When we think of clandestine or irregular immigration, what opponents often refer to as «illegal immigration», we most often have recent waves of immigrants in mind. In France, the idea of clandestine immigration came into common usage when the economic recession of the mid 1970s ended the Thirty Glorious Years. Xenophobia against diverse communities of immigrants played a central role in the national reaction to the contracting economy and soaring unemployment. Once France officially closed its borders to immigration in 1974, an era of regulation in French migration and immigration history replaced what came to be known as a period of open or «wild» migration – when migrants from the empire and southern and eastern Europe settled in France during the post-World War II economic boom.1 While there is no disputing the complex role of irregular immigration in France in past several decades – as evidenced by both public discourse and restrictive policies – this essay seeks to interrogate one important chapter in the history and construction of irregular immigration that is sometimes overlooked.

Algerians make up one of France’s largest ethnic groups, with approximately one and a half million Algerians calling France home by the mid-1990s, more than half of which were not immigrants but French citizens.2 Their presence in France is complex and has been highly contested. Algerians are at once France’s oldest Muslim population, with at least 350,000 settling in France before 1962, and a reminder of France’s fall from imperial glory during the long, blood war of decolonisation. After Algeria gained independence, Algerian migrants’ complex status became increasingly murky, their juridical status and social rights as (former?) French nationals repeatedly reinterpreted.

While not the only contested migrant group in France during this period, Algerians have been central to the place and rights of migrants in metropolitan France at

1 C. Wihtol de Wenden, Les immigrés et la politique, Paris 1988, 125.
2 Among others, see P. Silverstein, Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation, Bloomington 2004.
least since the state extended their flawed, particular French citizenship after World War II. Attempting to reassert itself on the world stage, the post-war French government granted Algerians citizenship, despite various limitations, in an effort to prove Algeria was an integral part of France. While Algerians in Algeria remained second-class citizens, metropolitan politicians and policy makers sought to prove that «Algerians are French citizens» capable of «integrating» into French so-called «universal» culture if given a little help. Throughout the bloody Algerian War (1954–1962), the French government upheld the freedom of movement principle, which allowed Algerians to travel back and forth across the Mediterranean without official restrictions. Despite efforts to control and limit migration to France in the decade before Algerian independence, Algerians, including a growing number of families, settled in France under the particular status of français musulmans d’Algérie (FMA). The drive to save French Algeria required the metropolitan government to highlight Algerian migrants’ rights and eligibility for all the benefits of the French welfare state. Certainly, FMAs’ status in the métropole was never straightforward during decolonisation, but recognising Algerians’ particular citizenship status during the final decade of French colonial rule is vital to understanding the transition that took place once Algeria gained independence in 1962.

This essay hopes to offer some insights surrounding the transition that took place roughly between 1962 and 1968. It does so by focusing on three key areas – Algerians’ changing legal status, the size and demographic composition of the population, and new policies requiring Algerian families obtain housing certificates –, each of which received significant attention and played a role in both growing anxieties about and efforts to control Algerian migration to France in the period immediately following Algerian independence. During this transitional period, Algerians possessed rights not afforded to other immigrants groups. State officials warned colleagues in regional governments that they could not treat Algerians like «ordinary foreigners». Officially, the Evian Accords’ guaranteed Algerians’ right to circulate freely in metropolitan France. Moreover, while former French colonists fleeing Alge-

ria maintained their French citizenship without any juridical procedure, new regulations required FMAs to publicly declare their intent to keep French citizenship. In other words, despite possessing French identity papers, Algerians’ ill-defined legal and social status perpetuated their ambiguous place in France. These uncertainties ensured Algerians would be seen as foreigners. A growing number of Algerians became marginalised, irregular migrants – migrants hors règles – like other poor migrants from the Iberian peninsula and other parts of the empire. At the same time, the history and legacy of colonialism placed Algerian migrants in a separate category from other immigrants, legally and in the nation’s imagination. As one official reminded his colleagues in 1966, Algeria may have become «a foreign country» but in every way it was «unlike all the others».

Given the French state’s conflicting priorities and contradictory policies regarding Algerian migration during the 1960s, this essay traces parts of the complex and often-incomplete transitional process that made it possible for some Algerians settled in France to remain French and for others to become foreign. To explore these issues, this essay poses several questions. How did Algerians in France move from a particular category of citizens, whose presence was problematic for a host of reasons, to a new category of immigrants that had to reapply for French citizenship? How did a group becoming foreign but still possessing French identity papers navigate new policies and procedures to maintain their status and eligibility for state benefits? What were some of the consequences of Algerians’ ambiguous status in the period immediately following independence?

