's role is to train and eventually help individuals transform society. According to Buisson, the Republic consists of the 'utopias of yesterday', and transforms them to today's ideals in preparation of tomorrow's reality (Barrère and Martuccelli, 1998). This type of nation building is also described in François Dubet's analysis of the three major functions to the French educational system. The first major function as outlined by Dubet (2007: 58) of the

school is the integration into one common culture. The second function is the promotion of the hierarchy, values and competencies of the system. The third function as outlined by Dubet is the “subjectivation” (identity forming process) in which the culture has a value in and of itself as a liberating virtue through knowledge (Dubet 2007: 58).

Similarly, theorists such as Hicks argue that the goal of education is not limited to obtaining a job, but in the context of a multi-ethnic classroom, social and cultural experiences play a significant role in education (Hicks 1999: 3).

As Durkheim believed that pedagogy is the art of teaching together with the science of what is taught, the objective of the teacher is to describe and explain how things should be, it socialises (Pickering 1979: 105). It is in this teaching approach Durkheim places education as a social matter based on social needs and ideals as opposed to the individual’s psychology (Pickering 1979: 99). Durkheim’s primary focus is on what is being taught, the place it is being taught and how it is controlled by society and is “a function of the social organisation of society” (Pickering 1979: 99). Hicks’ analysis (1999: 98) concurs with that of Durkheim in the sense that education is a social matter and her assessment of that institution measures the ability of the class to educate all students. In order to obtain a certain organisation of society, Durkheim believed that there must also be a certain level of homogeneity. This is where the institution of education in fact perpetuates and reinforces homogeneity by teaching, from the beginning, “the essential similarities that collective life demands” (Pickering 1979: 107).

Current debates about the contemporary educational system in France on the one hand argue that the system is not helping students in their social mobility nor is it the answer to France’s current socio-economic issues of families with Algerian origins. In

fact, Pierre Bourdieu believes that French schools as presently organised are not the answer to societal problems. Rather, he argues that although the educational systems are “formative of the structures of understanding,” schools are reproducing inequalities through the teaching of dichotomies and reproducing taxonomies (Bourdieu 1992:39-40, Halls 1976: 165). Similarly, Blais et al. (2008) deconstruct the transmission of knowledge, or lack thereof, from a politico-philosophical perspective and into three sections: authority, family and tradition. By recognising the holistic nature of French schools and how they affect the individual within the system, Blais et al (2008) delineate three areas of analysis broadly similar to the breakdown of this thesis.

Problematising Education

Researchers suggest that the success or failure of school is linked to psycho-sociological factors instead of ethnicity (Khamès 1993, Allemann-Ghionda 2001). Khamès believes that even in the case of failure in schools, the French education system produces cultural homogeneity where immigrant students who are economically excluded still are able to integrate culturally (Khamès 1993: 48). On the other hand Bourdieu and Passeron explain how it is the ‘mismatch’ of languages from the home and school that accounts in part for failure in school (Hicks 1999: 90). However, Khamès also explains that the problem of the educational system arises from the idea that in certain areas of France, the secular school no longer develops ‘citizens’ (Khamès 1993 : 48).

Hicks also outlines the limitations of the school system in general. She believes that “nationally, multiculturalism and postmodernism are two movements which have created a context in that classroom boundaries are being defined theoretically . . .” (Hicks 1999:21). These boundaries created in the classroom go beyond the school system once

the students leave the institution. In addition to this, in areas with high levels of diversity, there are new linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural class boundaries being created. In reference to Antonio Gramsci's political claims, Hicks explains that together with the creation of new boundaries, there are laws which create and stigmatise the Other legally and in the educational institutions (Hicks 1999: 21). The challenge brought on by differences is not only in the institutional framework defining the conditions of communication, but it also takes the risk of establishing one definition for everybody (Barrère & Martuccelli 1998: 668), and consequently risks not addressing cultural differences in and outside of the schools. It is important to note the limitations within the school system are a reflection of abstract and practical issues outside the classroom.

Gender Issues

According to Hicks, notions of gender are not congruent with ideal gender-based norms (Hicks 1999:10). Meaning, there is interplay between the ideal gender norms and actual behaviour of women. Guénif Souilamas (2000) explains how these ideal gender norms are affecting "second generation" women and obscuring what is considered traditional or modern in the context of the French suburbs. Ethnicity does not have a significant role in a state believing in universalism and therefore, those on the margins are not suited for integration. This situation in France reveals how Algerian women on the one hand refuse to forget their cultural identity while on the other hand they are inventing ways to be better integrated (Guénif Souilamas 2000).

The question of the hijab is a superficial yet a topical example of the debate surrounding women's integration in French society. It represents a disagreement about the ideal gender norms affecting schools, communities and beyond. Many of Jules

Ferry's contributions from 1881 remain in contemporary France. What we refer to today as laïcité was essential his goal to secularise France. As opposed to other European Union countries where secularism is within a context of recognising religious pluralism, France maintains a complete separation between public space and religion affiliation; a space where there is a shared moral vision within the nation (Lelievre: 2000: 7).

Some argue that laïcité is liberating while others see it as discriminatory and a superficial solution to a deeper issue of integration. It is also important to note that this law with regards to the veil has politicised the veil, as it entered the political realm recently in 1989 where two girls were suspended from school because they refused to take off their hijabs. The situation settled down and returned into the media in 1994 when over 100 girls refused to take off their hijab at school. And so, it became official in March 2004 that hijabs were banned in the classroom under the founding principles of the Republic (Gaspard and Khosrokhavar 1995). Although the hijab is not the primary focus of this thesis, it is essential to discuss due to its significant role in the gender discourse in French schools.

There is a policy debate surrounding the integration of Algerian girls in the schools, however, it is also essential to discuss the relationship these same girls have with their male counterparts. Boys of Algerian descent, too, have to consider what is meant by traditional and modernity and how it relates to integration. They are placed in a space of contradictions within a system hiding behind abstract notions of universalism and equality while the boys are balancing colonial nostalgia and modern anxiety (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 27). In juxtaposition to what Guénif-Souilamas and Macé (2004) consider modern, the “Arab boys” are depicted as being far from modern. As the “Arab

boy” challenges France’s cultural hegemony, the “internal Other”, or the “Arab boy” is re-created, stereotyped and presented as the “*garçon arabe*, rapist and “veiler” (*violeur* and *voileur*) of French girls” (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 26). According to Guénif-Souilamas (2006: 26), “this racist and eugenistic conception will remain at work until its moral justifications are deconstructed”. The result of the system focussing predominately on the religious aspect to laïcité consequently affects the image of the “boys”. These boys are being left behind in the schools and their social status becomes illegitimate because they are defined mostly on their origins, class and/or sex. The result of this perception of the boys creates a scapegoat for the country’s complex social issues (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 27).

Resorting to stereotyping, a method of avoiding social and political issues, affects social stability for France. The (new) French male population experiences difficulty because of the general climate of a weak economy with an unemployment rate of 23% for young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24; this is more than twice the OECD average (OECD 2008: 110). Furthermore, the educational system has an unequal awarding of degrees for its students with Algerian origins, resulting in a structural youth unemployment issue coupled with discrimination in hiring (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 29). As 150,000 students between the ages sixteen and twenty-one drop out every year, another component of the social instability in France is in the lack of management and organisation of the educational system to better protect students who do not fit into the traditional path in the system (Guenif-Souilamas 2006:29).

The differences between the gender roles vary from case to case, however it is interesting to see how girls are statistically doing better in school than their male

counterparts. This forces us to ask ‘why are girls more successful academically than their brothers?’, and ‘how does this relate to integration?’ There have been studies conducted whose cross-ethnic analysis of immigrants in France illustrates how Moroccan³ “second generation” women’s education level has significantly improved compared to their parents’ (Simon 2003: 1107). Simon suggests that the improvement comes from a more gender balanced, equalitarian school system in conjunction with familial involvement in the girls’ education (2003: 1107). In contrast, the “second generation” Moroccan boys’ drop out rate is higher than their female counterparts as they tend to focus more on short-term education and value independence from their families (2003: 1107). This leaves us questioning how this affects the integration of both girls and boys through education and if religion intertwined with culture is a variable in the differences between “second generation” Algerians and other groups.

The educational system has close ties with France’s history, methods of integration, perceptions of Frenchness and gender. The following section provides major hypotheses in light of the issues described above, to help guide the analysis of why immigrant-origin and particularly Algerian students experience educational difficulties.

Research Hypotheses

Given that the educational system is an institution which prepares and provides the tools for students to become integrated into the rest of society, students with Algerian roots appear to be experiencing difficulty in the integration process compared to their peers with French roots. There are different possibilities of explaining integration in France which provides insight into the role of the educational system. Firstly, it could be argued

³ Although Morocco has a different historical connection to France, the importance of North African experiences remains significant to illustrate the “second generation” experience.

that the colonial history hinders the possibility of integrating the Algerian youth in France. The power dynamic between the two countries is unique and affects the way France perceives the youth with Algerian origins.

Secondly, as integration is not a linear process, the new French youth may follow different paths of integration. One consideration for the lack of integration could derive from a reproduction of the socioeconomic positions of the first generation. In part, the family effect explains a connection between the parents' adaptability to change and their children's ability to perform in school through a variety of social challenges such as difference in lifestyle and religion. Although Islam in France is not the focus of this thesis, it remains a factor to consider while discussing perceptions of integration or lack thereof.

Lastly, depending on how integration is measured, we may see that the new French are in fact successfully integrating compared to their parents' generation. For example, language plays an important role in integrating into the schools and workplace. Those born in France will speak the language and be aware of the differences in socio-cultural practices, thus making it easier to integrate into the workforce. We may also discover that successful social mobility through education has helped the "second generation" in bettering their economic position compared to their parents' (Simon 2003).

Considering the above hypotheses, I will argue that although social mobility is increasing between the first and subsequent generations with an Algerian lineage, it is not enough to ensure that this significant group in France is becoming a well integrated, functioning part of society. In fact, it is the responsibility of the educational system to evaluate its structural and value – oriented issues that may be contributing to the success

or underperformance of Algerian-origin students.

Considering the structure of the system, I will argue that teachers within the centralised educational system reinforce intended or unintended negative consequences for students with foreign-born parents, especially those who come from Algeria. The method of training needs to reflect the challenges in a multiethnic space because the structure of the system does not allow teachers to accommodate for the undeniably multiethnic classroom. Currently, the cultural capital of the dominant class determines what is a success or failure in the classroom. The standardisation of testing is an example of how not only elitism is reproduced, but also a hierarchy is maintained between the actors within the system. On a micro perspective, the students are affected by the hierarchy and suffer from early streaming into less desirable programs. For the macro perspective, institutions can easily be compared through published test results, desirability of the school's location and the recruitment process of the teachers from government sources such as the French Ministry of Education. If the structure of the school system were to consider the changing, multiethnic classroom, the values of the system and the families involved is essential for further examination.

