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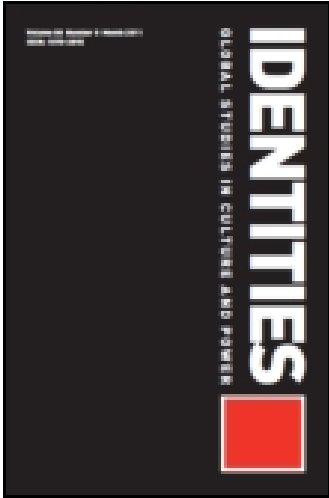
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Boundaries of Frenchness: cultural citizenship and France's middle-class North African second-generation

Jean Beaman

Based on 45 interviews in the Paris metropolitan area, I focus on the middle-class segment of France's North African second-generation and use the framework of cultural citizenship to explain why these individuals continue to experience symbolic exclusion despite their attainment of a middle-class status. Even though they are successful in terms of professional and educational accomplishments and are assimilated by traditional measures, they nonetheless feel excluded from mainstream French society. Because of this exclusion, they do not feel they are perceived as full citizens. I also discuss how this segment of France's second-generation draws boundaries around being French and how they relate to these boundaries. Despite their citizenship and their ties to France, they are often perceived as foreigners and have their 'Frenchness' contested by their compatriots. I argue they are denied cultural citizenship, because of their North African ethnic origin, which would allow them to be accepted by others as part of France. Applying cultural citizenship as an analytical framework provides an understanding of the socio-cultural realities of being a minority and reveals how citizenship operates in everyday life.

Keywords: immigration; Maghrébin; North African; identity; cultural citizenship; France; middle-class

Drinking tea in her living room one Saturday afternoon, Noura, a single 30-year-old woman of Algerian origin[1] who lives in an HLM (*habitations à loyer modéré* or subsidised housing complex) in the Parisian *banlieue*, or suburb, of Drancy, explains the importance of valuing France's Republican motto of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*:

[But] that does not mean being that faithful to the Republic because the Republic has many faults. The French Republic was colonialist. [France] committed many crimes in many countries. There was inequality, even today there is inequality. France does not ensure the same rights to all French people. But attachment to the motto, meaning *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, you can put everything behind that. For the majority of French people, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, that is what being French means to them …

Noura recognises particular Republican values inherent with being a member of the French Republic, even if she does not agree with how they put into practice.

The symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002) she draws around what it means to be French reveals the gap between the France she would like to live in and the France she actually sees herself inhabiting.

Noura's parents immigrated to France when they were adolescents. Her parents are now divorced; her father is a retired factory worker and her mother is a childcare worker. Growing up, Noura knew little of her parents' lives in Algeria. She has since learned, through her mother, of the atrocities committed by the French during the Algerian War – how her grandmother was tortured and how her uncle was shot by French soldiers because he was considered a militant. Noura describes herself as an active Leftist and currently volunteers for an anti-racism organisation in Paris. She is determined to work for a France in which *liberté, égalité, fraternité* is implemented in practice. In doing so, she asserts a legitimate place for herself and other children of North African immigrants in French society:

> We have to combat this myth that to be French means you have to be white, or you have to have a Judeo-Christian background … There should be no hierarchy between children who come from a long line of French relatives and children of immigrants … Minorities are often not seen as legitimate. The media only focuses on their problems, not their successes.

Noura's narrative captures the complexity of French identity for children of North African, or Maghrébin, immigrants. Noura feels that she and other ethnic minorities are regularly seen as not French, despite their citizenship status. She, herself, is well-educated and currently works as a manager for a non-profit organisation focused on youth and preventative health.[2] Yet her success has not made her feel more legitimate in the eyes of the French republic.

In this article, based on interviews and participant observation in Paris and its *banlieues*, I discuss how middle-class descendants of immigrants from former French colonies in the Maghreb draw symbolic boundaries around French identity and how they relate to such boundaries. I argue they are denied cultural citizenship, based on their Maghrébin ethnic origins. Despite feeling excluded, many of these individuals still assert being French as part of their identity. In other words, they do not adopt an identity in opposition to being French. Part of understanding their social location relies on the distinction between the legal and cultural dimensions of French identity – that is, between being a French citizen and actually being accepted as French by others. While the Maghrébin second-generation are technically French based on their citizenship status, I show how they still experience exclusion and are denied *cultural citizenship*, which would allow them to be accepted as French by others. I ultimately show how cultural citizenship is a useful analytical framework for considering how individuals can remain on the margins of mainstream society.