Contradictory policies and complex views about Algerians and their place in France made it possible for state officials at the local level and service providers in charitable associations to interpret directives in a variety of ways. Even if the intentions of and views held about Algerians among officials implementing new policies may be difficult to gauge, as Alexis Spire’s work has shown, state officials had a great deal of «discretionary power» when interpreting policies concerning Algerians status. This discretion in interrupting policy, particularly when it came to granting Algerian families newly required housing certificates, had a range of consequences. In one respect, the new policies clearly intended to curb family migration, yet many officials – often those that had worked closely with Algerians before independence in 1962 – accepted many families. Moreover, many families denied housing certificates found ways around the new requirements by living in unapproved conditions. Migrating as tourists or living without proper housing authorisation made a growing segment of the Algerian population irregular if not yet illegal immigrants in France – even if they still possessed identity papers that made them French.

7 Representative of the Secrétariat d’Etat aux Affaires Etrangères, Déjeuner-Débat, 27 September 1966. Archives nationales (AN) F1A 5011.
1. Freedom of Circulation?

Article three of la loi organique d’Algérie, passed in 1947 by the Fourth Republic’s first National Assembly and built upon decrees issued by general de Gaulle’s provisional government, guaranteed Algerians’ right of circulation within metropolitan France without restriction and emphasised that Algerians had the right to «exercise all of the rights associated with French citizenship.» These legal assurances, part of the state’s larger rhetoric meant to dissuade mounting support for Algerian independence, offered evidence that France treated all of its citizens equally. Yet, even before Algerian independence in 1962, the state worked to abrogate the freedom of movement policy quietly, while publicly upholding it as proof of France’s generosity. Throughout the 1950s, the state kept track of migration through maritime and air travel records, sought to limit departures from Algeria and to slowly re-establish repressive policing techniques. One of these restrictive policies, established by Interior and Algerian Affairs Ministers Roger Fry and Louis Joxe in 1961, sought to control Algerian family settlement, which they characterised as «excessive». The «massive arrival of women and children» had to be curbed, they argued, to prevent any deleterious effect on efforts to provide «housing» to families already in France. They issued a circular via the Algerian Affairs Office, informing regional prefects that families wishing to settle in France should complete a residency certification process. The policy directed local officials to determine a family’s stability by collecting the male head of household’s work contract and by issuing a certificate once they determined he had found appropriate family housing. The housing form also collected data about the size of the family and each member’s relationship to the head of the household. The policy did not overturn the freedom of movement clause of the 1947 law, but it represented an important step in a series of regulations put in place after independence that intended to restrict all Algerian migration and family settlement in particular.

As Algerian independence became a reality in 1962, FMA’s juridical status became even more complicated. The Evian Accords, which represented «a provisional denouement» of hostilities, provided the first outline of the legal status of both the French in Algeria and Algerians in France. Fourteen articles outlined the rights of...
French citizens living in Algeria in a futile attempt to convince over one million colonialists that they had no reason to abandon their homes and businesses. Conversely, only two articles addressed Algerians, both outlining the rights of the several hundred thousand Algerians that called France home. Article seven ensured that Algerians in the métropole continued to possess all the same rights as French citizens, except political suffrage. The full nature of these rights, however, remained open to interpretation. The broad wording of the document implied the intent to ensure legal protections and access to social welfare benefits – what T. H. Marshall has called «social rights». Article eleven assured potential Algerian workers that they needed only possess valid identification to circulate freely between France and Algeria. It upheld the long-standing, persistently contested principle of unrestricted movement between France and Algeria in an effort to secure its influence in Algeria as well as its access to cheap labour. Both articles also revealed France’s desire to protect its own interests in Algeria. The Evian Accords’ primary purpose was to protect the individual property of French citizens and the financial interests of French businesses. In other words, French negotiators extended Algerians’ rights and the freedom of movement to assure the protection of colonists and French influence on the nascent Algerian republic. Since the Accords remained vague about what exactly it meant for Algerians to possess social but not political rights, policies and practices regarding state welfare benefits became an important avenue by which to monitor and limit Algerian migration without actually circumventing the Accords’ freedom of access clause. The restrictive housing policies illustrate how muddled Algerians’ status in metropolitan France became after 1962. Some state officials and private charitable service providers continued to provide Algerians a variety of social services, possibly continuing to view them as poor, «unevolved» members of the French imperial community in need of the civilising influence of France’s universal culture, while others stopped serving Algerians, likely seeing them as undesirable, Muslim foreigners responsible for a long and costly war.