To address the above issues within the scope of this thesis, the following chapter explains the research methodology. This chapter also operationalises key concepts which are discussed throughout the analytical chapters.

Chapter 2: Methods and Concepts

This chapter explains the research methodology used in this thesis, from choosing a topic, to collecting data, to writing the analysis. It will also contextualise and operationalise the thesis' major concepts found in the literature review to clarify the argument that the French educational system has structural and value issues contributing to the detriment of the children of immigrants with Algerian heritage in France.

Methodology

Fundamentally different from the other sciences, the social sciences value both qualitative and quantitative analysis; my approach to this thesis emphasises the importance of interpretation of how humans construct their social reality (Esterberg 2002:

1). To first develop my research strategy, I considered the following:

- The population and geographical location of interest
- Type of evidence such as existing studies, official documents, and archival materials
- The analytical strategy used to go through published materials and documents (Esterberg 2002: 35).

As per the tradition of qualitative research, which includes content analysis of documents, I have combined inductive reasoning approach with more traditional hypothesis-based analysis. I began by examining the world of the “second generation” Algerians and the world of the school system in France. I began this process with a previous familiarity with the demographic, geographical location and the institution in question. After I

decided on the subjects of the research, I had to choose the texts on which I would build my research strategy. I was interested in the connection between colonial history and the social realities of the “second generation” born in the country of the “oppressor”.

As opposed to beginning the research with a theory to test, my strategy was to begin the analysis of the empirical world through the existing literature. To analyse how the French educational system affects its students, primarily those with Algerian roots, I used both primary and secondary sources. My search initially consisted of a general concept search for articles and books on the Algerian War, the “second generation”, education and integration in France. Sociological classics such as Durkheim and more contemporary sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu were my starting point. There is a loose limitation on the dates the literature was published to ensure more of a contemporary perspective on the topic in question.

However, the type of evidence I hoped to find were ethnographic or quantitative studies relating to the “second generation” in France and of the experiences of students in high schools. The scope of the thesis and geographical barriers obliged me to remain in Ottawa and search for published material from peer reviewed journals, government reports and institutional releases and reports. From this point, I obtained the contents of the literature review, which continuously changed throughout the thesis writing process. Although most literature is focussed on France, I utilised theoretical perspectives of researchers studying other countries such as the United States, Canada and any other Western European country which has relevant demographic and political issues. In the end, the literature review was divided thematically reflecting the current debates regarding the “second generation” in the school system and integration.

The next step in the methodological process was collecting and organising the data. As this thesis relies on published material, the literature review and the collection and organisation of the data were essentially a part of the same step in the process. Therefore, after the initial search for the general concepts to my thesis, I conducted a more focused search using an archival strategy. Public archives, including online sources, facilitated my research from the mostly standardised formats and filing systems of such documents (Berg 2004: 211). Using public archives allowed me to locate and piece together different varieties of sources such as statistical data and ethnographic articles.

I drew on a variety of data sources including government websites such as the Ministère de l'Éducation nationale (M.E.N.), L'Institut national de la statistique et des études économique (INSEE), articles from peer reviewed journals and academic books on the subject in question. This type of *triangulation* in the data collection helped validate the information and build a more sound theory. A significant part of my research was conducted by utilising the library resources while a small portion of my search included commercial media accounts in French and Canadian newspapers, and other published literature from reputable sources. The variety of information sources is helpful to illustrate perception either described by or to the public in terms of the “second generation” and their integration. Searching for public records including official government documents and studies helped me better understand policies and how they are implemented and reinforced on a macro level.

Like many qualitative researchers, I shifted between data collection and analysing (Esterberg 2002: 40). However, after collecting and organising a significant part of the

data, I began the process of documentary analysis. My first task at this stage was to manage the data. I followed a cyclical process by recognising relevant ‘phenomena’, seeking more examples of the phenomena and analysing them for similarities, differences and trends (Esterberg 2002: 158). I replaced the more traditional method of organising the data chronologically with a thematic data organisation (Esterberg 2002: 154). To initiate the process of making sense of the information, I organised the data by colour coding all apparent themes from the literature. This type of “open coding” allowed me to have a basic organisation of the data in the vague themes which may or may not be relevant to my initial research question. Once I had my basic themes such as education and gender, I began the more focused coding and itemised sub-themes (Esterberg 2002: 161). In general, my research and analytical process consisted of gathering data and inductively identifying the themes to the research question. My themes were then broken down into more detailed topics such as the structure of the educational system and the values. Girls and boys became two separate entities under gender roles as opposed to just a vague concept of gender. Once I had categorised my themes I identified major patterns, relationships, commonalities and differences from the relevant data. Coding the information is only one step towards the analysis, the next step in the methodological process is to answer the ‘so what’ questions from the information.

Content Analysis

The next step for this research was using the condensed information for an interpretative approach to my analysis. This approach treats information regarding social action and human activity as ‘text’ (Berg 2004: 266). Within social action and human activity, researchers can assess a collection of symbols with layers of meaning. As a part of the

interpretative approach, I adopted a more interpretative orientation to the analysis by reducing the found data to uncover any patterns of ‘human activity’ and to find a deeper meaning behind such activities (Berg 2004: 266). Given the interpretative approach to my analysis, I also relied heavily on latent content analysis. Latent content analysis focuses on the underlying meanings of the texts. This approach is best suited for the topic of the school system and “second generation” Algerians because it allows for a deeper analysis of the social realities of all parties involved such as the students, teachers and the official government positions. For sources such as government documents, statistics and ethnographic research, I would interpret the given information based on the context in which the articles were published. For example, the Ministry of Education published reports on the school system and its students. Here, I would have to consider the political nuances of when the reports were released. Recognising the dangers of directly inferring content from published pieces of work, this approach remains most logical for my research topic and scope.

Considering the complexity of the school system and its relationship with the “second generation” Algerians in France, an open, morally neutral approach to analysis is the best fit. This approach considers there is not one reality but a variety of realities (Esterberg 2002: 20). The issues regarding the “second generation” and the school system do not fit into one coherent theory, but a variety of stories, positions and perspectives. In the case of this thesis, the perspectives range from the official view of the centralised school system, the school experience of the “second generation” Algerians in and out of the school, the history of immigration between France and Algeria and the informed opinions of outside researchers.

Ethical Considerations

It is important to consider how the research in questions will affect the subjects themselves and other social actors. There is always the possibility of harming people when conducting qualitative research, even when the data consists of documents (Esterberg 2002: 44). As the nature of research presents the possibility of harming people, it is important to consider how to conduct research to reduce any harmful effects, to examine what type of relationships the researcher is willing to make with the subjects, to be aware of the power relationship between the subject and researcher and to see the benefits of the research (Esterberg 2002: 44).

Although ideally, conducting interview in France would have enriched this thesis, an archival strategy for data collection is appropriate. It allowed me to remain within my scope of the thesis and it reduces ethical dilemmas. Obtaining information using a document analysis is an unobtrusive measure and for this thesis it made issues of confidentiality and informed consent irrelevant. As a side note, the nature of my research design did not require any procedures with the Institutional Review Boards (IRB).

Strengths and Limitations

This content analysis' advantages include: its unobtrusive nature and, the possibility of obtaining relevant information for the research topic without having to design questionnaires and conduct interviews. The topic of the educational system in France is richly documented in many sources from government documents to academic papers which often drew comparisons between either different groups of origins within France or between other Western European countries' experiences with the new French.

Although this information enhanced my understanding of the topic in question, it became increasingly difficult to capture one specific group for the continuity of the paper.

A key issue with taking the approach chosen for this thesis is the question of being able to adequately capture the lived experience of French born students with immigrant origins within the school system. Initially, my focus consisted of primarily the so-called “second generation” Algerian in France. However, as anticipated, the lines of this particular group are blurred because of the laws in France against the government tracking ethnic minorities in population counts such as the census. I therefore draw on studies that use a variety of groupings to identify French born students with Algerian roots. The major groupings for these students can be referred to as North African, Maghrebi, Algerian, Muslims, and Arabs (les beurs, in French slang). As each study has a slightly different definition to this group of people, I have kept a limited variance in the language with which I refer to this group. As a result of the different realities presented throughout my research and the “legitimation crisis” by which the researcher takes on the authority to write an accurate and true story (Esterberg 2002: 21), I was continuously conflicted with the challenge of describing France’s situation with one stance on the issues. Although the educational and social experience of the first generation differs greatly from that of the second and third generations, and even the terms to describe them change, I have focused on all children with Algerian origins in order to provide a snapshot of their experiences.

Lastly, the limitations for this content analysis approach include: lack of ability to test causal relationships between variables and reliance on available text research, as opposed to specifically tailored oral information from interviews. Relying on previously

published works has proven successful, but I had to consider each source's objective in its own research to reduce misconceptions

Writing the thesis

When writing this thesis I was conscious of my own biases and attempted not to use a traditional Canadian lens when discussing concepts such as assimilation and children of immigrants. Canadians tend to refer to children of immigrants (depending on country of origin) as 'ethnic minorities', 'visible minorities' or simply 'minorities'. In avoiding this vocabulary, I attempted to provide a clearer picture to the reader, Canadian or not, to consider how issues of integration, and social citizenship are perceived in France. The following are examples of concepts I had to infer and define before executing the written portion of the research.

Contextualising and Operationalising Concepts **Foreigner, Immigrant or French?**

The terms « foreigners » or « immigrants » have become blurred to the point of losing their meaning when discussing the portion of the population that has an ethnic background other than French or "white" Western European. There tends to be confusion between the terms foreigner, immigrants, and ethnic minorities (Tribalat 1995: 10). The confusion in these terms may derive from the beginning of the Third Republic (1870s), when the term "foreigner" was never clearly identified judicially (Schor 1996: 11). The difference between these groups lies in their place of birth (in France or not), their nationality (French or not) and some argue their stage in assimilation, which also influences their inclusion in one of the above groups (Tribalat 1995: 10). For the purpose of this thesis the following definitions will be used to make a distinction between

sometimes debatable terms. Foreigners are people who do not have their legal French citizenship, whereas immigrants were not born in France but have obtained their citizenship. Lastly, people born in France from one or two foreign or immigrant parents will be referred to as children of immigrants, the “second generation” or the new French (Tribalat 1995: 11). Although in the case of children with Algerian roots, the “second generation” in literal terms may no longer apply, I will use this term and “new French” interchangeably to stress the importance of distinguishing between an immigrant and their French born children. Although they are not “new”, the term “new French” indicates a proposal for a new definition of a group that is forgotten and not recognised within the French institutions including that of the school system. In addition, I will use the term North African when interpreting and referencing studies such as that from OECD statistics that give preference to this geographical term. Based on immigration trends between Algeria and France, it is safe to assume that the majority of North Africans in France come from Algeria. However, it should be clear that Algerians and the new French with Algerian roots are two distinct groups. Because of the differences between Algerians and the new French, this thesis does not describe in detail the migratory trends of Algerians. The importance lies in the fact that the children of Algerian immigrants, although similar in many aspects, are not their parents, they are not immigrants nor do they share the experiences of immigration. The historical literature, current research and our every day language tend to place immigrants in the same grouping as what Canadians would refer to as Visible Minorities. In reality, the group in question is most likely third and fourth generations of Algerian descent. Table 3 shows estimates in the population by comparing immigrant, first and second generations born in

France.

