FRANCE FACING MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY: IS L'INTEGRATION A LA FRANÇAISE REALLY IN CRISIS?

Sylvain Brouard and Vincent Tiberj
Sciences Po
2007-4

About the Matthew B. Ridgway Center

The Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies at the University of Pittsburgh is dedicated to producing original and impartial analysis that informs policymakers who must confront diverse challenges to international and human security. Center programs address a range of security concerns—from the spread of terrorism and technologies of mass destruction to genocide, failed states, and the abuse of human rights in repressive regimes.

The Ridgway Center is affiliated with the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) and the University Center for International Studies (UCIS), both at the University of Pittsburgh. The Ford Institute for Human Security is a constituent unit of the Ridgway Center.

This working paper is a product of the Ford Institute for Human Security's working group on "Immigration, Integration and Security: Europe and America in Comparative Perspective," co-chaired by Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia and Simon Reich.

This paper and the working group that produced it were made possible by a generous grant from the Ford Foundation to the Ridgway Center on The Determinants of Security Policy in the 21st Century, Grant # 1050-1036.

Introduction: a French identity crisis?

September 11, 2001 shed new light on multiculturalism in France and in Europe. Before these tragic events, immigration, cultural and ethnic diversity were issues raised only by the extreme-right parties, the best known being the French National Front, and only a small part of the electorate considered terrorism the most important political issue.[1] Since the re-election of Jacques Chirac, the situation has changed dramatically. France has engaged in serious debate on the relationships between Islam and the Republic (the Islamic scarf, Mahomet drawings and freedom of speech, creation of the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman – French Council on the Muslim Faith*, etc…). Recently a new theme has emerged: the question of the Islamization of French society, popularized by Philippe de Villiers, leader of MPF, a right-wing, anti-European political party. The MPF propagates the fear that Islamist organizations would take advantage of the increasing number of Muslims to legitimize and impose their values and way of life on the rest of the national community.[2]

Simultaneously, doubts have been cast on the desire of the latest immigrant waves – mostly from Maghrebian and African origins- to join the French mainstream. Traditional critics of immigration state that immigrants try to take advantage of the French welfare-system and steal jobs from French born citizens. Current criticism of immigration focuses on the belief that immigrants refuse to enter into mainstream French society. The public perception is that France would become a "communautarist" society, like the Anglo-Saxon nations (following the representation of these polities as portrayed by many French academics and politicians), where specific groups would demand and obtain special treatment thus ignoring the Republican ideal of equality among citizens. French essayist, Alain Finkielkraut interpreted the riots of November 2005 as an ethnic and religious uprising against the rest of society.

Preoccupation with the French immigration question is not limited to the elite. In two opinion surveys conducted over a six month period (April 2005 and December 2005) the percentage of respondents who answered that the number of immigrants was too high in France rose from 49% to 64%. When asked whether they thought that "France has a debt toward those who come from its ex-colonies" those that disagreed rose from 36% in April to 48% in December. Such dramatic changes in opinion polls can best be explained by the rioting in the suburbs. In fact, after running a hierarchical classification using several values questions (both socio-economical and cultural), we identified a particular class of voters which constitutes two thirds of the rightist electorate, which we named "the closed right". These voters are characterized by a very specific interpretation of the November 2005 riots. The remainder of the electorate stressed the socioeconomic reasons behind the riots and blamed the discrimination of French society against the youth in the suburbs. The "closed right", on the other hand blamed the riots on problems resulting from immigration and integration. They consider that those living in the suburbs rather than French society at large are mainly responsible for the crisis: The primary reason for the riots is anti-French racism (41% of responses), ahead of the effects of television news (38%), Islamic organizations and gangs (35% each, multiple answers allowed). The "closed right" explains the crisis by a lack of parental control (47%), unemployment (29%), immigration (26%) and the insufficient number of police officers in the suburbs (24%) whereas for the rest of the sample, unemployment and discrimination were the primary reasons. The closed right favors conservative or repressive policies to solve the problems in the suburbs including more restrictive laws against illegal immigration (96%), a contract of parental responsibility (88%), an increase in the number of police officers (87%), automatic expulsion of foreign rioters (84%), more restrictive conditions regarding the rights of immigrants to bring family members to France (76%), whereas the rest of the electorate focused on social responses

including increased funding for public schools, better public housing, and education to fight discrimination.