Cultural citizenship contradicts what would be expected under the French Republican model, which rejects any implication of a connection between culture

and citizenship. In terms of cultural citizenship, I am referring to the cultural markers, often undergirded by race and ethnicity, which allow an individual to traverse cultural-symbolic boundaries around a particular national identity. In other words, it allows others to accept the national identity that an individual claims. It would, in this case, enable children of North African immigrants in this case to be seen as truly 'French'. Cultural citizenship is particularly relevant in France, as according the Republican model, citizenship is something that is supposed to supersede all markers of difference.

When respondents seek to be seen as French by others, they are making a claim for cultural citizenship – a claim to be seen as a *member* of the French mainstream or a part of French culture. In particular, I focus on the middle-class segment of this second-generation population – a group who, despite their educational and professional accomplishments and achievement of a middle-class status, nonetheless feel excluded from conventional definitions of a French person. Many middle-class Maghrébin second-generation individuals, rather than assert an oppositional identity, desire both full cultural citizenship and to be seen as French by others, with all that that connotes. Yet it is because of their North African ethnic origin that they are denied it.

As the French Republican model denounces race and ethnicity as meaningful categories and stresses the connection among citizens over any other character-istic or categorisation, France is an appropriate site to examine how citizenship and ethnicity intersect and operate in practice. Being French is supposed to surpass all other identities, including the religious, ethnic, linguistic and regional (Bertossi 2007). What being French actually means or what it means to be French remains a debated question in popular discourse, as evidenced most recently in the 2009 public debate on French national identity launched by then-President Nicolas Sarkozy (Cowell 2009).

In what follows, I present a background of the North African population and the methodology I used. I then discuss cultural citizenship and its relationship to race and ethnicity as an analytical framework, how my respondents construct boundaries around French identity, and how they locate themselves vis-à-vis these boundaries. Finally, I discuss cultural citizenship that is denied to these individuals because of their ethnic origin and how it relates to their social location, as well as the implications of these findings beyond France.

Historical background

Despite its long history of immigration, the French government rarely acknowl-edges such a history and invokes its Republican ideology, particularly in the context of immigration, in order to promote a monolithic version of its identity. Under the French Republican model, acknowledging difference is seen as pro-pagating difference. Yet despite the Republican emphasis on the renunciation of racial and ethnic categorisation, France has long relied on racial and ethnic boundaries in constructing its national identity (Kastoryano 2004; Peabody and

Stovall 2003; Wieviorka 2002). In what follows, I provide a brief background of North African migration to France, which while not exhaustive, situates the contemporary experiences of those middle-class adult children of North African immigrants I studied.

The North African second-generation originates from France's relationship with the Maghreb through the colonisation of Algeria from 1830 to 1962, of Tunisia from 1881 to 1956 and of Morocco from 1912 to 1956 (Laurence 2001). Though emigration from the Maghreb to France began as early as the early 1900s (see Barou, forthcoming for more on this), World War I brought immigrants from these colonies en masse to France for employment. These immigrants, who were expected to be only temporary residents, often settled in the outlying *banlieues* of major cities because of the presence of cheaper housing and factory employment. The number of Maghrébin immigrants continued to increase with World War II, the end of France's Fourth Republic in 1958 and the Algerian War of Independence in 1962. By the end of the 1960s, there were more than 800,000 immigrants from the Maghreb (Winant 2001).

As the result of an economic recession and declining employment opportunities, France temporarily suspended immigration of non-European workers in 1974. This led to migrant workers settling permanently with their families in France, as opposed to returning to their home countries (Body-Gendrot 1993). According to the Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (INSEE), which conducts the French census, more than half of the immigrants who arrived before 1974 came for employment-related reasons and another one third came to join their husbands or family. Second-generation North African immigrants descended primarily from this population (Silberman, Alba, and Fournier 2007). The growing attention paid to immigrants is not due to numbers, as the actual number of immigrants has remained relatively constant since 1930, but rather to its changing demographics, as presently more immigrants are from former North African colonies than from other regions (Noiriel 1996).