The Evian Accords’ divergent approach to French colonists and FMAs underscores how the former remained unquestionably French, while the latter slipped into foreign status even though they possessed French identity papers. Centrally, the Accords abridged article thirteen of the Nationality Code, which mandated that those living in territories separated from the nation forfeited their claim to French nationality. Through ordinance 62–825, issued 21 July 1962, the Gaullist government suspended article thirteen, but made a point to distinguish between Algeria’s European

16 On these issues see Lyons, *The Civilizing Mission*. 

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and indigenous populations. Those in the former category retained French nationality without being subject to any bureaucratic procedures. Algerians holding French civil status could also maintain French nationality even if they lived in Algeria after 3 July 1962. The ordinance stipulated, however, that French Muslims of local status, the FMAs, would lose their French nationality unless they moved to France and declared their intention to remain French citizens by 1 January 1963.\footnote{17}

The state's decision to abridge the Nationality Code related directly to its effort to provide support and to dissuade fears among the hundreds of thousands of French colonists in Algeria who began fleeing in great numbers in 1962. The government's efforts to prevent a massive exodus, through its policies and its negotiations with Algeria's provisional government, failed. Approximately 800,000 French colonists fled Algeria between 1962 and 1964, with many settling in southern France. While this group, known at the time as repatriates and increasingly referred to by the pejorative term pieds noirs, faced a difficult adjustment after leaving their way of life behind, most found adequate housing after a short stay in transitional units.\footnote{18}

2. Anxiety about Algerian Migration

At the same time, Algerians continued to migrate to France in rather large numbers. As Patrick Weil has argued, Algerian migration, which continued to grow after independence, «accentuates the contradictions of the politics of migration».\footnote{19} In addition to the Algerian repatriates, known as harkis, that managed to escape, regular Algerian migration continued.\footnote{20} Algerians came for the same reasons they had during the war: to flee upheaval, to seek economic opportunity and to reunite their families. The influx of so many people from Algeria in such a short time created significant anxieties in metropolitan France. New concerns about Algerians’ presence in France after independence in 1962 paved the way for a complex and often-contradictory discussion that simultaneously foisted attention upon the problems associated with Recruitment of harkis for the Algerian conflict began informally in 1955. Within two years, and after formalising their role, over 100,000 Algerians were serving the French on Algerian soil. The Evian Accords simply did not include any provisions for the nearly one million harkis in Algeria. Most harkis found themselves caught up in bloody reprisals at the end of the war. While no official record exists, the number of harkis killed, or missing and presumed killed is estimated between 10,000 and 150,000. On these issues, see G. Pervillé, «Non-application des Accords» in: Gallissot, Les Accords d’Evian, 136–137; C.-R. Ageron, «Drame des harkis,» 68 – Vingtième siècle (October–December 2000): 3–16; L. Muller, Le silence des harkis, Paris 1999; J.-J. Jordi / M. Hamomou, Les harkis, une mémoire enfouie, Paris 1999.
Algerian immigration and produced policy decisions that inhibited Algerians right to settle in France. Speculation about the new and uncertain political situation fuelled anxiety born of an inability to come to terms with the recent past. Mounting fear about the size and nature of the Algerian population generated an atmosphere that became increasingly antithetical to further Algerian immigration.

Fears revolved around the veritable flood of people from Algeria (including the nearly 800,000 white settlers) that would swell the existing Algerian population of about 400,000 to what several contemporaries predicted would be over one million Algerians in France by the end of the century. These concerns grew after the war. Throughout the 1950s, French officials sought to enumerate the Algerian population, when the narrative of Algerian inclusion in the nation was vital to the larger political context. Algerian independence made it possible for concerns about the size of the Algerian population and the size of the family population in particular to swell. The vastly overstated statistics circulating in the years after the war illustrated this anxiety. The influential journal Cahiers nord-africains informed readers in 1963 that the Algerian population consisted of «250,000 workers, 250,000 women and children». A year later, the Fonds d’action sociale (FAS), a key government agency that provided social services to Algerians in France, proclaimed that 560,000 Algerians resided in France. According to official statistics, about 262,000 Algerians immigrated to France in 1963, 269,000 in 1964. With other Algerians leaving to the newly independent Algeria, net immigration was about 50,000 people in 1963 and 44,000 in 1964.