The context surrounding immigration and multiculturalism raises several questions. Are the French suffering an identity crisis? Do they question their capacity to integrate the new waves of immigration (though some of these immigrants have lived in the country for three generations)? Does French public opinion reflect the debate over Huntington's clash of civilization theory? We will address these questions by examining the relationship between the opinion of the French electorate regarding the question of immigrants' integration. Several points of tension between the French electorate and those of immigrant origin will appear including islamophobia. We will compare the attitudes and behaviors of the "new French" i.e. the French of immigrant origin to determine whether the integration process in France has failed.

Data

In this paper we will use data from the CEVIPOF survey "Rapport au politique des Français issus de l'immigration – The political implications of the French of immigrant origin" (RAPFI).[3] The field institute TNS-SOFRES conducted the poll, using the questionnaire drawn up by the CEVIPOF research team, between April 8th and May 7th 2005, with a representative sample – called RAPFI – of 1,003 French citizens who emigrated from Africa and Turkey aged 18 year and older. A "mirror" survey was also conducted, between April 13th and April 21st 2005, with a representative sample of the French electorate– called the "control sample" – of 1,006 18-year and older individuals. Both consisted of a phone interview which lasted 35 minutes on average. In both cases, a base of surveys representative of the two types of households was set up using the quota method (respectively INSEE EHF survey[4] and INSEE Employment survey). Among this base, phone numbers were randomly

selected. With the exception of a few necessary adaptations, the questionnaires used in both surveys were identical, in wording as well as in the order of the questions. The methodology used ensures a reliable and systematic comparison of the two samples.

The RAPFI survey is unique in the field of minority studies in France. First, the population of interest was defined to avoid bias. Previous surveys defined the population by selecting only individuals of the Islamic faith or by their birthplace. Both these criteria are biased: What about the French of immigrant origin who are atheist or practice another religion? What about the pieds-noirs of Algeria who do not identify themselves as immigrants? Our study includes individuals of French citizenship having at least one parent or grandparent who held or still holds the nationality of one of the following countries: Turkey, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, or any other African nation. We therefore include in our sample naturalized immigrants, first and second generation born in France, whether of mixed heritage or not. Second, by using the EHF survey and the CATI procedure, this survey is the first to be controlled by quotas thus correcting the methodological errors of previous polls.[5] Most previous polls were based on face-to-face interviews and are biased since they chose densely populated urban areas to minimize the cost of the polls. These areas have disproportionately high numbers of foreigners. Our method, though more labor intensive, remedies this bias: 28,000 individuals were interviewed to make up a representative sample of 1,003 respondents. Lastly, the RAPFI survey is the first survey which explores specific dimensions such as integration, perception of racism and relationships toward Islam, but also general dimensions including politics, values systems and policies preferences, whereas the French of immigrant origin were only surveyed on matters such as Islam or secularization.

The French and their models of integration

Integration: a preliminary assessment

Table 1. Opinions about integration

	RAPFI Survey Immigrant-origin French	Mirror sample French electorate
The immigrants' situation will worsen in the future. (%)	27%	26%
There are too many immigrants in France. (% agree)	37%	47%
In France, everybody can succeed regardless of skin color. (% agree)	49%	43%
Immigrants can easily integrate into French society. (%)	41%	33%
Concerning the problem of integration, the responsibility comes mostly from the immigrants who do not try hard enough. (%)	26%	48%
Concerning the problem of integration, the responsibility is mostly that of French society. (%)	59%	39%

Several differences between the French of immigrant origin and the rest of the electorate are noteworthy. First, the French of African, Maghrebian or Turkish origin responded more often than the mirror respondents that French society is color-blind and that immigrants can be easily assimilated. They are also less often prejudiced against immigrants (not because they are of a particular ethnic origin but because they are younger and therefore better educated). They believe that integration difficulties are due to societal attitudes rather than immigrants' behavior.