Integration

As a term used by the elite to achieve their own interests, “integration” has become divisive in nature. Also, being an unclear term it has become yet another loaded concept complete with negative connotations focusing on difference (Noiriel 2005: 9). However, the term “integration” can reflect a variety of daily activities such as economic, social, cultural and political activity. The Haut Conseil de l’Intégration describes integration:

L’intégration consiste à susciter la participation active à la société tout entière de l’ensemble des femmes et des hommes appelés à vivre durablement sur notre sol en acceptant sans arrière-pensées que subsistent des spécificités notamment culturelles, mais en mettant l’accent sur les ressemblances et les convergences dans l’égalité des droits et des devoirs, afin d’assurer la cohésion de notre tissu social. [...] Elle postule la participation des différences à un projet commun et non, comme l’assimilation, leur suppression ou, à l’inverse, comme l’insertion, la garantie protectrice de leur pérennisation (HCI, 1993 in Simon 2007 : 41).

This definition shows the importance of societal participation for both men and women and it warns of any dated cultural perspectives that may be hindering equality. By focussing more on our similarities integration can be possible.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will utilise the more contemporary understanding (Joppke, 2006: 145) of integration referring to integration in social terms while touching on the importance of economic standing. The nature of integration includes the multiform design in which social interactions between individuals or groups of people affects perceptions of identification, social values and a certain level of social cohesion is either established or preserved (Weil 2005: 47). Ideally, integration entails the process which a society experiences between its members and results in a general feeling of

collective solidarity (Durkheim in Weil 2005: 47-48). I am consciously avoiding “culture” as a means to an end for “integration”; the debate about cultural integration can easily fall into ethnocentric value judgements with a focus on an immigrant population. Cultural integration in the French context for French born children of immigrant parents would inaccurately treat this demographic as immigrants. Education is used as an example of social integration via test results, academic success in a streamed system and the eventual entrance into the workforce.

Immigration and integration are two terms seemingly connected to media, policy and social perspectives. The assimilation versus multicultural methods of integration are the debates which occur when discussing integration. As the two ideological debates about assimilation and multiculturalism happen mostly when discussing immigrants, the classic discussion is challenged when we discuss the children of these immigrants who are born in their parents’ host country.

Forms of Integration: Assimilation vs. Multiculturalism

In many cases, when discussing integration, the discourse remains the same for immigrants and their French born children. This is problematic primarily because of the tendency of treating a citizen as a foreigner and thus affecting the concept of citizenship and national perception.

Assimilation: “Français comme les autres”

France’s approach to integration is through assimilation, and often the two concepts are referred to as one in the same. Based on the foundations of the Third Republic (1871-1940) and solidified from the reception of immigrants before the 1980s,

France's assimilation approach to integration has emerged with tensions and contradictions (Simon 2007: 40). These tensions may be derived from a lack of foresight into the immigrant contribution to France as a functioning society and the standards of French values and norms in which immigrants are naturally expected to adopt (Simon, 2007: 40). Furthermore, masked under equality, the French model of assimilation has become discriminatory. Often, when discussing integration and assimilation, the debate quickly turns into one of ideology. According to Tribalat (1995), the term integration has become almost sacred and the term assimilation provides an imagery which is a throw – back to colonial France.

Multiculturalism: Canada's Approach

Although France does not adopt multiculturalism as an approach to integration, it is relevant to present the basic principles of multiculturalism as a juxtaposition to assimilation. Canada is a global icon for multiculturalism; it is often presented as an example of a successful method of integration. Interestingly, Citizenship and Immigration's description of multiculturalism shares a similar discourse of equality with France's assimilation approach. Officially, Citizenship and Immigration Canada states that multiculturalism is fundamental to its belief that "all citizens are equal" and that this approach "ensures all citizens keep their identities . . . [and] [t]he Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding, and discourages ghettoization, hatred, discrimination and violence" (CIC 2009). Although beyond the scope of this thesis, Canada's multiculturalism approach to integration is imperfect, problematic and not a solution for France's integration needs, but

it provides an interesting point of comparison. Whether a country adopts a multicultural, assimilation or another approach to integration, the common thread is perceptions of citizenship. As the nature of the French educational system is to teach the country's youth how to be full functioning citizens in their own right, France's concept of citizenship is directly affected by this approach.

What is Citizenship?

According to Barrère and Martuccelli (1998), citizenship has become the implicit solution to a crisis in the schools' roles in French society. Citizenship is used to provide meaning for the "collapse of the authority of the teachers" while it attempts a recreation of the student within the establishment as a member of a recognised collectivity. This recreation or development of an active member in the establishment is comparable to the creation of identities within a Nation, in this case France (Barrère and Martuccelli, 1998: 652). Barrère notes how this "essential condition" of citizenship brings us to identifying "who is in" and "who is out" (Barrère and Martuccelli, 1998: 652). Barrère and Martuccelli refer to four other characteristics of the citizen. They state that the citizen possesses rights, meaning the necessary rights for an individual to have freedoms such as speech, beliefs and social freedoms including economic and social well-being. They explain how the citizen is a social actor who participates in public life. Citizens have groups of peers and a youth culture, and a form of public and public life teachings (done in the schools and on the streets) (Barrère and Martuccelli 1998: 654-657). This becomes problematic for children of immigrants who are not a part of the immigrant population yet are not considered to be "French". The recognised collectivity, it can be argued, is the "second generation" collectivity. However, this term alone tends to have negative

connotations and also excludes the third and fourth generations born in France. The children with Algerian origins do not fit into Barrère and Martuccelli's four supporting characteristics of citizenship; this group is excluded in the citizenship discourse.

Although the French educational system plays a role in creating and maintaining citizens, there are conflicts in terms of the system and democracy; there is conflict between individual rights (as seen from *laïcité*) and the collectivity. The French educational system practices equality to a fault, and is leaving behind those students who do not fit into the strict framework of what is officially considered a good citizen, or French.

To break down the relationship between school, democracy and citizenship, it is important to understand the paradoxical nature of these issues. Under the concept of democracy, French schools are occupied with equality to the extent that the structure of the system becomes unequal because it does not consider the differences in social production and the autonomy of the individual (Barrère and Martuccelli, 1998: 660). The system accepts students on the premise that all pupils are a type of blank slate and easy to configure. The system is democratic in nature yet problematises the individual rights by not considering the students' different social backgrounds. This form of assimilation in the classroom is historical, as it follows the Durkheimian belief that assimilation is good and strives for the betterment of French life. The connection to citizenship lies in the fact that those students who do not fit the "French" mould as such, are not perceived as being French; they tend to be forgotten students, or students who "fall through the cracks" and are not active participants in the school.

Chapter 3: Structural Issues in the School System

The French educational system is guided by five major principles: *la liberté de l'enseignement, la gratuité, la neutralité, la laïcité* and *l'obligation scolaire* (M.E.N. August 2006b). As the educational system is centralised, most of the decision making processes are the same for every school in France and fall under the five principles. The Ministère de l'Éducation nationale's *liberté de l'enseignement* is defined by the *loi Debré* and explains that public and private schools will all be free of religion and the teachers will have the freedom of thought (L'Assemblée nationale, 1959: 218). However, stressing mostly the regulations for private schools, the *loi Debré* clearly explains that although teachers prepare students for the national exams, they will not receive their diplomas until the State officially recognises their achievements. The *gratuité* and *l'obligation scolaire* are principles which stress the importance of attending school by making it obligatory for all children ages 6 to 16. According to a law passed in 1933, all public schools up to the lycée level are free (M.E.N. August 2006b). *La neutralité* in the context of the centralised French educational system clearly states that teaching in the public schools is philosophically and politically neutral. Lastly, well entrenched in Republican values dating back to 1882, *la laïcité* ensures the secular nature of all schools across France. *Laïcité* will later be discussed in chapter 4. These five principles show how centralisation is at the heart of the educational system. The rest of this chapter will discuss how centralisation affects school management including who is hired and how teachers approach their classrooms.

Management in a Centralised System

Hierarchal Structures

It is important to deconstruct the structure of the French school system because of its rich history and the cultural implications it holds for the country as a whole. An essential characteristic of the French school system is its bureaucratic potential for being equitable yet its failure to bring this to fruition. A centralised school system has the potential to distribute educational opportunities equally and it allows for easier adjustments to educational provisions when compared to a more decentralised system. This section argues that although the structure of the French educational system would allow for a better ability to address ongoing social issues, its nature to stress equality fails to address equity and as a result, creates otherness and dichotomises the teachers and students alike.

Although the management of schools has recently shifted from a heavy reliance on the ministry to a more autonomous approach in the administration (M.E.N. 2006a), the level of “decentralisation” for the lycées, or secondary schools, across France has not realistically been put into practice. As part of the department responsibilities, the lycée manage the organisation of classes such as the number of hours taught and the role of the institution within its economic and social environment (M.E.N. 2007). However, when probing further into the management of the schools, the notion of equality as defined by the French school system is not reflected in its actual structural management. The training and recruitment of teachers is an example of how the structure of the school system is not meeting the needs of the multiethnic classroom because of the failure to consider equity. In fact, for schools to have the ‘autonomy’ to choose their hours or to

consider its role within its unique economic and social environment does not remedy the fact that teachers may be unprepared for the classroom in which they are placed.

In addition to the issues about teachers, France's policy makers are failing to examine how its school system constructs differences and creates tensions between ethnicities. To explain this phenomenon, Khamès and Paoletti (1993) and Derderian (2004) elaborate on the role of schools in *banlieue*. Khamès and Derderian point out that xenophobia disables the full participation of individuals within institutions. The socialisation process students experience in school affects their desire to learn and participate in the classroom (Redjimi 2006: 160). The opportunity of full participation reflects how the State either helps or hinders the collective integration process. In fact, the educational gap between children with non-immigrant parents and children with two immigrant parents has the potential of creating a new underclass in Paris (Crul 2007: 2). This educational gap affects France's social cohesion and the economic well being of the country and of the individuals (Crul 2007: 2). The educational gaps can occur when students are treated as a homogeneous group. This Durkheimian approach to education was never intended for a multiethnic classroom. If we superficially examine Durkheim's essential argument on the division of labour, we see that the greater the division of labour, the weaker the collective consciousness. If we were to translate this into contemporary educational terms we could argue that because there is a high level of difference in the classroom in terms of social situations, the French educational system needs to be altered to accommodate difference and diversity.