Even though families represented a small minority of the overall population, family migration had sharply increased during the war. Especially once the French military started its campaigns of forced resettlement in 1955, women and children tried to join male family members in France rather than subsist in the internment


This pattern of migration and services provided by national, departmental and local charitable associations – a veritable welfare network for Algerians – continued after the war. Yet, even as programmes continued, immediately following independence anxieties about the size and nature of the Algerian population became increasingly frequent in welfare providers’ documents. The social workers of one prominent social Catholic organisation that worked with Algerian families in most major French cities – the Service social familial nord-africain (SSFNA) – reported that a wave of male workers had been followed by a steady and continuously increasing number of immigrant families beginning in September 1963.28 The General Council for the department of Seine-et-Oise expressed great concerns in early 1963 about the arrival of countless Algerian families since the cessation of hostilities in Algeria.29 The FAS, which funded social services for Algerians, expressed particular concern about the massive arrival of Algerians – particularly when whole families immigrated before the male head of household secured stable employment.30 As late as 1965, its associate director Jacques Revol reported that Algerians, Italians and Poles had the largest percentage of families among immigrant groups in France.31

In addition, public opinion about Algerians, already negative before and during the war, worsened after independence. Their presence more commonly elicited « xenophobic reactions».32 Linguistic, religious, social, and cultural differences were more often interpreted as insurmountable impediments to Algerian integration than they had been during the war. In 1967, the social affairs officer of the Algerian Embassy warned colleagues at a conference on the state of Algerian migration that steps needed to be taken to «detoxify» French opinions about Algerians.33 Highly exaggerated...
fears about Algerians’ alleged propensity for criminal behaviour and susceptibility to contagious disease appeared in newspapers and government reports. While Algerians had been erroneously associated with these problems since the interwar years, they found themselves the focus of renewed attention after 1962.34

These mounting fears about a troublemaking, disease-spreading, ever-growing Algerian population made quantifying the population an imperative. Studies of the population abound, much as they did throughout the post-World War II period. Official census records indicated the population of France reached 46,456,000 as of March 1962. Of that, France had over 2.1 million foreigners, specifically 335,000 Algerian Muslims.35 Few trusted the accuracy of these figures. Administrators on the national and departmental levels concurred with sentiments expressed by the director of Police Services in the Bouches-du-Rhône, when he indicated that figures only provided a rough estimate of the Algerian population «since no accurate means of precisely evaluating this group exists».36

Difficulties determining the number of Algerians in France came from two sources. Their precarious living conditions made it difficult to accurately count them. In addition, government agencies charged with conducting studies did not approach Algerians consistently, another indication of their ambiguous status. The Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE), responsible for the French census, compiled information collected through regional officials. Many of these reports on the foreign population reflected inaccurate knowledge about the current state of the French empire. Apparently unaware or unwilling to accept that the French colonies in West Africa had gained independence in 1960 and that Algerian independence was a forgone conclusion, many reports excluded both Algerians and West Africans from figures of foreign populations. Throughout the 1960s, INSEE used estimates of these populations taken from the social service administration, or even more commonly from the Labour Ministry, which significantly lowering the national totals. In many cases, local authorities only considered the male population, while some reports counted immigrant families but excluded anyone in France on a tourist visa (which included a high number of families). According to FAS inquiries, this approach provided only «an approximation of women compared to men (with no indication of age, especially in the case of children) leaving only a rough estimate» of the real population.37

35 In addition, there were 645,000 Italians, 431,000 Spanish, 177,000 Polish, 78,000 Belgians, 69,000 Americans, 50,000 Portuguese, and 46,000 Germans. Hommes et Migrations Documents, 656 (30 June 1966): 1.
37 FAS, Etudes et Contrôles, «Enquête auprès des
In 1965, the Interior Ministry sponsored a study to better determine not only the Algerian population, but France’s entire foreign population. This study, which asked each region to report its current foreign population, determined that France had over 2.5 million foreigners – 1.65 million men, 450,000 women and 600,000 children. As with previous studies, the information collected in the regional reports turned out to be unreliable. Jacques Aubert, who had worked in the colonial government in Algeria before heading up the Interior Minister’s Cabinet, wrote a summary of the reports. Despite near perfect compliance (all but three of the French departments replied), Aubert noted that the responses arrived too early for most departmental governments to have actually re-tabulated the foreign populations. No uniform procedure for acquiring statistics (whether of men, women or children) existed either. Many departments simply conveyed existing estimates. Others inquired among governmental offices and private organisations that worked with foreigners, but here again, no one verified if parts of certain populations had been overlooked or counted twice. As a result, the figures for Yugoslavs, Moroccans, Tunisians, Poles, Portuguese, and, of course, Algerians were significantly underrepresented.