Citizenship and nationality have been historically distinct in France, as French nationality, based on being born in France, does not mean automatic citizenship and all the benefits this confers.[3] Citizenship is defined by the French Constitution, and nationality is defined by the Civil Code (Noiriel 1996). Currently, those born in France to Maghrébin immigrants generally become citizens at 18 years old and can be seen as having 'virtual citizenship at birth' (Simon 2012). The case of my respondents reveals how having citizenship does not signal full inclusion into mainstream society.

The middle-class North African second-generation

The French census does not ask about the racial or ethnic origin of those born in France, and it is unconstitutional to document race and ethnicity (Simon 1999; Tribalat 2004).[4] As such, there is a paucity of available data on second-generation North African immigrants. Recent studies have begun to fill this gap by

combining data on individuals' country of birth and parents' country of birth. As of 1999, about 26% of second-generation immigrants are of Maghrébin origin. To be more precise, about 14% are of Algerian origin, 9% are of Moroccan origin and 4% are of Tunisian origin (Tribalat 2004).

The largest survey of France's second generation, the 2009 joint INED and INSEE study *Trajectoires et Origines*, reveals a strong mismatch between individuals feeling French and perceiving that others see them as French (Beauchemin, Hamel, and Simon 2010). When asked whether they feel French, about 70% of second-generation Maghrébin immigrants indicated that they do, but about 43% also feel that their 'Frenchness' is denied by others (Simon 2012). According to Simon (2012), 'Frenchness is not attributed on the basis of nationality or cultural codes, such as the language spoken, but rather on a restricted vision of who "looks French"'. (13). This evidences the racial and ethnic underpinnings of who is actually accepted as French. The findings I present here are an ethnographic complement to this survey data. I also explain how the source of this dissonance lies in how the middle-class North African second-generation is denied cultural citizenship.

Existing research on the North African second-generation has primarily focused on disadvantage inherited from the first-generation, particularly in terms of specific outcomes, including educational attainment and employment prospects (Meurs, Pailhé, and Simon 2006; Silberman, Alba, and Fournier 2007). Many North African-origin individuals regardless of socioeconomic status experience discrimination in employment and other domains, which they perceive as based on their name, skin colour or residential location – all seen as proxies for race or ethnic origin (Silberman 2011).The North African second-generation is less likely than whites[5] to have professional types of work and also more likely to have a lower average annual income (Lombardo and Pujol 2011).

Yet, as of 2003, about 15% of second-generation North African immigrant men, and about 23% of second-generation North African immigrant women, hold salaried jobs. While much research has focused on the economically disadvantaged segment of the Maghrébin second-generation, I focus here on this middle-class segment of this population, or what some have termed the *beurgeoisie*, a play on the slang term for children of North African immigrants, *beur* (Hargreaves 1998; de Wenden and Leveau 2001). These individuals have experienced upward mobility vis-à-vis their immigrant parents and have achieved a middle-class status in terms of educational and professional accomplishments (Beaman 2012). The middle-class focus of this study is both a theoretical and empirical contribution, as less research has addressed how 'successful' children of immigrants face similar issues of marginalisation as their working-class counterparts in spite of their upward mobility. In shifting attention to the experiences of middle-class minorities in France, I reveal how individuals who are citizens remain on the margins of mainstream society.

Cultural citizenship and the significance of race and ethnicity

In addition to focusing on middle-class minorities, I also complicate how citizenship operates as a marker of difference by applying the framework of cultural citizenship to understand how my respondents are marginalised. Traditional conceptions of citizenship are based on a common culture that makes some legal citizens more or less accepted than others. However, it is this cultural dimension that often goes unacknowledged. Cultural citizenship considers citizenship beyond its legislative status and acknowledges the relationship between culture and citizenship (Delanty 2002; Vega and van Hensbrock 2010). By acknowledging this relationship, I stress how different groups can be denied citizenship on cultural grounds, including an ascribed otherness based on race and ethnicity. Moreover, culture is code for race and ethnicity particularly in contexts where race and ethnicity are not as acknowledged (Lamont 2002).