Although historically those able to obtain a high level of education keep their knowledge up to date while people with less education tend to see their knowledge as

outdated thus, exists a continuum of the reproduction of elitism within the structure of the system. The well educated are able to obtain and maintain their positions in society while others would either have to adapt to these requirements – long education or accept other positions in society (Bourdieu 1971: 45, Halls 1976: 167). As the French educational system was not created to teach and produce ‘blue collar workers’, it streams students early in their education experience to divide the academics from the ‘workers’ (Bourdieu and Champagne 1992: 71-72). Consequently, the most promising students are placed in the more desirable academic stream with the most ‘qualified’ teachers.

The hierarchy is implemented amongst students through a system of standardised testing. Students are required to take the first national exams in their *cours élémentaire* (CE1) class at the age of 7 or 8 and the second in their *cours moyen* (CM2) at 10 or 11 years old. The purpose of the exams is to measure how students fare in their programme and to detect any areas of concern for the students and the schools (M.E.N. 2006a). These exams are taken seriously and the results are available to the public. The data available to the public includes the overall national level and by region.

Students are required to write more national exams in lycée. Officially, the national tests are used as a tool to indicate how many students have successfully completed their programme, and how the lycée compares to the rest of its region and the country. Furthermore, because of the hierarchical nature of the system and depending on the stream in which the student pursues, the programme and lycée will vary. At this level, the national exams cater to the *lycée professionnel* and the *lycée général technologique* because of the requirements to enrol in each type of school and because of the difference in course material. Having two distinct types of schools also creates a

hierarchy of institutions and consequently a hierarchy amongst students. Similarly, the bureaucratic nature of the school system and its standardised tests is divisive for both students and institutions, and those in the more academic stream presumably will later have a better experience integrating into the workplace for professional positions.

Like in the *collèges*, the results for the lycée are available to the public from the Ministry of Education's website (M.E.N. 2009). The results available to the public include the number of students who wrote the exam, the expected average of students to pass and a percentage of students who actually passed the exam. The Ministry offers an explanation to the overall expected averages of the national exams. It states:

Les taux attendus estiment la valeur qu'un indicateur prendrait si, en moyenne, les élèves du lycée réussissaient au baccalauréat ou y accédaient comme tous les élèves de mêmes âge et origine sociale, sexe et niveau scolaire (ce dernier paramètre n'est pas retenu pour les lycées professionnels) et scolarisés dans des établissements comparables en terme de population accueillie (âge, sexe, origine sociale) (M.E.N. 2009).

Interestingly, the Ministry's calculation of the expected results from the national exams is not in line with the system's principles of equality. Given everything is equal, the expected average of the exams should be based on the school's historical trends. By considering the "social origin" of a student, the system in this justification recognises that it is in fact essential to consider equity when measuring success in the educational system. Furthermore, if the Ministry is to accept that students have different needs depending on the above criteria, it would also be beneficial for the students' success that the Ministry consider ethnic backgrounds along with their sex, age and socio-economic backgrounds. Interestingly, the Ministry does not discuss the role of the teacher and his or her impact on the students. Responsibility is placed on the student and how he or she

essentially copes within the institution regardless of their background. In fact, the Ministry states “Le taux de succès d’un lycée dépend fortement des caractéristiques de ses élèves, indépendamment de la qualité de l’enseignement qui y est dispensé » (M.E.N. 2009). There is a disconnect between the educational system in abstract terms and the practical, realistic results of the system. This is one example of how the school system is failing to meet the needs of its multiethnic classroom.

The centralised nature of the French educational system is not meeting the needs of the multiethnic classroom because of the unintentional hierarchy it creates between students, teachers and schools. The students within the system who come from the desirable “social origin” will succeed because the system was established on the needs of a homogeneous, privileged group within French society. Furthermore, the educational system is built to reflect specific moral and cultural values, which are presented as being natural. In fact, the development of good citizens is secondary to the production and reproduction of a higher social class. Consequently, this system treats the students as active actors yet the intention is to reproduce ‘clones’ as the system constructs the students’ school experiences while attempting nation building for the betterment of the Republic and its citizens (Dubet 2007: 66). However, the French system is divisive because it does not consider the multiethnic classroom and thus highlights difference while creating ‘otherness’ between students. There is little congruence between the system and the lived experiences of the student. The same issues from the mid sixties remain as the unintentional consequences of the centralised and thus bureaucratic nature of the system. Michel Crozier comments on the lack of meeting point between education and the pupil: “Authority is converted . . . into impersonal rules”, this does not consider

any personal concerns of the students; the structure is arguably separated from ‘reality’ and ‘authority’ (Halls 1976: 41).

Making a connection between the ‘reality’ and the structure’s ‘authority’ is difficult at best in such a complex environment. However, the role of teacher within the context of a centralised system can provide insight into why there is a disconnection between the abstract and the reality of the system. The following section will discuss the role of the teachers, how their roles fit into the system and the affects they have on the students’ experience.

Teachers

The French secondary school system was established on three key principles: secularism, rationalism and meritocracy (Brisard, 2003). Under the umbrella of French secularism, teachers have the duty, as civil servants, to promote the values of the Republic: liberty, equality, fraternity. Considering the impact of immigration during the seventies, the needs of the students in the classroom changed (Halls 1976: 116) and consequently, in 1991, the National Ministry of Education began to make significant changes to teacher training.

The reforms of the early 1990s closed the divide between the qualifications for primary and secondary teachers and the Ministry strengthened the links between theory and practice in the initial teacher training/education (Foster 2000: 5). With 31 *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres* (IUFM) distributed throughout metropolitan and offshore France, each institution is managed the same and hopeful teacher candidates must pass a standardised test for acceptance (IUFM, 2009). The reformed system is more uniformed as all teachers must have successfully completed the University Institute of

Teacher Education [*Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maitres (IUFM)*]. The changes to the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) were set for a modernisation of the educational system (Foster 2000: 5). Given the changes for the modernisation of the educational system in both the UFM and the ITT, the effectiveness in teaching is measured by the knowledge that particular individual has of his or her subject and the teacher's awareness of "external factors" such as managing problems in the classroom affecting the pupils is excluded in the teachers' training (Foster 2000: 6). Teachers who learn and implement the appropriate 'soft skills' to manage their classroom would make for a successful school experience for the majority of students.

However, the centralisation of education in France inhibits the teacher's ability or even foresight to adapt to the classroom for a more successful learning experience for the students. In fact, many teachers see their civil servant role as being more significant than the "professional" role within the system (Brisard 2003). This attitude towards the job, also lies in the centralised structure of the system and the perception that teachers are civil servants. Like many government positions, all teachers are recruited based on merit in which the teacher is hired before his or her practical training in the schools. This method of recruitment is problematic as the teacher is not tested on his or her ability to teach in a practical setting, nor are there any forms of testing to measure soft skills which may help the classroom environment as a whole. The role of the teacher is essential in the success of the students. Although pluralism is associated with a sense of nationalism and resistance, (Hicks 1999: 9) the structure of the school system needs to adapt its approach to education and to the role of the teachers for a more successful classroom.

Furthermore, over the course of the past century, the suburbs (or banlieues) of

Paris and other major French cities with a significant number of immigrant residents, have become a focus of media and political attention. This urban segregation has roots from the beginning of the 1970s when these suburbs became the home of the working-class immigrants, mostly from the former North African colonies (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 29). Consequently, the “urban landscape” changed permanently to one with a concentration of subsidized housing and general poverty with a population of postcolonial, subordinate, illegitimate identities challenging French society (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 29). Fast forward to the 2000s, the international media was taken aback by France’s suburban 2005 riots that took place across the country. Focusing primarily in the Parisian suburbs, the rest of the world became more exposed to the issues arising from these mostly impoverished areas and its youth. Racism coupled with a weak economy were two of many reasons brought forth (CBC News, 2007) to better understand what was happening in these areas.

As the suburbs are continuously depicted as spaces of violence, depression and full of unemployable immigrants, the reputation of the residents and everything else in these spaces is considered less than desirable. Schools in these areas have traditionally been considered less prestigious than the national norm. Whether it is merited or not, the reputation of violence and poverty is beyond the scope of this paper. However its effects on the desirability for teachers are of great significance.

The nature of the centralised French school system places teachers in schools, as opposed to the teachers applying to the school board, as is the case in decentralised systems, including Canada’s. Teachers are specialised in a specific discipline, in Ontario this specialisation is referred to as ‘teachables’. As in Ontario, the teachers’

specialisations vary from a technical background to more of a theoretical discipline.

Teachers in France are recruited after they have completed a three year post secondary program and by successfully completing the competition (M.E.N. 2006a)

A part of the recruitment process includes the appointment of teachers to a school by the Ministry; consequently the teacher is committed to that particular school indefinitely. Only once the teacher is tenured, may he or she gain mobility rights to change the school in which they are teaching (according to the need) (Brisard 2003). The method of staffing is problematic for the interest of the students living in the less desirable locations. Knowing and understanding their location is less desirable, students are well aware their teachers may not want to be teaching them. Also, the effects of the point system decides where to place teachers who may not be able to relate to the multi-ethnic classroom. Likewise, the students may not be able to relate to their teachers and therefore there is high potential for a difficult classroom environment. This model also poses many problems to the French classroom as it does not meet the needs of the teacher in terms of mobility and a lack of training in soft skills. This model does not meet the needs of the students in many ways because of the teacher's lack of training in interpersonal relationships. Consequently, a teacher placed in a multi-ethnic classroom with no previous experience or training cannot address the student's needs to create a better learning environment for the whole. In addition, one major part of the structure of the educational system is how it recruits its teachers. The recruitment and staffing process often results in teachers who are knowledgeable in their particular subject but who lack the skills needed for the changing, multiethnic classroom.

Recruitment

The recruitment of teachers is arguably not reflective of the students' needs. In fact, based on the restrictions placed upon teachers and their ability to change regions or schools, the rector is not sending the right teachers to the right places. The IUFM and the Ministry is not recognising the need for a better balanced training between subject-knowledge and practical – classroom knowledge. In many cases, the dialogue used by teachers describing their students reflects this lack of adaptation and training for the multi-ethnic classroom. Phrases such as “they are hopeless” or “[they] have nothing but the experience of violence” (Redjimi 2006: 159) are common. The lack of preparation for the variety of needs a multi-ethnic classroom possesses is also revealed in the connections teachers often make regarding the differences between the ‘cultural differences’ and academic failure. The challenge of recognising the changing classrooms with the new French students is evident, yet teachers are pressured to prepare their students for the final standardised national exam.

On a pedagogical note, the institutions have to consider a variety of questions regarding the management of their changing classrooms. In the 1970s, teachers were asking if their role in the classroom was to either integrate immigrant children with French children, or teach in a way where the immigrant children's national, religious and cultural identity be respected (Halls 1976: 116). Although French national identity has been affected by immigration patterns and consequently their children, teachers are asking the same questions from the seventies and earlier because of a lack of separating the immigrant and the new French citizen.