Second, respondents in the mirror sample focused more on the question of religion. Their perception of whether the number of immigrants is excessive does not change their position on the difficulty of immigrants' integration (roughly a third of the respondents think that immigrants can easily integrate into the French mainstream). This is not the case when Islam is considered. Forty three percent of the mirror respondents felt slightly or very negatively toward Islam (17% in the RAPFI survey) and negativity toward this particular religion colors their attitude of immigrants' capacity to join the French mainstream. When respondents in the mirror population judged the Muslim religion positively, 48% of them said that integration of immigrants would be easy, whereas among those who viewed Islam most negatively, this proportion drops to 28%.

Furthermore, when assigning responsibility for integration problems in France, the differences between the "new French" and the rest of the electorate are even greater. French

of immigrant origin, whatever their ideological leaning or level of ethnocentrism, blamed society more often than they did immigrants. Among the electorate as a whole, the variations are even more dramatic. If French society is considered color-blind by respondents, immigrants are held responsible for immigration problems and not society. On the contrary, when respondents recognize racial discrimination in France, the society as a whole, rather than immigrants is blamed for the problems of integration. Furthermore, when the mirror respondents answer questions on the integration process, they simultaneously answer questions on the compatibility of Islam with French society. When respondents view this religion positively, society is blamed, when they view Islam negatively, immigrants are blamed. The integration issue is therefore not only the traditional economical and political debate but more recently a religious question in secular France. The fundamental question is whether Islam, the French identity and the French mainstream can be jointly reconciled?

The French models of integration

The French are so clearly divided on the integration process in France and the capacity of immigrants to join the mainstream because the general public holds several different views of integration.

Table 2. For you today, what is the most important?

	That immigrants join the rest of society without conflict?	Or that they petition for special rights even if it creates tensions?	DK	Total
RAPFI Survey	54	43	3	100
Mirror survey	65	32	3	100
	To treat every French person equally?	Or to struggle against discrimination?	DK	Total
RAPFI Survey	41	59	0	100

Mirror survey	58	41	1	100

	To value the cultural differences among the French?	Or to highlight what the French have in common?	DK	Total
RAPFI Survey	43	55	2	100
Mirror survey	31	67	2	100

The responses of the majorities are the same for two of three questions, in both samples. The sample groups' answers differ sharply though on the choice between equal treatment for every French person and the struggle against discrimination, the general public being focused on the first and the RAPFI respondents on the second. This could be the consequence of demands for special treatment, or evidence of immigrants' resistance towards assimilation. This is not as simple as it appears as we will demonstrate.

Using a hierarchical classification based on these three questions and the item concerning the responsibility for the integration problem, we have identified three specific groups of French voters, each of them with different models of integration. The first group, the assimilationists make up 46% of the mirror sample, the second group, the republicans, count for 36% of the sample and the third, the multiculturalists, constitute 8%. Each group helps to shed light on the question of integration.

The assimilationists believe the following: immigrants are responsible for the integration problem and not society (100% of their responses) and to be assimilated, immigrants do not have special rights (78%), under a framework of equal treatment (70%) and of cultural commonality (72%). Ethnocentrism is highest among this group (67% think there are too many immigrants in France, in comparison with 49% at the sample level). Assimilationists also score high on two traditional questions measuring authoritarianism in the sociological field,: 66% of them value discipline over the development of critical thinking at school, and 41% of them believe in the re-establishment of capital punishment, versus 50% and 32% of the overall sample. They also most often belong to the Catholic Church (76%)

and are the most critical toward Islam: 55% of them feel negatively toward this religion, in comparison with less than 40% of negative feelings among the two others groups. Clearly, they are the least open to a society made up of many cultures and religions. For them, immigrants must be assimilated and thus abandon that which makes them different from the rest of French society. Integration means accepting the French way of life.