I position cultural citizenship as a different kind of citizenship, one which is undergirded by race and ethnicity. My framing of cultural citizenship specifically focuses on what allows an individual to traverse the cultural-symbolic boundaries around a particular national identity and be accepted as a member of that national community. I follow cultural anthropologist Renato Rosaldo's formulation based on Latinos in the United States, as

> the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong …[this] includes and also goes beyond the dichotomous categories of legal documents, which one either has or does not have, to encompass a range of gradations in the qualities of citizenship. (Rosaldo 1994, 57)

He argues that cultural citizenship presumes a universal citizenship that is based on white men, where those who are different are excluded. For Rosaldo (1994), Latino identity has been shaped by experiences of discrimination and efforts towards full inclusion in American society. Thinking of these second-generation individuals in France, like Latinos in the United States, as being denied cultural citizenship reveals how their ethnic origin remains significant for how they are kept on the margins of mainstream French society.

Considering cultural citizenship allows us to distinguish between the legal and cultural elements of national belonging and unpack how citizenship is socially and culturally constructed (Ong 1996). Specifically, 'citizenship is both a cultural and anti-cultural institution … citizenship positions itself as oppositional to specific cultures, even as it is constituted by quite specific cultural values' (Volpp 2007, 574). The cultural attachments seen as associated with being of North African origin are positioned as oppositional to being French (Lamont 2002). France's Republican model has historically excluded and marginalised particular populations, including children of North African immigrants. Cultural citizenship becomes relevant because of the way in which culture is seen as homogeneous in the French Republican model. There is one way to be French

(Volpp 2007). In this sense, cultural citizenship builds upon the notion of multicultural citizenship, which is opposed to universal citizenship and recognises that formal equality through citizenship rights can mask actual disadvantage (Castles 1997; Joppke 2001). Therefore, additional rights should be given to particular groups (Kymlicka 1995). My notion of cultural citizenship differs from this in that I am not arguing for a differentiated citizenship, nor for different kinds of citizenship rights to be applied, but rather for recognition of the non-legal dimensions upon which citizenship is based. It is therefore radical to think of cultural citizenship in the French context as it implies that citizenship status is not the only marker of difference.

Methodology

The research presented here is based upon data from 45 semi-structured interviews with children of North African immigrants in the Parisian metropolitan region. My respondent sample consists of 24 men and 21 women. Respondents range in age from 24 to 49 years (the average age is 32). In terms of North African origin, 25 of them are of Algerian origin; 12 are of Moroccan origin; and 8 are of Tunisian origin. The majority of my respondents' parents emigrated from the Maghreb between 1950 and 1970, primarily for economic reasons. Many of these parents have low levels of educational attainment, speak little French and communicate mostly in Arabic. Usually, the fathers worked in low-skilled jobs, such as construction and manufacturing, while the mothers were homemakers or did domestic labour. 35 percent of respondents live in Paris and 65% live in the *banlieues*, mostly the inner-ring departments of Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, and Hauts-de-Seine. All respondents have French citizenship, and about a third of them have dual citizenship (with the country of their Maghrébin origin).

As previously mentioned, I focus on middle-class individuals, those who have achieved upward mobility vis-à-vis their immigrant parents. I define middle-class by educational attainment and professional status. In terms of education, I focus on those who passed the *Baccalauréat* (BAC) exam and attended college (whether they actually graduated). In terms of employment, I focus on those who have a professional type of employment (in the French socio-professional category of *cadre*). Respondents had jobs including journalist, human resources associate, lawyer, technical director and banker. I therefore use a combination of occupation and educational attainment as indicators of respondents' socioeconomic locations.

I recruited respondents by contacting various organisations and associations, as well as by advertising on relevant Internet forums and websites. I employed snowball sampling because of the difficulties in obtaining access to a large respondent sample (Small 2009). Because of my outsider status and being neither French nor Maghrébin, snowball sampling, in which existing respondents generate potential respondents, was crucial for getting me 'inside' this population.

Because of this sampling method, this research is limited in its ability to generalise to the entire second-generation Maghrébin population.

Interview questions addressed a variety of topics related to second-generation North African immigrant experiences, including ethnic, cultural and national identity; social networks; employment; family history and parental background; relationship to parents' country of origin; educational trajectories; religious identity; and perceptions and experiences of marginalisation and discrimination. I conducted the interviews in French and digitally recorded them, unless respondents requested otherwise. A native French-speaking professional later transcribed the interviews. All names and identifying information have been changed per Institutional Review Board guidelines.