Additionally, these figures were significantly lower than the 1962 census (335,000 Algerian Muslims) and reduced the size of the family population even though it was growing, not shrinking. This report revealed new attitudes about Algerian immigrants in France more than it accurately reflected the actual demographic composition of the population. This occurred in part because Algerians continued to be counted in perplexing ways. Regional summaries sometimes lumped West African and Algerian immigrants together while they nearly always considered Moroccan and Tunisian immigrants separately from Algerians and one another. Other reports did not include Algerians and West Africans at all, still considering both groups French nationals and therefore not part of the local immigrant population (even though both had gained independence). Apparently it was easier for many to accept the independence of two former protectorates than the loss of colonies. In this
regard, some French officials still saw Algerians as French even if they were undeniably seen as a separate category.

The 1962 law requiring Algerians to reaffirm their French nationality publicly or lose it by January 1963 cemented their difference. Moreover, subsequent ordinances demonstrated the state’s desire to improve both awareness of and compliance with the new regulations. For both Algerians and social service providers, the state, through ordinances issued by the Justice Ministry and laws that extended Algerians right to seek French citizenship, sought to clarify – for Algerians and to French officials – that Algerians were no longer really French even if they possessed French identity papers, unless they had publically declared their loyalty to France. By the mid-1960s, 64,000 Algerians had formally requested French citizenship. This translated into citizenship for nearly 200,000 people because the male head of household applied for his immediate relatives.

Despite numerous directives, many regional French officials did not fully grasp how to characterise Algerians living in their departments. In fact, when trying to report to the Interior Ministry in 1965, some departments counted all Algerians, some excluded any Algerian that had already reapplied for French nationality, interpreting the request for information about the Algerian population narrowly. Aubert, when compiling and analyzing the statistics, agreed that officially naturalised French citizens with Algerian heritage, or French Muslims, as they were still be called in the 1960s, should not be counted among a study of foreigners. However, he thought it would be most useful to consider all Algerians foreigners when attempting to collect demographic data.

In all these studies, researchers considered Algerians as a category unto themselves, even when enumerating Algerians as part of the North African population or as a percentage of foreigners in France. The categorisation emphasised Algerians’ perceived difference as a legal category and an ethnic group. In this respect, Algerian foreignness pervaded most interpretations after independence. Yet, the shift hap-

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45 Enquête auprès des Préfets, 1965.
pened slowly and in fits and starts. The National Immigration Office (ONI), for example, only began to monitor Algerian immigration in France in 1970. Before then, ONI viewed Algerians as internal migrants from the colonies – with almost a decade lag between Algerian independence and its inclusion of Algerians into its mandate to regulate all foreigners. It took many years for any kind of uniformity to appear in official characterisations because personal perspectives and experiences coloured how and why each official categorised Algerians as either French, foreign, or something in between.

Still unwilling to overturn the freedom of movement clause but wanting to better control Algerian migration, the French government entered into talks with the new Algerian republic in 1964. The new Algerian government was willing to come to the table for a number of reasons. Among them, it wanted to end French discriminatory practices against its citizens and increase its control over emigration. At the same time, it wanted to ensure the nation's economic growth which relied on both the funds emigrants sent home to families and French development aid. The resulting Neccache-Grandval Accords, signed in April, slightly amended the Evian Accords and upheld France's right to conduct medical exams in Algeria on potential workers. The new agreement appeared to offer a workable solution by limiting future immigration, something the Algerian government hoped for as well. Medical exams offered a plausible method for restricting Algerians’ access to French territory without appearing to have a racially motivated agenda.