In areas with high levels of diversity, there are new linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural class boundaries being created. In reference to Antonio Gramsci's political

theory, Emily Hicks explains how at the same time as the creation of new boundaries, there are laws which create and stigmatises the Other legally and in the educational institutions (Hicks 1999: 21). The challenge brought on by differences is not only in the institutional framework defining the conditions of communication, but it also takes the risk of establishing one definition for everybody (Barrère & Martuccelli 1998: 668); and consequently not addressing cultural differences in and outside of the schools. It is important to note the limitations within the school system are a reflection of abstract and practical issues outside the classroom.

However, this is not to say that all teachers see themselves more as civil servants and therefore have no connection to their students. It is the system which hinders the teacher to best accommodate to his or her classroom. Often, it is the teachers who defend and to a certain extent ask for more autonomy and leeway in the classroom (Dubet 2007: 62). Teachers do meet with the parents of students if there are areas of concern for the student's progress within the system. According to a study conducted by INSEE in 1992, immigrants from North Africa meet teachers more frequently than French parents (Simon 2003: 1108). The majority (51%) of meetings between the teachers and North African parents are the result of a summoning from the teacher. This shows that although the involvement of the teacher and family in the student's school life exists, there are no positive consequences because the students continue to have problems.

Having the proper preparation and training in the IUFMs geared towards a more balanced approach to bridge the gap between the pupil and knowledge (Blaya 2003: 650) along with more autonomy from the teacher's perspective in adapting to the needs of the students, would be of benefit to address the needs of the students in question. While

following the system’s curriculum, both teachers and students would benefit from a greater sensitivity to cultural and gender differences (Hicks 1999: 14). Such variation does not have to be reserved for classes with a social or moral nature, but it can be implemented throughout the streams and courses. Educational systems structured around integration and heterogeneity are more prone to value linguistic and cultural diversity (Allemann-Ghionda 2001: 4). The negative perceptions of the youth in France is in part derived by the lack of “success” in the classroom. However these students who are failing school may associate completed homework, punctuality and politeness as “acting white” (Hicks 1999: 25) and therefore they are rejecting the “elite, dominant culture”

The complexity of social perceptions includes teachers’ attitudes towards their students. According to a 2003 comparative study on perceptions of school violence in England and France, the relationships between pupils and teachers revealed that the French school staff’s perception of the quality in their communication and relationship with students is one of difficulty. More than half of the school staff respondents reported to having a ‘difficult’ relationship with the school students while only 0.4% indicated a good relationship (Blaya 2003: 654).

Pupils/Teachers					
Country	Bad	Not That Good	Good	Extremely Good	Total
England	1.1	14.7	65.8	18.4	100
France	5.5	46.0	48.1	0.4	100
Total	3.5	32.0	56.0	8.5	100

Notes: All figures are percentages. Number of observations: England, 190; France, 235
Source: Blaya 2003: 654.

According to the same study, French teachers feel isolated as they perceive an increase in student violence in the schools. Whether the violence is in fact increasing or not, the fact

remains that teachers are left without the proper tools/skills to handle the changing classroom.

As per the nature of the teacher's role in the current French system, opposing behaviour is often construed as a failure to integrate or succeed, this is a lack of equally distributed cultural capital needed in the educational system for all students to feel equal. (Hicks 1999: 83). In conjunction with the dominant culture's measurement of success there is a philosophical discussion explaining when there is an assessment to determine "achievement", there is inevitably a dichotomy of success or failure. Structurally, the role of the teachers does not facilitate an equal distribution of such cultural capital and thus this reflects on the students who have become 'the other' within a system that is contributing to the reproduction of cultural and class elitism (Bourdieu 1971: 47).

The centralisation of the school system does not allow much freedom for teachers to consider the individual; from the curricula to the method of teaching, much is prescribed and controlled. Officially, teachers do not have the authority to experiment in their teaching methods (Halls 1976: 40). In a changing and more diverse classroom, teachers are being forced to consider the implications of only addressing the collective. Many students' needs are not addressed because the current system does not allow for much consideration for the individual. In most cases, when students are experiencing difficulty in their school work and fail a class, the best solution offered is to repeat the entire year. It seems there is more concern from teachers for their students to pass the standardised exam at the end of the year than for the overall learning process of the students. In a learning environment valuing standardised testing, the cloning of students and producing elite ideas from the past, minority students, especially those with Algerian

roots, will experience difficulties and will be socially and academically left behind.

If the students stay in school, pass and receive their high school diploma (*le Bac*), the recent graduates are faced with integrating into the workforce, one of which is known for its high unemployment rates. In fact, for the “second generation” population between the ages of 15 to 40 and of all origins, 45% are employed (OECD 2008: 141). However, by controlling the “second generation” with North African origins, the numbers are significantly affected. Table 3 indicates how the “second generation” with two immigrant parents from North Africa has a higher unemployment percentage than the overall “second generation” with two immigrant parents (OECD 2008: 142).

In addition to the structural implications of the French educational system on its new French students and the reproduction of elitism, otherness and streaming which may lead to underemployment for students with Algerian origins, the system also upholds values that directly implicate these students. The next chapter will discuss the significance of such values including the role of the families with Algerian origins.

Chapter 4: Values in the Educational System

The values of the French educational system promote a specific set of Republican values that are an integral part of the actual structure of the National Ministry of Education.

This chapter discusses how the implications of laïcité and its significance for gender relations within the school system and for the rest of the country. The family effect is another piece of the puzzle to better identify why students with an Algerian background are not succeeding in the French educational system. While respecting the fact that students are in part responsible for their actions and success within the school system, I will also discuss the family effect. This integral part of the discussion of values will present the conflicts between family values and the Republican values, their measurements of success and implications of responsibility for the students' actions. Before addressing the family effect issues, it is important to understand how the school system presents laïcité and its assumptions for gender roles.

The Values of Laïcité

Laïcité, one of the five major principles in the educational system does not recognise religion or political symbols; it takes pride in its efforts for an egalitarian, gender neutral system which promotes meritocracy and rationalism. In general, French society has enjoyed a system which in theory provides their children with the same schooling throughout the country under the premise that all students are treated equally. This aspect of a centralised structure of the system has proven itself efficient in a homogeneous society where the schools were meant to serve as an institution reproducing ideals of the elite, for the elite. However, such a system also creates problems in a modern, multiethnic context. Focusing on the absence of any religious symbols creates

hostility amongst those who do not fit into the homogeneous grouping of French society.

Laïcité creates problems

On the basis of the ideology that all are equal and thus treated equally, the French educational system has been successful in building a sense of nationalism, with citizens playing key economic and social roles for the functioning of the country. However, this system is problematic in a multiethnic environment because it focuses on the absence of religious symbols and therefore creates hostility amongst those who do not fit into the homogeneous grouping of French society. The ‘Conseil d’État⁴’, in a decision of November 27th 1989, confirmed and clearly identified the following exclusive principles of laïcité: « *Le port de signes ou tenues par lesquels élèves manifestent ostensiblement une appartenance religieuse est interdit* » in the schools and public scholarly establishments (Lorcerie 2005: 75). It is argued that this principle helps to ensure the equality of treatment of pupils. Noted in the Stasi commission, laïcité maintains a “moral” obligation to ensure equality between men and women (Beaubérot 2006: 256), and therefore it is logical to forbid the headscarf. This debated question is reflected in the Debré commission, as it notes how many professionals in the schools were divided on the issue (Lorcerie 2005: 74). Also, amongst those schools most affected by the enforcement of the laïcité law, there are schools which are not in agreement with the sanctioning of students. However, the government and other decision-makers did not consult with students nor include the pupils in the debates. Noting this is essential for us not to make the assumption that students are either for or against laïcité (Lorcerie 2005: 93).

Considering the context of the multi-ethnic classroom under the umbrella of

⁴ Conseil d’État counsels the government on a variety of issues pertaining to legislative or administrative reforms.

laïcité generates hostility between a variety of parties involved in the school system. The excessive focus on the absence of any religious symbols including the hijab problematises an issue that may have had little significance in the school prior to outbreaks such as those in 2003-2004. Such a system like that in France shows how an emphasis on equality based on laïcité creates inequalities amongst pupils. As an example, in 2003-2004, the school and its professionals played a paradoxical role in the politicisation of the hijab (Lorcerie 2005: 73). The school became the heart of the problem regarding the hijab and it became the example of the “ultra-laïque’s” platform in order to conceive a solution of banning the headscarf (Lorcerie 2005: 73). Unfortunately, the objectification of schools in relation to laïcité law is being used for political opportunism and ultimately at the cost of students’ education (Lorcerie 2005: 75). Focusing on socio-economic backgrounds, many of those affected by the enforcement of the laïcité law are statistically not expected to succeed as well in the educational system as their ‘French’ peers. The additional issues surrounding the enforcement of the laïcité law only provides more obstacles for these students.

Unfortunately laïcité disregards students’ backgrounds, but it also negatively affects their educational experience. Some sociologists would argue that a type of war has been claimed by laïcité against those who support the girls wanting to wear a headscarf (Lorcerie 2005: 80). The prohibition of religious signs by this law is more cyclical because it does not regulate problems in the schools (Lorcerie 2005: 94) but only negates efforts to maintain a Republican tradition striving for national unity (Barrère 1998 : 651). In fact, schools were thought to guarantee socialisation and the emancipation of students if the latter were provided the proper education with the right resources to

ensure their success in life (Redjimi 2006: 159). The role of the Republic is to respect the individual and to assure the moral development of a civic citizen (Barrère and Martuccelli, 1998: 651). In this sense, if schools form citizens we are faced with new, complex problems regarding the school system. How do we integrate students into the “real world”? How do we integrate those students, primarily Algerian, who are systemically excluded from the dominant culture practiced and taught in schools? The reproduction of social class within schools and later in daily life has become increasingly evident in France. Students’ school experience affects their socialisation where the outcomes could be detrimental to the students’ professional future if there is a continuously negative perspective on their participation at school.

The values promoted within the context of the school system shows how equality is not equity. Egalitarianism in theory is good: in practice, it does not work. If the French educational system’s goal is to create functioning citizens, we have to address the fact that laïcité as a policy does not help bridge the wide differences in students’ experiences within that system. French schools are preoccupied with the concept of equality to the extent that they have become institutions producing ‘otherness’ and inequalities because the values fail to consider differences in the social production and the autonomy of the individual (Barrère and Matuccelli, 1998: 660).

Furthermore, the objective of citizenship in the scholarly domain involves high school students in the re-establishment of traditional forms of authority (Barrère 1998: 669). The system accepts students on the premise all pupils are a type of blank slate, easy to configure. The system is placed in a society that problematises the individual rights and the collective constraints (Barrère and Martuccelli, 1998: 660). Although

Durkheim believed assimilation is good and strives for the betterment of French life and that the Republic respects the individual while prioritising the development of moral citizens (Barrère & Martuccelli 1998: 651), the tension exists between the schools and the concept of citizenship in a modern multiethnic environment.