My position as an outsider, not only as a researcher, but also as an American and non-French person, undoubtedly shaped how my respondents perceived me. Interactions between researcher and respondents can be thought of as 'construction sites', where the identities of both parties are negotiated based on similarities and differences in background and social location (Horowitz 1986; Venkatesh 2002). Similar to what other American researchers have experienced conducting research overseas (Killian 2002; Pickering 2007), being American was often an advantage in my interactions with respondents. They assumed that I was unfamiliar with Maghrébin and French culture, so they explained in detail things that they might otherwise have not explained at all. Though researchers are never 'ideologically free' (Keaton 2006), I remained cognizant throughout the research process not to impose my own understanding over that of my respondents.

French identity and its boundaries

Many respondents distinguish between cultural and legal dimensions in their definitions of French identity. This is due to the fact that they are included in one dimension – the legal or national one – and excluded in the other dimension – the cultural one. The differentiation between the cultural and legal dimensions evidences the tenuous social locations of many children of Maghrébin immigrants. When individuals invoke the cultural dimensions of French identity, they include references to values, customs, traditions, practices, as well as the racial and ethnic underpinnings of each of these. This dimension of French identity encompasses what is perceived as specifically French, that which could not be applied to any other nation.

Saïd, a 30-year-old sociology doctoral student of Algerian origin, explains the interplay between these two dimensions:

There is the theory and there is the practice … There was a French philosopher named Renan who said that everyday you have to want to be French. You accept to live together, it is a future community … But for me being French is a desire, a desire to live together despite our origins. That is the theory, but in practice being French when you are of immigrant origin, outside of Europe, because when you are

of Swiss origin, or Swedish origin, or British origin, there isn't a problem, you are seen as French and no one talks about integration. However if you are of Maghrébin origin, that is different, there are barriers. And in the eyes of others, you see that you are not always seen as French.

While Saïd acknowledges that he is a French citizen and therefore is technically French, he still identifies a discrepancy between this definition and the degree to which he personally can identify as French and have that identity accepted by others. Part of claiming an identity is having compatriots accept that identity. When I ask him the degree to which he actually feels he can assert a French identity, he responds:

Yes, I feel French, I want to be French, but what is certain is that in the eyes of others, we are not always seen as French. That is the hardest part, because me, I want to be French, there is no problem with that. The problem is that people have to see me as French. If I say yes, I am French, I am French. But I cannot get into a nightclub, I submit my CV [in order to obtain employment] I don't receive any response, I am discriminated in [terms of] housing, and then at that moment you are in fact telling me that I am not French, all these problems mean that I am not French … So there are many youth in working-class neighborhoods who are sick of this. For them it is the reverse, they say, 'You don't see me as a French person, ok we are not French, so we are Muslim, we are Algerian, we are Moroccan, we are Tunisian, I will wear a jacket with the Algerian flag on the back' … and that transforms into aggressiveness and to me that is what the riots in November 2005[6] were all about.

Saïd discusses what many of my respondents reference – the dilemma between wanting to be seen as French by others and the inability to be seen this way. While he is not one of the working-class Maghrébin youths he references, he nonetheless relates to and understands the difficulties they face. Moreover, Saïd sees his own circumstances of being marginalised or excluded because of his North African origins as mirroring those of his working-class counterparts. This also reveals the limitations facing individuals like Saïd despite their middle-class status (Beaman 2012). How he relates to the boundaries he constructs around French identity are directly correlated with his own experiences of marginalisation, which he attributes to being of Maghrébin origin. Often, because individuals like Saïd do not see themselves as fitting into the boundaries of what a French person is, they find it complicated to negotiate being both French and Maghrébin.

Nasser, a 36 year old of Algerian origin who works as a journalist for a major French television station and lives near the Stade de France in the *banlieue* of Seine-Saint-Denis, references particular stereotypes in explaining French identity. 'Many people think being French, it's being white, eating pork, going to mass every Sunday morning, being Catholic and so on',[7] he explains. 'But me, I say being French is not that, for me being French is simply working in this country, paying taxes, it's just living here'. By framing French identity in this way – that is, focusing on the legal dimensions – Nasser actively combats the racialised

nature of French identity, in particular the association between whiteness and 'Frenchness'. Nasser is one of many respondents who invoke the racial and ethnic implications of the boundaries around French identity.