Assimilationists and republicans share some common beliefs, particularly their preference for equal treatment (75% of their responses), their insistence on what the French have in common rather than their cultural diversity (77% of responses) and their wish for integration to be achieved without immigrants' demands for special rights. The major difference with the first group is their opinion that society is responsible when integration is problematic (78% of them place the blame on society, the remaining 22% think that responsibility for the difficulties of immigrations is shared by immigrants and society). The republicans clearly voice their commitment to the traditional model of the French Republic, or at least the one to which political elites refer when talking about the Republic, and cannot be portrayed as anti-immigrant. In contrast to the assimilationists, only 29% of them consider the number of immigrants in France too high and only 37% feel negatively toward the Muslim religion. These respondents are mostly left wing (48% in comparison with 27% of the first group) and are opposed to the death penalty (80%). The republicans also rated the development of critical thinking (61%) as more important than discipline in the schools. They share with the assimilationists the wish that migrants join the French mainstream, but their definitions of this mainstream differ greatly from the definition of the first group.

The gap between republicans and assimilationists is wide on several topics (tolerance toward Islam, the death penalty, and responsibility for problems with integration). The republicans value a society based on tolerance toward ethnic diversity at the private level and on republican neutrality at the public level, whereas assimilationists are more intolerant in

matters of ethnic and religious diversity, (even when they are private) and closer to a traditional vision of French society, where authority is strong. Furthermore, republicans are much more in favor of public policies to promote integration which demonstrates their judgement that society is responsible for difficulties in the integration process, whereas assimilationists disagree. 30% of republicans support public funding for building mosques in France, 70% favour budgetary increases for schools with a high proportion of immigrants and 51% agree with quotas for social housing dedicated to immigrant families. Assimilationists answered those questions respectively only 16%, 48% and 36%. Republicans are in favour of state intervention for overcoming the difficulty for immigrants to join the French mainstream whereas assimilationists consider migrants as solely responsible for their destiny.

The multiculturalists share certain beliefs with the republicans. They both have positive attitudes toward Islam (62%) and think that society is responsible for failures in the integration process (86%). They also reject the re-establishment of the death penalty (75%), the teaching of discipline at school (62%) or ethnocentric prejudice (only 25% think immigrants are too numerous in France). As for the republicans, they are left wing in their politics (53%) and are highly educated (63% of them earned the *baccalauréat* or college degree)[6]. They favour a particular model of integration though. The multiculturalists are equally divided between the acceptance and refusal of immigrants' demands for special rights. They unanimously believe in the fight to end discrimination and promote cultural diversity rather than commonality. Not surprisingly, the multiculturalists are in favor of public and state intervention to promote both cultural diversity and the integration of immigrants. 81% support increased public spending on schools with high immigrant populations and quotas for public housing for immigrant families. Fifty-eight percent promote affirmative action for immigrants in the private and public sectors and 55% favour public funding for mosques in France. Their model of integration is clearly grounded in a society which recognizes and even

promotes ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, in contrast to the public neutrality favored by the republicans.

The various groups of French that we polled view integration differently; the multiculturalists readily accept immigrants and even view their cultural differences as a benefit to the nation while assimilationists believe that immigrants must merge into the French mainstream and believe that they are solely responsible for that process. The particularity of assimilationists is their ethnocentricity and their religious prejudice. Rejection of Islam is not new but this survey demonstrates the connection with this particular model of integration. The religious factor could also preclude positive evaluation of the immigrants' integration according to the republicans. As previously shown, republicans are less accepting of religious differences when those differences become public. The numerous public stances voiced by Islamic organizations such as the UOIF (Union des organisations islamiques de France), could, in the long run, polarize republicans. Furthermore, among both assimilationists and republicans, integration has a shared common goal; immigrants must become "French citizens just like the others," which means no preferential treatment or rights. In both groups, integration would be considered unsuccessful if immigrants do not try to join the mainstream and remain apart from the rest of society. But is that true? Do people of the Islamic faith demand special treatment? Can Islam and French secularization co-exist? How realistic is the threat of ethnic separation?