Laïcité and Gender

To assimilate in the context of the French school also means to change an individual's morals and values according to the civic standard taught. A result of this approach is the changing of ethnic identity including cultural traditions in order to become accepted in the French culture. A prime example is the emphasis on religious symbols in French institutions such as the hijab. Although students of Algerian origins typically do not wear the hijab in public, the debate nevertheless is negatively affecting the girls and boys who are suspect to the enforcement of the law; the sense of equality in the name of laïcité overshadows that of equity whereby this specific group is identified as challenging the law.

The Conseil d'État is transparent in their view that the wearing of the headscarf is a political – religious sign that is an obstacle of integration (Lorcerie 2005: 80). It is important to note the Conseil d'État sees this phenomenon as "an affair" of a small proportion of France's population and that today, the situation has "calmed down" (Lorcerie 2005: 80). Although the situation may have less media attention, it reflects how the modern concept of laïcité in fact affects France as a whole and the rest of the European Union, even in abstractly, with similar immigration and "second generation" groups and trends. Reflected in the Debré commission, it is important to note many

professionals in the schools were divided on the issue (Lorcerie 2005: 74). The government and other decision – makers did not consult with students nor include them in debates and therefore it is essential we not assume students are either for or against laïcité (Lorcerie 2005: 93).

Luc Ferry⁵, the former minister of education (2002-2004), believes there is a need to restore “republican sanctity”. His attitude on pupil’s attire in school is reflected in his actions as minister seeking to forbid all religious and political symbols in schools. He has played an important role in the 2004 French law on Secularity and Conspicuous Symbols in School (Lorcerie 2005: 80). The general protectionism of schools for a collective identity is exemplified by the “headscarf affair”, which has turned to an issue of girls and schools, of interpersonal relations, and of an educational system that is no longer regarded as French (Lorcerie 2005: 80). The current discourse on the headscarf and its affects on the students and the general population’s perceptions of the new French is also described as a type of war brought through laïcité by the oppressors of girls who happen to wear the hijab (Lorcerie 2005: 80). Here, young Muslim girls with Algerian roots or otherwise, are viewed as pawns in a type of war against the establishment. French public rights professor Claude Durand-Prinborgne, recognises how laïcité may be perceived as ethnocentric but he justifies the Laïcité Law because the headscarf is an indicator of the “feminine condition” and represents oppression (Lorcerie 2005: 84-85). This thesis argues that the perspective that the veil is an indicator of oppression masked by religious beliefs is superficial and lacks merit. Under the guise of equality, this argument solidifies religious and gender dichotomies and feeds into a national system of

⁵ Luc Ferry is mostly known for the Law on French law on secularity and conspicuous religious symbols in school.

values legitimising one acceptable type of citizen.

Reinforcing the laïcité law reveals France's perspective on women, especially those who happen to be Muslim and who wish to wear their hijab in public. Laïcité in the school system is value centric and has successfully stigmatised boys and girls alike in the school system. Consequently, relationship between males and females, masculinity and femininity, Muslim and non-Muslim, male Algerians are dichotomised.

The dichotomies are presented on the one hand, the iconic veiled French Muslim woman; she is suppressed by the patriarchy of Islam and Muslim order. On the other hand, the equally iconic version of a young French Arab woman who has been saved from a life of oppression and is actively a part of the movement "Ni Putes, Ni Soumises" speaking out against the oppression of women living in the suburban North African ghettos (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 31). Coupled with these two dichotomised versions of (new) French women, mostly with Algerian roots, we are presented with yet another stereotyped figure, the essentialised male who is incapable of controlling his sexual and violent impulses (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 31). These iconic, essentialised figures pose problems to the well-being of the greater French society because they are integrated as they represent the "other" and challenge what is "French".

Although laïcité stresses the headscarf as a main issue in the school system, it is important to address how this concept of equality or result of inequality affects both boys and girls in the system. It seems the essentialist approach to laïcité alienates large groups of boys and girls whose roots may come from North Africa or other historically Muslim countries. These students are automatically perceived as "the other" whether they agree or disagree with the law in question. Having to address and question their own religious,

moral and social beliefs is not always clear during adolescence. One possible reason for the lack of success in the classroom could derive from the lasting effects of stigmatism coupled with being forgotten in a system which stresses egalitarianism more than the student. The stigmatism may come from the Republican preoccupation of the veil itself, not necessarily the person wearing the veil. In simple terms, Republicans see the veil as the source of the young woman's subjection. The source of the subjection comes from extremist Muslim men. Republicans see only one way for these women to be "liberated" as a step towards avoiding Islamist terrorism and the complete abolition of French culture: expel veiled women from France's institutions (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 32). The expulsion of veiled girls from schools (as per the March 2004 French legislation) represents an attempt to remove signs of religious and male oppression.

As the veil remains a symbol of oppression, the perception of male-female dichotomies in France remain apparent and as a result, the veil has become increasingly politicised. However, while the school system has structural and value issues, it is also necessary to consider the student's family background and influence as a predictor of their success or failure within the school system.

The Family Effect

To argue that contextualising the student in their family as an answer to why students with Algerian roots are not doing well in school can easily lead to a racist justification that schools cannot "rescue" them from their household environment (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 29). There is the assumption that the new French students come from homes with parents who resist French customs, where young men dominate their "liberated" sisters

and other young women. However, if parents and children alike avoid confining roles, it is mostly because their social standing within the community and greater society limits them from the possibilities beyond their situation of low socio-economic standing. In other words, it is the cycle of their 'subordinate' status which inhibits 'French' integration (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 29-30).

As mentioned above, variables such as socio-economic status affect the student's academic endeavours and success. One key factor regarding students' academic success is their parental income. This may be of more importance than the culture or educational qualifications of the parents (Halls 1976: 163). In fact, research has shown the value of education in the home affects the student/child more than the actual education of their parents and more than the household income. Meaning, an "educogenic" family⁶ will be more ambitious and will motivate their children to perform well in school (Halls 1976: 163, 165). This may reflect what Bourdieu describes as "cultural capital" as ethos is passed from generation to generation (Halls 1976: 165).

In a study conducted by the National Ministry of Education (M.E.N.), in which children whose parents were interviewed regarding their educational aspirations, the children were in their third year of their secondary education. More than three out of four students are either on time or ahead of their educational schedule, however only half, for example, come from Portuguese or North African roots (Brinbaum and Kieffer, 2005: 58). At the same time, children whose families come from the working class show a lag in school, which is magnified amongst those coming from Portuguese and North African families compared to those of French origins (Brinbaum and Kieffer, 2005: 61).

Additionally, if students do not do well in elementary school (collège), they are

⁶ A family placing high value on education

automatically streamed into either a “professional” or “technical” school. The purpose of these schools is to provide students with trade or industrial skills (e.g. learning how to cast plastic for boats and airplanes). In many cases, the parents coming from Algeria are unable help their children obtain the family’s desired results in school (Tribalat 1995 : 146). In general, students with weak school results tend to follow the less desirable technical stream. To better understand the statistics of students repeating or failing a school year, it is necessary to look beyond the numbers and examine which streams tend to be more successful. Statistically, students coming from a higher economic background « cadres supérieurs » have seven times higher of a chance to graduate on time compared to those coming from the working class (Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005: 71).

Depending on where the family comes from, and the degree of literacy from that country, the value placed on education can be used as a measurement when examining further a family’s eventual problems of adapting into the French lifestyle (Tribalat 1995: 23). For example, those coming from European countries tend to have an educational background of some sort, it could be weak or strong. This is not the case for those born in Algeria or Morocco: 41% and 31% of the respective male immigrants have never been to school. For women, 45% have never been to school (Tribalat 1995: 23). These numbers seem paradoxical because of the positive valuation of education for both girls and boys with Moroccan and Algerian origins. There is a common perception that those with a higher level of education value education more than those coming from lower socio-economic statuses, however, the educational background of a parent is a feasible variable to consider. In the case of Algerian immigrant families, it is not uncommon that many parents living in France never had the opportunity to go to school. An explanation

of this may be found in Algeria's colonial past where the value of education is more of a cultural phenomenon and less of a class issue. In fact, as the colonialist powers divided the "natives" from themselves and created the "Other" by defining specific ways each group should interact and decreased what rights each group had (including educational rights), the same confrontations are essentially taking place in the French suburbs (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 26). The family's colonial experiences and colonial memories (personally experienced or not), are later discussed in this chapter, demonstrating that these variables influence the "second generation's" reaction to formal institutions such as the school system.

In addition, the Ministry of Education studies have found that depending on the family origins, scholarly aspirations and pursuits vary. Young people with North African origins try to accommodate to the ambitions of their parents, however, as discussed above, the boys tend to take the more of the "professional" and "technological" streams (Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005 : 53). However, there may be a disconnect between the North African family's aspirations for their children and the actual success of the students in the school. On the other hand, the differences between "second generations" in France is apparent. In fact, 14% students with Algerian origins stay in school until they are about 23 years old, this is comparable to their peers with French origins (Tribalat 1995: 145). On the other hand, their peers with Portuguese origins remain in school for less amount of time (6% stay in school until the age of 23) (Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005). These numbers illustrate a distinction between groups of students with varying ethnic backgrounds. After examining the duration of a student's school life, we can further probe into the household's values on education and how this varies based on origins.

Therefore, in the post colonial context in France, with Algerian or North African origins, the students dropping out because of the school system may be doing so because of reasons preventing them from constructing and legitimizing their identities. The factors feeding into the roadblocks are economic instability, symbolic suspicion and the students' own insecurities with their identities (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 30).

The Socio-Economic Factor

Discussions of children's success or failure in school often begin with an analysis on the parents' socio-economic background and its relationship to a student's level of education and success in the schools. Although the socio-economic background of families influences a child's perspective on life, as it may also have a lasting effect on the student's learning process and level of education, I am presenting a case in favour of the value placed on education in the household as being more influential than the socio-economic background of a family. The effects of social and economic class cannot stand alone in assessing educational experiences of students. Families with immigrant origins are not homogeneous in nature, nor should they be treated accordingly. To compare the working class from Algeria with the working class in France is not to make a homogenous comparison because of the economic and historical differences each group has experienced. The Ministry of Education sees those students with foreign born, working class parents as having two 'handicaps' against them because of their social and foreign origins (Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005: 53). Here, we cannot place an equal amount of value on the variables many use to explain the problems arising from poor academic results or poor integration. This reasoning, known as « all other things being equal⁷»

⁷ *Ceteris paribus* is a Latin phrase, literally translated as "with other things the same." It is commonly

or [« toutes choses égales par ailleurs »], has its limits. As previously discussed, while it is almost unheard of in France to have no formal education, this is not uncommon in Algeria. Therefore, to analyse and compare children whose parents may come from a completely different type of “working class” does not completely explain why some groups of students out perform others.