Born to an Algerian-immigrant mother and a Moroccan-immigrant father, Zara remembers understanding she was different, or considered outside the boundaries who is considered French, at a young age, growing up in Perpignan (a town in southern France):

> There are moments you remember, for example when I was young at school I remember having henna on my hands, you know the tattoos people have, and my schoolteacher got really upset with me because … at the time I was 7 years old, so it was about 20 years ago, and the teachers did not even know what henna was, and I remember my schoolteacher punishing me because she thought that I colored my hands with felt-tip pens. It really traumatized me. It was such a horrible feeling.

Now 28 years old and living in Seine-Saint Denis (a *banlieue* north of Paris), Zara remains troubled by experiences such as this one, where her ethnic and religious identifications remind her that others do not often see her as typically French. Yet, she feels that France is her first country. She sees herself as a participant in everyday life in France, which, according to her, is the necessary requirement for being French:

> Being French is being a citizen, meaning behaving in a citizen-like manner towards what happens in France, and having the power to decide what happens, via the vote for example. Being French is having a voice in France, being heard in France, because unfortunately even with French residence you are not necessarily treated as if you were French.

As a social worker in the 19th arrondissement who helps youth find employment, she has witnessed this phenomenon and the lack of opportunities for upward mobility for Maghrébin-origin individuals first-hand. Zara is actively involved in several cultural and professional associations related to her Maghrébin origin and frequently visits her extended family in Morocco. Yet, she could never imagine herself actually living there. 'I love Morocco, but I mean, I could never live there. Everything about it is different; it is a completely different way of life'. Even though Zara experiences marginalisation as an ethnic minority in France, she nonetheless sees being French as a core, inescapable element of who she is.

The majority of my respondents (about 67%) reference French Republican values, as embodied in the French motto (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*), when they define what it means to be French. In other words, they reference the French Republican model, meaning that citizens interact with the state as individuals. Republicanism in France is based on equality before the law, individual emancipation (or a rejection of communalism), *jus solis* (based on place of birth) and *jus sanguinis* (based on parental origins) citizenship, *laïcité* and cultural assimilation (d'Appolonia 2009).

Youssef, a 30 year old of Algerian origin who works as an insurance agent and is an aspiring journalist, explains:

> For me, being French means to believe in the ideals of France, meaning loving France and all its freedoms, France of Lights, France of equality, France of everything that makes France universal. She [France] has values that transcend differences … that pierce through differences. You can be black and be white or gray, at any given moment you share those values. You could be Muslim, Christian, whatever you want, if you share these values, you are French.

In emphasising these values, Youssef draws boundaries around being French that include him and also claims a privilege associated with being French. He sees it as an advantage to live in a democratic and occidental society. As a child, Youssef's parents continually told him that his home was here in France. He therefore feels like he has fewer issues with his identity than other children of North African immigrants. As he sees it:

> [Former French President François] Mitterrand once said 'We are all from the country of our childhood'. That means that me, I spent my childhood here, I didn't spend it elsewhere, and there is no one who can take this from me.

Even though he realised at an early age he was different from whites, Youssef came to see that as a richness – being both Arab and French. Yet this richness also created difficulties. Youssef remembers wanting to be a journalist when he was younger, but a teacher telling him early on in school that he would never be good enough to be a journalist. He attributed this statement to being of Maghrébin origin; it was one of his earliest memories of being treated differently because of it. Youssef remembered feeling like Malcolm X must have felt when he told a teacher at an early age that he wanted to be a lawyer but the teacher replied that it would never be possible for him because he was black. He locates himself in the space between the messages and values that his parents shared with him and the messages that he received at school; that is, between being both Maghrébin and French. Despite facing symbolic exclusion, he still feels fortunate to be French, and to have been raised in France. Its values are what set it apart from other societies. For Youssef, to recognise one's French identity is to recognise and acknowledge these values.