Islam: representation and reality

Diversity among Muslims

Several scholarly studies have addressed the question of Islam in French society usually by relying on in-depth interviews of French and non-French Muslims.[7] One problem

with this method is that this type of definition, exaggerates the weight of religious identity in individual value systems. It is also noteworthy that in dealing with a marginal part of the French population (4%), quantitative analysis is often complex. The RAPFI survey is therefore a very useful tool to examine the conclusions of these scholars. Among them, Jocelyne Cesari hypothesizes that there is not a departure from the Islamic culture for the new French and their children.[8] Our findings contradict this assumption: first, there are strong differences in terms of modal denomination (Catholics for the electorate as a whole and Muslims for the RAPFI respondents), but it is false to categorize French as Catholics or to categorize Maghrebian- African- and Turkish-French as Muslims only; second, though less numerous in proportion than the electorate as a whole, atheists account for 20% of the new French.

Table 3. Religious affiliation

	Catholic	Muslim	Other religion	Atheist
RAPFI Survey	13	60	7	20
Mirror survey	66	2	4	28

Furthermore, the social logic behind the Islamic denomination must be examined. Three phenomena are opposed to the traditional findings of the sociology of religion, particularly in the study of Catholics.[9] First generational renewal does not attenuate the religious affiliation of this population: Among the mirror respondents, atheists account for 45% of the 18-25 years old individuals, and 19% of the 50 year or older individuals, whereas among the new French the proportion of atheists remains more or less the same. Second, education level is positively correlated to atheism. This is true for both populations, but the relationship is weaker among the new French. Among the RAPFI, 17% of the less educated practice no religion. This is the case of 25% of the college educated, whereas among the same groups, the proportion of those practicing no religion increases from 17% to 33%. Religion in

general and the Islamic denomination in particular are therefore more widespread among the immigrant French and their children, than in the overall electorate.

Table 4. A comparison of the importance of religion amongst Catholics and Muslims

Religion is very or extremely important. (% agree)	Regular attendees	Irregular attendees	No attendance
Mirror Catholics	61	19	**
RAPFI Muslims	95	75	55

Finally, religiosity in Islam does not follow the same trend as among Catholics. To analyze the connection with religious beliefs among the Catholic French, scholars usually study mass attendance i.e. Catholics who believe they have a moral obligation to regularly go to church. Using only this indicator, French Catholics and French Muslims would have a similar level of regular attendees: nearly 20% of them go to church or the mosque at least once a month. But the percentage of irregular attendees compared to those who attend a religious ceremony differ: 87% of French Catholics surveyed attend mass only for marriage, burial or religious events and 3% never go to church, whereas among the Muslims the respective proportions are 45% and 35%. Following the traditional analysis of religiosity, these privatized Muslims would be seen as being in conflict with their religious beliefs, but this is not the case. As shown in the above table, when asked whether religion is important in their everyday life, there is a marked difference between Catholics who attend mass regularly and those who do not. This clearly demonstrates that among the second group religious denomination should not be taken at face value. It is more a cultural distinction than a strong religious tie.[10] But Muslims are different: Religion plays a bigger role in their everyday lives regardless of whether they attend mosque services. There are therefore various ways of being a Muslim in France. And the relevant indicators to understand the Catholic religiosity do not fit the Muslim religiosity. So, considering all the different indicators, we set up a hierarchical clustering analysis comprised of four groups of Muslims. The different dimensions of the

involvement in the Muslim religion can be summed up by three criteria: the importance of religion, the level of compliance with some religious norms in private and the level of mosque attendance. The four groups – nominal Muslims, customary believers, private followers and the orthodox i.e. those who regularly attend mosque services - present some different and systematic features related to these three dimensions (see Table 5): 1. The lowest level of involvement in every indicator characterizes the nominal Muslims; 2. Regular attendance at mosque distinguishes orthodox worshipers from other types of Muslims; 3. The systematic individual compliance with the religious rules in private distinguishes the private followers from 4. the customary believers who limit their religious involvement to cultural tradition.