The family’s historical degree of literacy often affects the level of value placed on education or the family’s “educational baggage”. In many cases, the family’s educational background may indicate how their children fare in school and later how they integrate into the rest of society (Tribalat 1995: 23). However, in many cases, when foreign born parents see their children obtain a high school diploma, it acts as a concrete measure of integration (Brinbaum and Keiffer 2005: 60). Patrick Simon explains how the “family effect”, to use Tribalat’s expression, reveals how immigrant families, especially those from North Africa, tend to compensate for their social disadvantages and “lack of cultural and social resources by devoting extra attention to the education of their children” (Simon 2003: 1107). Students coming from an Algerian background tend to be a part of the demographic in which their parents are industrial workers. Many parents who migrated to France before and during the Algerian war did not have an opportunity to obtain a formal education. The literacy rates of these adults tend to be low, but, the Ministry of Education demonstrates that often those students coming from an Algerian background have parents who have high expectations for their children’s academic pursuits. The educational aspirations of immigrant parents for their French-born children

rendered in English as "all other things being equal." It is a statement about causal connections between two states of affairs, which rules out the possibility of other factors which could override the relationship between the first and second variable

are in general much higher than the aspirations of French born parents from the same social class for their children (Brinbaum and Keiffer. 2005: 60). The lack of opportunity for parents or grandparents coming from Algeria could be an explanation as to why this demographic places a high value on education. Schools become a source of practical knowledge about France for children of immigrants, and the educational system becomes an institution of culture, teaching key information such as history, literature and a model of French ideologies (Schor 1996: 100). In the same vein, parents pressure their children to do well in school in order to promote their children's social mobility. Social mobility is important for parents because of their own lack of opportunity because of economic blockages (Zeroulou 1988:456). A boy with Algerian roots explains:

« Mon père est venu pour faire de l'argent comme tous les autres mais ses projets, il ne les a jamais réalisés, il n'a toujours pas de maison en Algérie, maintenant ses projets c'est nous, c'est l'école, il ne parle plus de retour maintenant » (Zeroulou 1988 : 456).

In this case, the family's socio-economic status does not reflect the family's value of education; in fact, a lack of social mobility may increase the value of education in the household. School becomes a challenging investment for parents and their children (Zeroulou 1988:456). The "family effect" also can include a "family standard". To illustrate: a family member enrolled in university establishes the "family standard" and most likely affects the rest of the family's educational aspirations (Simon 2003: 1107-1108). The National Ministry of Education concludes from their studies that those students with immigrant parents have higher academic goals than their fellow students with French born parents from the same social background (Brinbaum et al. 2005: 53).

On the other hand, an explanation for those students with Algerian roots who are not as successful in the school system compared to their peers may not necessarily reflect

the fact that the families do not value education. In these cases, I argue, it is necessary to look beyond socio-economic issues and consider the “Otherness” schools may impose on foreign or immigrant parents and their children (Zeroulou 1988:461). Schools do not accommodate the multi-ethnic classroom and consequently do not accommodate the parents coming from different countries.

Similar to only accepting socio-economic background as the answer to why some students do better than others in school, the “family effect” is not the only variable for consideration. In fact, influence from the family may not occur naturally and it needs a certain level of parental involvement. In this case, school involvement includes any learning activities to improve the students’ learning processes, including the socialisation of the children for school (Ascher 1988: 109).

The family’s aspirations and knowledge of the school system are among proposed explanations for differences in school success for students with Algerian roots. However, works, including those by Ministry of Education, believe a student’s socio-economic background is a key variable which often decides on the fate of the systems’ students. According to studies from the Ministry of Education, families’ (in this case the Ministry is only considering families with French origins) expectations for their children depend on their social class. This has not been completely explored for families with immigrant origins (Brinbaum and Kieffer. 2005: 54) nor would it be necessary if we consider the paradox of those students with similar ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds performing drastically differently from each other. When we consider socio-economic background as a precursor to a student’s success in school, we must consider the completely different outcomes in students’ school experiences; meaning, socio-economic

considerations do not have much bearing for such a heterogeneous group (Zeroulou 1988: 453). We should be asking if the social background of parents from foreign countries is in fact a sufficient indicator of social background (Zeroulou 1988: 453) in the context of their children in France. In fact, Zeroulou (1988:453) believes it is the parents' attitudes towards education on which are also a significant variable.

In the past, we have examined factors connecting the social position of the parents in their country of birth, their emigration experience, their lifestyle, remaining relationships in their country of origin, the parents' mode of education, experiences of failure or success in the school system (Zeroulou 1988 : 448). Although some of these variables may not be relevant for third or fourth generations what resonates is the household's lifestyle and how the parents interpret their experience of failure or success in the school system. The school experience can include their own experience in the French system or in a system in the country they emigrated. In most cases, the parents of students presently in the French system themselves went through the same system. Although the social class is a viable indicator when examining a heterogeneous group of students, we have to separate it further into the family values about education. This may not always correlate with a child's perception of how he or she should function in society according to their parents' positions in society. However, having support in the household to pursue a certain level of education is only one piece of the story.

The reaction of many new French citizens towards the traditional French culture is often dichotomised into acceptance or rejection. The acceptance or rejection depends on whether or not they maintain strong ties with their roots. If a family maintains strong ties with its country of origin and wishes to one day return, the family will hold strongly

onto their traditional religious and daily practices while maintaining a strong connection with the immigrant population in France (Zeroulou 1988: 468). Consequently, their children, often French born, in the school system have a different perspective of themselves in France compared to their peers with less of a connection to their roots. On the other hand, if a family has fewer ties with its roots and wishes to remain indefinitely in France, succeeding in school can be seen as a means of integration, establishing cultural capital and social mobility.

For a clearer context, if we were to calculate drop out rates from school for young people with Algerian roots (boys and girls) and those with Portuguese origins, we might be able to see two distinct realities. Drawing a comparison between the groups shows the differences in students with varying origins. The lack of strong educational goals in one family will equate with a certain level of failure in the classroom. In other words, the weaker the aspirations of the parents (mostly those who have quit school at an early age), the weaker the student (Tribalat 1995: 149). More specifically, the girls coming from Algerian origins have an academic profile consisting of the following characteristics: they do marginally better than their brothers, but their level of academic achievement is much below the national average (Tribalat 1995 : 150). However, the girls coming from a working class family tend to do worse than their French peers coming from the same socio-economic background (Tribalat 1995: 150). These results force us to reconsider the general assumption that the working class is the same, without considering immigrant backgrounds and these results also force us to reconsider the assumption that girls generally succeed in schools. The discourse on the general success of girls in schools makes the assumption that girls do better than boys. However, this comparison becomes

meaningless when both categories from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds do poorly.

This analysis offers an illustration of the complexity of the issues and the nature of the question regarding the success of the new French in schools and how they are integrated into the rest of French society. Evidently the success or failure of a group of students is complex; there are other considerations beyond the school system and the social – familial indicators that are noteworthy.

Other Considerations

Language Issues

In conjunction with re-considering the impact of the social class of a family for their children's achievement in school, it is important to address the language issue. As discussed above, the group in question should not be considered to be immigrants, but rather to be French – born citizens. Scholars such as Tribalat (1995) emphasise that in the cases where parents whose mother tongue is different from that of their host country tend to place a high value on their children's learning and maintenance of their 'mother tongue'. In many regards, parents believe the learning of their own language and the host country's language is better for their children's learning process in the school. However, some researchers believe this is not necessarily always a factor of success throughout their academic careers (Tribalat 1995: 152). In fact research often shows how bilingualism tends to have a negative effect on the child's learning process and is more of a 'handicap' than an advantage (Tribalat 1995: 137). The full debate regarding the learning of language at a young age is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, the importance remains that although the new French are perceived as foreigners, language is

not an issue for them by the time they are in high school. Therefore, considering a 'language barrier' for "second generation" students as an explanation for their weak school results is not a viable variable. However, a different approach to the success in schools is the student's ability to live simultaneously in a family culture and a different societal culture which may be at times contradictory to each other (Zeroulou 1988 : 466). To consider this difference is more indicative to integration and more valuable for a better understanding of any underlying familial affects on the student and his or her success in school.

Summary and Conclusions

The educational system, in any given country, should reflect the nature of that particular society. Having experienced significant immigration before World War II, France's migratory history is unique in Europe (OECD 2008: 171). Consequently, the school system was greatly affected, revealing a lack of agreement as to which approaches work, or how it should be structured. The objective of this thesis was to show how, although the French educational system is well established, its policies and laws are dated and do not fully reflect the diverse contemporary French population. I argue that the new French population, mostly students of Algerian heritage, are being left behind in an educational system that does not meet their educational and integration needs. For a better understanding of the reasons why the schools are failing this group of students, the analysis focused on the values and structures of the system and how they affect immigrant-origin students.

The goal of the thesis was to provide a holistic analysis to France's educational system by beginning with its history and its Durkheimian approach to pedagogy and equality. However, Durkheim's failure to address issues of power, elitism and class division reveals a contemporary weakness in his theory of education and its relationship with society. Durkheim's analysis of the French situation does reveal the unique role this particular institution has been playing within a national and global context (Pickering 1979: 104). By emphasising the social aspect of education, this thesis hopes to better address the structural and value-based issues facing the educational system, particularly those that promote overt and covert discrimination towards the new French population in the schools. Although Durkheim's vision entails the teaching of moral authority where

students are taught “the joys of acting in conjunction with others, according to the dictates of an impersonal law, common to everyone” (Pickering 1979: 161), the contemporary result is not what he would have anticipated.

Durkheim and the other “forefathers” of the French educational system did not anticipate the dichotomy within the system of social mobility for one group and failure for the children of another, primarily North African, group. The founders of the educational system also did not anticipate the disconnect between parental aspirations of parents with foreign origins for their French born children and the actual achievement of their children. In fact, one third of new French young women with North African origins and half of young men with the same roots do not complete their schooling with an adequate qualification to become integrated, functioning citizens in the workplace (OECD 2008: 145). Furthermore, although this new French population is making progress compared to their parents, the social and labour related consequences of stereotypes are a direct reflection of how the educational system is failing its students.

An underlying argument this thesis explores is the nature of the group in question. While multiple French identities are emerging from the margins and entering France’s institutions, researchers, policy makers and communities alike do not have a clear definition, nor do they distinguish the difference between an immigrant and their children. The integration needs of immigrants and of their French born children are different and this should be further explored. The lack of analysis of the new French speaks to how minorities in France are perceived in a minority context.

Further to this argument, this research adds to the existing literature discussing how education is a form of nation-building and how the Republican values that France’s

system teaches create an environment that tends to exclude entire categories of people. Within the boundaries of the schools, there is a push-pull relationship between the family-effect (private space) and the Republican, secular (public space) tradition. Assimilation in the context of French schools also means transforming an individual's values acquired in the household into the civic standard taught in the classroom. A result of this approach is the transformation of ethnic identity, including religious traditions, in order to become accepted in the French culture. A prime example discussed in chapter 4 is the emphasis on religious symbols in French institutions through the implementation and enforcement of the laïcité law.