As these individuals invoke principles of French Republicanism in how they define French identity, they simultaneously critique how such principles are actually implemented in French society. They do not reject Republicanism as an ideology; rather they accept it *despite* feeling excluded from its implementations. Therefore, they critique French society – and often, their particular circumstances – within the confines of French Republicanism, rather than establishing or accessing an alternative framework.

Am I French?: Locating oneself in French republican society

Kamel, a 33-year-old divorced father of Algerian origin with a 7-year-old daughter, remembers receiving the most salient messages about the Republican values of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* and what it means to be French at school. As he grew up in the 'Republican school', he considers himself to be as French as anyone else, despite others seeing him differently. 'I had the same scholarly training as the majority of French people, so I think we are all in the same group, in theory. Yes, we each have our own paths, but me, I consider myself as French as anyone else', he explains. Although Kamel remembers feeling marginalised growing up, as he was one of the only Maghrébin-origin residents in his neighbourhood, he still never felt anything but French. Kamel positions himself directly within the boundaries of his definition of French. That he was educated similarly to other French people confirms for him the salience of being French for his identity.

Because education in France is relatively centralised, schools are crucial sites in which to produce French citizens and instil Republican principles (Keaton 2006; Bowen 2008). Second-generation immigrants often receive the most significant messages of what it means to be French at school, as their parents were not educated in the French Republican system. Schools reify a particular national history and national cultural repertoire, one which often excludes the contributions of immigrant-origin populations (Keaton 2006). As such, they are often sites of otherness for this population, as this is where they first made to feel inferior and different compared to their white classmates (Noiriel 1996). School serves two identity-related functions for this population – it enforces a particular definition of a French person and also distances them from this definition. Children of North African immigrants often experienced a dual education system, as shown earlier regarding Youssef – one education received in school and another education received at home. In negotiating their own identity, these individuals must reconcile these two educations.

Nacira, a 25-year-old high school biology teacher of Algerian origin, connects to her French identity through her own educational experiences and her experiences as a teacher. As she ages, she increasingly accepts herself as French:

> For me, it [being French] is really bound to where you did your studies, and I realize that the references that I have are references linked to the French Republic. When I think, I think in French, when I dream, I dream in French, and even if the French system has its faults, it also has its advantages … For me, being French, it is bound to the education you have in this country. And even now when I teach, I teach how a French teacher teaches, with the same tools, the same resources, etc.

Because Nacira was educated in France and sees the country of one's education as a salient marker of cultural membership, she sees being French as a constitutive element of her individual identity. This is despite whether others accept her claim to cultural membership or her critiques of how French Republicanism is

actually practiced, particularly the inequalities between schools in bourgeois areas of Paris and schools in the Seine-Saint Denis *département* where she teaches.

Karim, a 35 year old of Algerian origin, who works in the *banlieue* of Levallois where he also was born and raised, clearly distinguishes between the discourse around French identity and the reality of who can legitimately affirm such an identity. Because he feels he has been constantly told that he does not fit within the definition of a French person, he struggles to actually claim such an identity:

> To actually be French you have to forget yourself a little bit, adopt the behaviors that are imposed on us. There is a path to follow to become French … but us, I'm speaking about me, as a French person of Algerian origin … when I am in France, I don't feel *French* French. So it is for this reason that France has to accept all French people as they are, and not as they wish they were …. In fact, the French really don't accept us, they tolerate us, that's all. But I have a million more reasons to be here than Nicolas Sarkozy, meaning that in the last few centuries there wasn't a shared history between France and Hungary, right? But between France and Algeria, I mean, we used to be a French colony … But even if I don't want it [being French] to be true, even if I say no, it's not true, it is a part of me, if not I wouldn't be here. And even everyone who says 'I am not French', even me I've behaved like that and said that I wasn't French. But I am French, whether they want it or not, I am French … So that means that we are here, we are really here. But that's why I say that it would good if the French make an effort towards us, meaning giving us opportunities. Why can't I, Karim, Algerian, I am educated, I went to a French school, I am not any dumber than anyone else, how come when I apply for a job they pick a French person and not me? The day that changes we can say France has evolved, but for now, it is not the case, and we are very far away from that.

Here I stress that, despite feeling excluded because of how citizenship and ethnicity are conflated, Karim still *wants* to assert a French identity. Even though he has tried to deny it, being French remains a part of his identity. He still sees himself as French as any other French person, despite being made to feel otherwise. Rather than developing an oppositional identity, he instead asserts a French identity and a legitimate place for himself in society.