Table 5: A typology of the involvement in Islam among French Muslims

	Nominal Muslims	Customary believers	Private followers	Orthodox attenders
Religion extremely important	0	31	28	52
Religion very important	12	56	53	46
Religion more important than before	16	40	50	62
Religion less important than before	39	12	9	11
Better worshipper than their parents	1	6	26	30
Worse worshipper than their parents	82	82	50	40
Never drink alcohol	49	73	94	95
Pray every day	0	0	92	84
Never pray	76	39	0	1
Fast during the whole Ramadan	66	87	86	96
Do not want to go on pilgrimage	42	8	9	1
Want to go on pilgrimage	58	92	90	88
Have already gone on pilgrimage	0	0	2	10
Attendance at least once a week	0	0	0	93
From time to time	2	39	45	0
Only for religious ceremonies	22	28	18	0
Never	76	31	33	0

N	101	179	164	112
% in the sample of Muslims	18	32	30	20

These results shed new light on the public policies designed by the French State. Interior Minister and French Presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy created a *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (CFCM) based on the election of representatives of the mosques, not of the entire Muslim community. These representatives are not even elected by all regular mosque attendees, but by a minority of electors designated by the local imams. This institutional framework is not by itself troublesome, since one of CFCM's missions is to organize the conditions of the Muslim faith. But the CFCM is also used by political, social and media actors to represent the whole Muslim community. Islamic groups including the UOIF exploit the legitimacy created through this institution to impose their views on various issues such as wearing the Islamic veil in school. And clearly they draw their legitimacy on a very unrepresentative sample of the Muslims, as the analysis of values and attitudes systems will demonstrate.

The relationship between Islam, attitudes toward secularization and cultural issues

Is the Islamic faith incompatible with French Republican values, as most French citizens think? Is French secularization viewed as an obstacle by French Muslims? Is Islam systematically associated with conservative beliefs which create tensions with the rest of the polity? Are assimilationists correct in their view that Islam is not part of the French way of life? Are republicans correct in thinking that religion should not be a public matter? To address these questions, we have compiled the attitudes of the different groups of French Muslims and other French of immigrant origin on what are often referred to as the cultural issues.

Table 6. Religious issues and religious affiliation

	Muslims				Other religion	Atheists	Mirror survey
	Nominal Muslims	Customary believers	Private followers	Orthodox attenders			
Secularization (% positive)	88	83	79	77	83	81	80
Christian religion (% positive)	84	91	87	94	86	69	72
Secularization is an obstacle for religious freedom. (% agree)	22	42	42	49	27	25	20
Muslims do not have problems practicing their faith in France. (% agree)	51	56	56	62	57	54	54
Secularization is the only way for people with different beliefs to live harmoniously.(% agree)	94	84	79	77	78	85	81
Specific religious menus in public school cafeterias (% agree)	56	81	80	89	58	59	41
Wearing the Islamic scarf in class (% agree)	33	52	52	76	22	22	17
Wish to enroll children in public secular school (%)	84	72	63	45	63	87	66
Wish to enroll children in public school where religious education is allowed (%)	6	14	21	38	11	4	14
No sexual relations for women before marriage (% agree)	20	51	59	67	14	7	8
Homosexuality is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality. (% agree)	65	53	45	35	72	83	81
Jews have too much power in France. (% agree)	41	51	46	55	38	26	21
Too many immigrants in France (% agree)	32	37	44	44	38	24	47
Re-establishment of the death penalty (% agree)	17	23	25	15	33	17	32