This thesis concurs with existing literature regarding laïcité by supporting the argument that it ignores the backgrounds of students and tends to exert a negative influence on their school experience. This seems to pervade students' experiences including their success in the classroom, their social, symbolic success and how their academic success relates to their integration into the rest of their communities. Similar to neighbouring Western European countries, the school system is not organised to acknowledge and address the individual, but the collective. The outcome is the paradox of constructing inequality in the name of promoting equality. In France, the Conseil d'État has made its view very clear that the wearing of the headscarf is a political-religious sign that is an obstacle of integration (Lorcerie 2005: 80). Developing comparisons between France's approach and that of the UK and Germany would add to the existing literature. This would enable policy makers to better understand the loss of human capital resulting from inadequacies of the educational system in its approach to ethnic and immigrant populations (Guénif-Souilamas 2006: 30). A step forward to

reduce the difficulties experienced by the new French population would include a greater acceptance of differences, in order to move beyond the “second generation’s” material and symbolic exclusion within and outside of the school system.

This study and the conclusions derived from it have obvious limitations. Documentary research inevitably glosses over the complexity of everyday social life, and cannot capture the actual experience of the people concerned, in this case immigrant-origin children. Ideally, this research would have included interviews with secondary-school students who are descendants of immigrant parents. In the context of further, more extensive research, the question could be further investigated by conducting interviews with both students and teachers from a variety of regions in France including the obvious choice Paris; but also the other great immigrant cities, Marseille and Lyon. By quantitatively and qualitatively comparing the cities with we may gain insight to how a centralised institution, like the educational system, affects the individual and community within that particular space and time. On the other hand, this research could also be extended by undertaking an in depth look into how marginalised students are coping in French society overall. Within the context of the school system failing its minority students, an exploration of violence and changes in language and culture such as the “verlan” slang could also be researched.

This thesis is nevertheless a necessary first step in understanding a very complex phenomenon. Much of what happens in French society is strongly influenced by macro forces and structures, especially state institutions. This thesis furthermore acts as a stepping stone breaking away from the standard socio-economic explanations of “success”. Although high dropout rates and high percentages of unemployment amongst

the children of immigrants contribute to a certain stereotype of this group, there has been a relative social mobility compared to their parents' situations and experiences (Simon 2003: 1092). Despite the difficulties students with Algerian roots may face, their rates of literacy and educational background are usually higher than those of their parents. The evidence of such social mobility shows that the school system is not completely failing the students but the existing issues remain in the school structures, the values developed within the educational system, and circumstance around students' backgrounds and family histories.

More broadly, educational systems and their integrative function need a more holistic, comparative analytical approach, which could benefit any "new population" including that of Canada. No system is perfect and beneficial practices can be learned from a variety of educational institutions. Although the Canadian school systems are run provincially, for instance, their relative autonomy often does not meet the needs of their minority students. Some degree of French-style centralisation but with more classroom-level autonomy is probably a path worth investigating. Questions of identity and diversity are also inevitably problematic. The negation of difference in the French system yields a broad range of problems, as discussed above. But Canadian policies and research pertaining to diversity and multiculturalism also have difficulties in distinguishing between immigrant, visible minorities, and Canadian born citizens. These comparative observations could be a useful starting point of further research in the sociology of education, diversity and multicultural policy issues.

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Annex

Tables

Table 1

Répartition des immigrés par pays d'origine

	1962	1968	1975	1982	1990	1999	
	en %	en %	en %	en %	en %	en %	effectifs
Europe	78.7	76.4	67.2	57.3	50.4	44.9	1,934,144
Espagne	18.0	21.0	15.2	11.7	9.5	7.3	316,232
Italie	31.8	23.9	17.2	14.1	11.6	8.8	378,649
Portugal	2.0	8.8	16.9	15.8	14.4	13.3	571,874
Pologne	9.5	6.7	4.8	3.9	3.4	2.3	98,571
Autres pays d'Europe	17.5	16.1	13.1	11.7	11.4	13.2	568,818
Afrique	14.9	19.9	28.0	33.2	35.9	39.3	1,691,562
Algérie	11.6	11.7	14.3	14.8	13.3	13.3	574,208
Maroc	1.1	3.3	6.6	9.1	11.0	12.1	522,504
Tunisie	1.5	3.5	4.7	5.0	5.0	4.7	201,561
Autres pays d'Afrique	0.7	1.4	2.4	4.3	6.6	9.1	393,289
Asie	2.4	2.5	3.6	8.0	11.4	12.8	549,994
Turquie	1.4	1.3	1.9	3.0	4.0	4.0	174,160
Cambodge, Laos, Vietnam	0.4	0.6	0.7	3.0	3.7	3.7	159,750
Autres pays d'Asie	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.9	3.6	5.0	216,084
Amérique, Océanie	3.2	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.3	3.0	130,394
Non déclaré	0.8	0.1	///	///	///	///	///
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Effectif	2,861,280	3,281,060	3,887,460	4,037,036	4,165,952	4,306,094	4,306,094

Note : /// = absence de résultats due à la nature des choses.

Source : Insee, Recensements de la population, 1962-1999

Table 2

ESTIMATION DE LA POPULATION D'ORIGINE ÉTRANGÈRE PAR PAYS
D'ORIGINE ET PAR GÉNÉRATION (EN MILLIERS ET EN %)

Pays d'origine	Immigrés		1re génération née en France		2e génération née en France		Total	
	Effectif (milliers)	%	Effectif (milliers)	%	Effectif (milliers)	%	Effectif (milliers)	%
Maghreb	1 299	30,2	1 431	25,9	269	7,4	2 999	22,2
Algérie	574	13,3	783	14,2	220	6,0	1 577	11,7
Maroc	523	12,1	451	8,2	31	0,9	1 005	7,5
Tunisie	202	4,7	197	3,6	18	0,5	417	3,1
Afrique sub-saharienne	393	9,1	286	5,2	–	–	679	5,0
Turquie	174	4,0	148	2,7	–	–	322	2,4
Europe du Sud	1 267	29,4	2 079	37,6	1 819	49,9	5 165	38,3
Italie	379	8,8	1 020	18,4	1 158	31,8	2 557	19,0
Espagne	316	7,3	577	10,4	571	15,7	1 464	10,9
Portugal	572	13,3	482	8,7	90	2,5	1 144	8,5
Autre pays de l'Union européenne	363	8,4	646	11,7	793	21,8	1 802	13,4
Autre pays d'origine	812	18,9	940	17,0	762	20,9	2 514	18,6
Total	4 307	100,0	5 531	100,0	3 644	100,0	13 482	100,0

Source : Insee, enquête Étude de l'histoire familiale 1999 in Tribalat. Une estimation des populations d'origine étrangère en France en 1999.

Table 3

Labour Market outcomes of second generation immigrants⁸ and their children according to the parents' place of birth and the nationality at birth

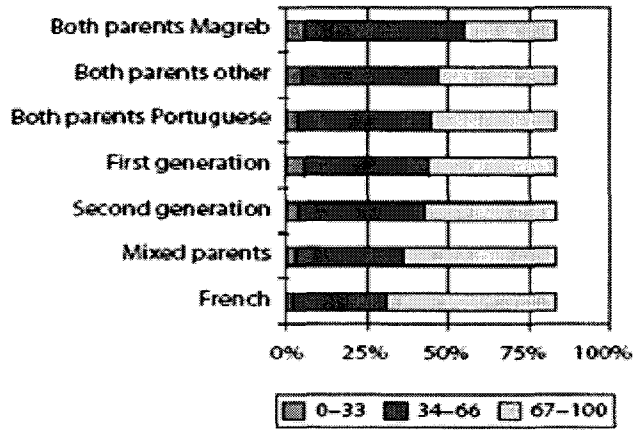
	Employment rate %	Unemployment rate %
15-40		
Two immigrant parents	45.3	20.6
Two foreign-born parents with French nationality at birth	50.3	21.2
Total	46.3	20.7
Two Immigrants born in North Africa	38.3	28.1
Two parents born in North Africa with French nationality	55.3	18.5
Total	43.6	24.6
Mixed – One immigrant parent	57.2	16.1
Mixed – One foreign-born parents with French nationality at birth	58.0	13.4
Total	57.7	14.4
Mixed – One immigrant parent born in North Africa	42.9	21.7
Mixed – One parent born in North Africa with French nationality at birth	60.2	13.6
Total	57.1	14.8
Two native-born with French nationality at birth	61.5	11.8

Source: OECD, 2008

⁸ “The ‘second generation’ are children of immigrant parents or of foreign-born with French nationality at birth” (OECD 2008).

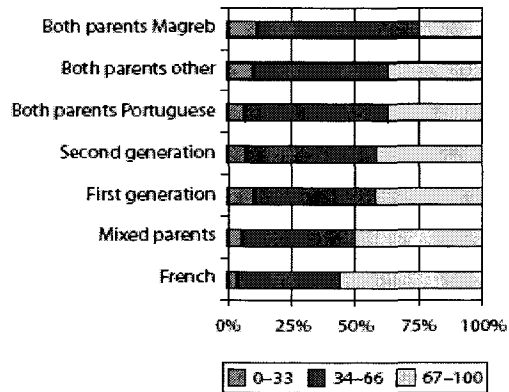
Figures

Figure 1
Results in French exams in 1995 by origin



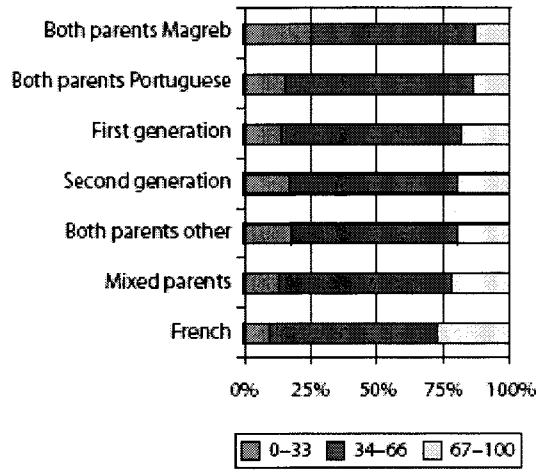
Source: Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005

Figure 2
Results in Mathematics exams in 1995 by origin.



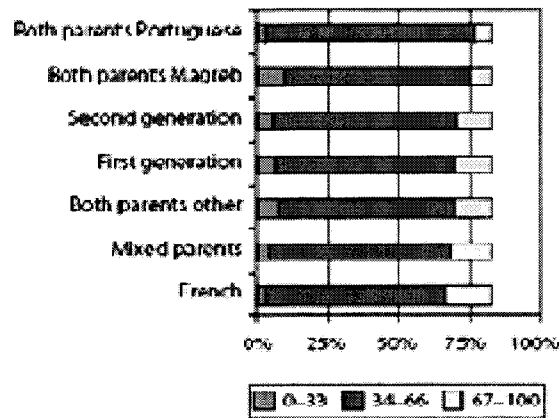
Source : Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005

Figure 3
Results from Mathematics exams in 1998 by origin



Source: Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005

Figure 4
Results in French exams in 1998 by origin.



Source : Brinbaum and Kieffer 2005