These Accords also implemented a quota system officially administered by Algerian authorities. Hoping to sidestep responsibility for setting a quota, French negotiators requested that the Algerian government fix the number of Algerians. In practical terms, the Naccache-Grandval agreements created a quota system based on the «availability [disponibilités]» of Algerian labour and French job «openings [possibilités]», in other words, based on unemployment in Algeria and underemployment in France. The actual agreement stipulated that the Algerian government would limit the number of Algerians emigrating to 12,000 annually. While the Accords required that the quota be re-evaluated each trimester, actual migration always surpassed the set limits. An average of 20,000 people migrated each year until the agreements were renegotiated in 1968.

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46 In 1987, ONI became the Office de Migration Internationale (OMI). Since 1946, it has recorded annual statistics of migration to France broken down by country of origin in reports called OMI Stats. Algerians did not begin to appear in these statistics until 1970, and Moroccans and Tunisians were not included until 1968, even though both achieved independence in 1956.

47 Weil, La France et ses étrangers, 97.


50 Gillette / Sayad, L’immigration algérienne, 92–93.
Since the 1964 Accords did not sufficiently curb migration, the state repeatedly extended the period during which Algerians could apply to reclaim their French nationality, hoping to separate the segment of the Algerian population that wished to remain permanently in France from the rest of the population. These new regulations culminated in the December 1966 law. It stipulated that any Algerian in France that had not made a public declaration was «deemed to have lost French nationality after 1 January 1963». Tacitly acknowledging that anyone that had missed the deadline had not lost their nationality – at least in practical terms since they continued to carry French identity papers and receive significant state benefits – the 1966 law extended the period Algerians could apply until January 1967. Moreover, unlike the 1962 ordinance, the 1966 law outlined how children, those born in Algeria and those born in France, could be attributed French citizenship at their eighteenth birthday. While the law did not overtly declare a failure to comply would result in deportation or extra-legal status, it clearly sought a gradual if firm end to Algerians’ ability to live in France as French citizens unless they proclaimed their loyalty to France and relinquished their right to Algerian citizenship.

3. Housing Certificates
At the same time the French government sought to better control Algerians’ access to French soil and French citizenship, it implemented a range of new policies and regulations concerning social entitlements. As with other changes to Algerians’ status, the new social service directives created confusion at the ground level, among social service organisations and the direct service providers working with Algerian migrants. Despite national directives about Algerians’ eligibility for welfare programmes, the SSFNA reported that its social workers saw Algerians’ status and the policies regarding their clients as «totally ambiguous». As a result, local organisations and government agencies dealt with Algerians in a number of ways. Some continued to provide services exactly as before, while others refused Algerians services even when they remained eligible. The Social Aide Service for the Seine, for example, applied statute 186 of the Social Action Code to Algerians, considering them «foreigners without a bilateral convention». Others, including the SSFNA, continued to provide services as before. As the largest and oldest private association working with Algerian families, the SSFNA also indicated that its Algerian clients understood how to work within the system. Their clients carried French identity papers in order to ensure they continued to receive essential welfare benefits, whether or not they intended to reapply for French citizenship.

Finding adequate housing remained the most difficult problem Algerians faced, as it had during the Algerian War. During the war, Algerian families faced discriminatory housing practices, all of which expanded after independence, as the state no longer needed to pay lip service to Algerian family settlement, and families were singled out for restrictive policies. In fact, as examined above, the Algerian Affairs Ministry had already begun to implement controls that intended to decrease Algerian family settlement even before the war ended.

After the war, a number of practices attempted to «dissuade» family migration.54 When families arrived in the port of Marseille, the main point of entry, Port Authority officials passed judgment about Algerian families based on their compliance with new regulations. To do so, they examined each family’s «composition» and took into account the assessment of the mayor and the regional director for social and sanitary issues that appeared on the housing certificate procured in advance by the male worker already living in France. Judgments included determinations about supposed levels of evolution, which determined what medical and social surveillance a particular family would be assigned.55

In addition to assessing families and turning away those that apparently did not meet the vague standards, the state tried to reach Algerian women before they moved to France. In particular, Radio France used programs that had been airing on Saturday mornings in French, Arabic and Berber since the late 1940s.56 Programmes tried, among other things, to discourage families that could not find housing from settling in France. Radio broadcasts told stories, with average Algerians talking with one another in scripted dialogues. In one programme that aired repeatedly, an Algerian voiced regret about bringing his family to France. Understandably, he wanted them to live with him, yet in his excitement to reunite his family, he had not carefully considered what his family would have to endure once they arrived in France. The didactic broadcast explained that he should have secured better housing prior to sending for his family – without entertaining the possibility that they endured worse conditions in Algeria. Instead, the announcer insisted that a family needed an apartment with more than two rooms. Two rooms, one for the parents and one for the children, did not provide adequate space for a hygienic, psychologically healthy, modern life. In addition, the moralistic anecdote cautioned that Algerian women, once in France, needed to learn French ways. Husbands had to get used to letting their wives shop and do other household chores that required them to leave home. In other words, Algerian women in France needed to be as free as their French counterparts – liberated to do all labour associated with the domestic sphere and the femme au foyer. If men tried to cloister their wives