Discussion

As the data above illustrate, having French citizenship is not a sufficient marker of who is seen as French and who is not. Previous research reveals how citizenship is a salient boundary marking us versus them in French society (Brubaker 1998; Lamont 2002). However, by focusing on the second-generation, I have shown how citizenship does not confer the same benefits as it does for whites, as middle-class children of immigrants often experience marginalisation similar to their immigrant parents. By focusing on the middle-class, I have controlled for socioeconomic status as an explanatory factor for social marginalisation and

instead have shown how their racial and ethnic origin is salient in shaping their experiences of marginalisation.[8] They are denied cultural citizenship.

Yet, the middle-class segment of the North African second-generation does not cultivate an oppositional consciousness. Even as they wrestle with what being French and being a minority mean, many respondents still desire to claim a French identity that is accepted by others. They assert, rather than reject, a French identity. This data suggest that one reason why these middle-class individuals do not adopt an oppositional identity is their fidelity to the French Republican model. Many middle-class children of Maghrébin immigrants want to be seen as French by others and therefore seek to reconcile how they see themselves with their perceptions of how others see them. Because these individuals lack the option of having their French identity affirmed and acknowledged by others, they remain in a marginal social location despite their middle-class status and accomplishments. This is evident in the distinction between their assigned versus asserted identities.

Cultural citizenship is useful for considering minority populations outside of France and the different ways such populations can remain marginalised. Western European societies and elsewhere are confronting multiculturalism in the post-colonial era, especially as the legacies of this colonialism seek to be fully included in their societies and in the boundaries around their national identities. This is instructive for thinking about how multicultural societies deal with cultural, religious and ethnic diversity – whether through as Castles (1997) has noted an assimilationist model (such as France, the United Kingdom or the Netherlands), a pluralist model (such as the United States or Canada), or one based on differential exclusion (such as Germany). For example, recent research has shown how new immigrant women in London and Amsterdam feel as though they are seen as second-class citizens (Ghorashi and Vieten 2012). That respondents who were born and have spent their entire lives in France can feel similarly reveals the complexities around citizenship as a marker of difference. Race and ethnicity continue to be significant in shaping the daily lives on immigrant-origin individuals. Ultimately, for populations designated as 'other', such as the middle-class North African second-generation, being a citizen is often not a sufficient marker of social inclusion.

Notes

1. A note regarding terminology: When I indicate that someone is of a particular origin, I mean that he or she is a child of an immigrant from that particular country. Alternatively, I use the terms 'second-generation immigrant' and 'North African second-generation'. While I follow the convention of research on second-generation immigrants in the United States in using the term 'second-generation immigrants', I recognise the issues associated with this term, as it can also imply that they inherited an immigrant status (Constant 2009). See Begag 2007 for more on terminology as it relates to this population in France.
2. While Noura lives in subsidised housing, it is important to clarify how this does not automatically mean she is economically disadvantaged (Stovall 2003).
3. French colonialism complicates this dynamic as well, for members of colonies were French nationals but not citizens (Alba and Silberman 2002).
4. The French census classifies its populations into three categories: French by birth, French by naturalisation and foreign (Kastoryano 2004).
5. Following the lead of my respondents, I use the term white throughout this article to refer to *français de souche* or those of native French-European origin for simplicity's sake, even though I recognise that 'white' is not a commonly used racial term in French society. Even though much of the extant literature uses the term native French, I use 'white', since the children of immigrants, being born in France, are also native French people.
6. On 27 October 2005, two teenagers – one of Tunisian origin and the other of Malian origin – were electrocuted in an electricity substation as they fled police in the Clichy-sous-Bois *banlieue*. They were apparently trying to avoid the constant police identity checks targeted towards youths. A few days later, police emptied a tear-gas grenade inside a local mosque and refused to apologise. These events led to riots, which spread in *banlieues* throughout France for about 3 weeks (Koff and Duprez 2009).
7. Note that this is Nasser's perceptions of what people think being French is, not an empirically accurate description of the French population.
8. It is important to note, however, that these findings are based on the middle-class segment of the second-generation population, and additional research should be conducted to examine how socioeconomic status impacts these dynamics.

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