The results concerning secularization are not as straightforward as some may think. The general attitude of French Muslims toward secularization is as positive as that of the rest of the society. This is also the case when the role of secularization is seen as a means to bring people with different beliefs and religions together. Differences appear when secularization

and religious freedom are linked: Muslims view secularization as an obstacle twice more often than the electorate as a whole. This could be interpreted as tension between the French way of life and that of Muslims, but Muslims respond differently to this question (49% of the orthodox vs. 22% of the nominal Muslims). Second, several Muslims support adaptation of secular rules rather than rejection of the laicity as shown by the strong support for their enrollment in the current French public school system. Expressing the wish to adapt cafeteria menus to the religion of the pupils is not as anti-laic as it may seem. Third, a strong gap exists between the orthodox and the rest of the Islamic community. Regular mosque attendees are the only group who support wearing the Islamic scarf in class by a majority and are the strongest supporters for "religion-friendly" public schools. In conclusion, as a whole Islam and laicity are not considered antagonistic by a strong majority of Muslims, but a small minority requests major changes in the way immigrants are treated by French society.

It is therefore not surprising to find that the orthodox are more conservative in terms of sexual tolerance (both for women and gays) and are also more anti-Semitic.[11] This is not to say that regular attendance is systematically associated with conservatism, as shown by the questions on the death penalty or ethnocentrism, but, clearly on several points, the orthodox differ strongly from the rest of Muslims and the rest of society (65% of homophobic attitudes among the orthodox, vs. 35% among nominal Muslims and 19% among the electorate as a whole). It also shows that Islam alone cannot be equated with conservatism and that the CFCM must not be seen as representative of the entire Muslim community.

In summary, tensions between Islam and the French way of life are too often exaggerated. A majority of Muslims express no particular resentment toward the French way of life, some ask for small but not radical changes; only a minority of them, mostly regular mosque attendees, place the French model into question. When the religious factor is considered, the results are positive in terms of integration.

A clash of identities?

While the religious identity of immigrants may not be as threatening as politicians and a significant part of the electorate claim, another question of the integration process remains: is the French polity significantly pressured by an increase of minority-specific demands? Does the communautarist threat correspond to a real claim voiced by the French of immigrant origin, and particularly by the Muslim French? As shown before, the electorate as a whole strongly opposes the demand for special treatment or the claim for the recognition of cultural diversity. Behind these attitudes, the respondents express their opposition to a perceived growing movement of ethnic and religious pressure against Republican neutrality. They view special treatment as separation from the rest of society i.e. that some members of the Republic would live by specific rules and not by general laws. For them cultural diversity would mean being of a particular origin or religion rather than being French and a member of the national community. But is that necessarily the case? Are the French of immigrant origin less "French" than the rest of society? Can an individual have distinct political, national, religious and social identities as some think, or are they mutually exclusive?

These are complex questions both for theoretical and empirical reasons. The wording and ordering of the questions in the survey could influence the level of "communautarism" by either over-estimating or under-estimating the phenomenon[12]. We chose therefore not to mention the population targeted by the survey and to ask the identities questions at the beginning of the interview before questions concerning affirmative action, discrimination, religious beliefs and attitudes could influence their thinking and exaggerate a feeling of belonging to a specific group. Finally the identities questions take the form of a battery of groups' proximity (generation, social milieu, ethnic and religious groups, nationalities)[13]. If

the Turkish-, African- and Maghrebian-French differ from the rest of the electorate in terms of identities, the inter-sample comparison will reveal that.

Table 7. Inter-sample comparison of proximity to several groups

Very close or close to the	RAPFI Survey	Mirror Survey
Residents of your neighborhood	69 %	73%
French	85%	84%
Citizens of other European countries	56%	59%
Citizens of the country from which your family emigrated	77%	**
People of your age	89%	87%
People of your social background	87%	88%
People who share your religion	71%	59%
Immigrants in France	76%	64%

Once again, the perception developed by a significant number of French does not fit with reality. The differences between the two samples on these indicators are often marginal. The impression of being close to the French is even more widespread among the French of immigrant origin than in the electorate as a whole, though the difference is statistically non-significant. The most widespread feeling of closeness is towards members of the same social background and generation. Religion or ethnic origin lag far behind these two groups. The samples differ for only two groups: feelings of closeness toward the religious group and toward the immigrants (respectively a 12% and 22% difference). The religious closeness can be easily explained by the more intense religiosity among the RAPFI respondents in contrast to the rest of the electorate and particularly the movement of secularization among Catholics. Country of origin also matters greatly for the RAPFI respondents. Nevertheless, intensity of these feeling of belonging should not be overstated. Most of them feel close, rather than very close to these two groups. There is therefore still a distance between the respondents and these groups. The closeness toward the country of origin is also widespread, even more than religious proximity.

But, these particular proximities (religion, country of origin, immigrants) do not conflict with feelings of closeness with the national community. Fewer than 30% of the RAPFI respondents state more intense feelings of closeness toward their country of origin than toward their country of citizenship. As far as religion and immigrants are concerned, this schema holds for respectively less than 25% and 20% of the RAPFI respondents. Consequently, closeness toward the French community prevails among a large majority of the French of immigrant origin. Finally, feelings of closeness based on religion and nationality are not mutually exclusive, on the contrary: the two variables are not correlated, demonstrating that religious and national dimensions are evaluated independently by respondents.

To summarize, transnational, religious or ethnic identities are not in conflict with the national feeling of belonging. Once again, regarding the question of Islam, French representation and reality differ greatly. Furthermore, the communitarianism ideology can be characterized simultaneously by a strong sense of belonging to a minority (superior to the national closeness) and by the claim of special treatment. Only 4% of the RAPFI respondents fit this definition.

To conclude, France is facing an integration crisis, as shown by the divergences among the electorate between assimilationists, republicans and multiculturalists. This crisis focuses mainly on two points: the religious factor and the rise of communatarianism. But as demonstrated in these pages, it is unclear whether the crisis is real or perceived. France is caught in a real paradox. On the one hand, politicians, intellectuals and a major part of the electorate believe that the incorporation process has failed and hope for greater assimilation and fewer multicultural claims from the French of immigrant origin. On the other hand, the new French demonstrate their high level of religious accommodation (when they belong to one denomination) and perceive themselves as being part of the French community. This

misunderstanding is troublesome, since it could threaten the French Republic through the rise of communatarianism and of ethnic separation.

Notes

[1] See Nonna Mayer, 2002.

[2] On this debate see Vincent Geisser, *La nouvelle islamophobie*, Paris, la découverte, 2003 or Thomas Deltombe, *L'Islam imaginaire: la construction médiatique de l'islamophobie en France, 1975-2005*, Paris, la découverte, 2005.

[3] This survey was conducted with the financial support of the Service d'Information du Gouvernement (SIG – French Government Information Service), the Centre d'Etudes et de Prospectives du Ministère de l'Intérieur (Study and Forecast Centre of the French Home Office), the Fonds d'Action et de Soutien pour l'Intégration et la Lutte contre les Discriminations (FASILD – Action and Support Funds for Integration and Fight Against Discrimination) and the Jean Jaurès Foundation.

[4] For more information about this survey, see Tribalat, 2004.

[5] For more information see Kaltenbach, Tribalat, 2002

[6] A specific trait of this group is their average age - 39 years-old, compared to 46 for republicans and 50 for assimilationists.

[7] See Cesari 2004 ; Lavau and Kepel, 2004 ; Venel, 2004 ; Tebbakh, 2004 and 2006.

[8] See Jocelyne Cesari, 2004.

[9] See Hervieu-Leger, 2003 Lambert and Michelat, 1992

[10] See Michelat, 1990.

[11] See Brouard, Tiberj, 2005.

[12] For example, some questions could artificially create an identity clash. For example: "Do you feel only French, more French than European, equally French and European, more European than French, European only?" or the question asked by the Pew Global Attitudes Project: "What do you consider yourself first? A citizen of your country or a Muslim/Christian? They place into competition two identities which are not mutually exclusive or even comparable for the respondents.

[13] The questions are labelled as follows: Would you say that you are very close, close, not close, not close at all to :the residents of your neighbourhood; the French, the citizens of other European countries, the citizens of the country from which your family emigrated, the people

of your age, the people of your social milieu, the people who share your religion, the immigrants in France?