and insisted on performing the tasks normally assigned to the wife, their work would undoubtedly suffer.\textsuperscript{57}

Radio broadcasts also warned about the dangers of overcrowding in social housing, telling families that it was dangerous to have multiple families in the same apartment. In an effort to instil a sense of the nuclear family as the norm, programmes warned about the proliferation of insalubrious conditions in the \textit{bidonvilles} and other overpopulated dwellings. For the state, the residency certificate offered a solution. It could monitor and even limit Algerian family settlement. When these policies did not prove effective, particularly since the freedom of movement clause allowed Algerians to circumvent the «titre de séjour» required of other immigrant groups,\textsuperscript{58} the state implemented a new set of interministerial circulars issued in 1965. They reiterated the housing certification policy and tried to improve its enforcement. Through these directives, national governmental officials instructed local mayors’ offices to verify that Algerian families had adequate housing. The «head of household» was required to present his case at least two months before the family’s scheduled arrival and to prove he had found «sufficient housing» for his family.\textsuperscript{59}

The circulars provided significant direction, but ultimately local authorities could determine if a housing certificate would be granted. The department of the Bouches-du-Rhône provides a case study. Through an examination of all applications on file from September through December 1965, several patterns emerge. Reviewers separated the 138 applications into two distinct categories: requests for members of a nuclear family and requests for extended family members. In most cases, regional officials accepted requests for a wife and natural children to join a husband in France. Out of 103 applications for immediate family members, only eighteen were denied. This meant eighty-five per cent of families in this unofficial category could settle in France following the new regulations, even if some of the applications had restrictions (usually verifications of housing after the family arrived). Often the restrictions revealed fears about overcrowding, with a case worker stipulating that the apartment could not accept more residents – an apparent attempt to stop other relatives from moving in. Nearly all the remaining thirty-five applications were rejected, generally without any explanation in the paperwork. All included relatives that applicants almost certainly saw as important members of their families but that fell outside the French government’s definition of family. Requests that included male family members – brothers, nephews and fathers – were never accepted. The most common exceptions focused on nuclear families accompa-

\textsuperscript{57} Transcript from Radiodiffusion française, «Conseils à donner aux nouveaux émigrants», 30 November 1962. CAC 19660271/5.

\textsuperscript{58} «Enquête sur les conditions de vie de la main d’œuvre étrangère en France», June 1965. CAC 770391/5.

\textsuperscript{59} See Circulars concerning «admission en France des familles des travailleurs algériens», of 9 March 1965, 9 July 1965 and 16 August 1965, which continued to delineate procedures that local officials needed to follow when processing Algerian immigration.
The Algerian Migrants' Status at the End of Empire (1962–1968)


nied by female relatives including mothers and young girls. The length of stay in France seems to have guided decision-making in these cases. For those cases that offered some explanation, officials accepted applications if female family members were going to be in France for a defined, limited period and therefore would not become a burden on the welfare state. In one example, a man living in the Marseille suburb of Marignane applied for a housing certificate for his wife, four children and mother in October 1965. The wife and children posed no problems, but the mother, who would likely have helped care for the family, was denied entry. In another example, an application included a mother visiting temporarily to provide childcare for older children when her daughter-in-law gave birth. In this case, the state granted the certificate.60

The decision-making patterns reflected the slow transition underway. Even with the growing desire to limit family settlement, Algerians still had the right to settle in France. Only those families that fell outside the normative category could be denied entry. Welfare services’ approach during the war, which depicted women as capable of stabilising a potentially radical worker population, seems to have carried over into the early post-war years. According to the SSFNA, the regulations intended to prevent bigamy in France, to ensure Algerian families were taught how to live like the French (which apparently could only occur by instilling French values in the mother), and to prevent multiple generational family cohabitation. They also intended to limit settlement to male-headed households. The state did not «authorise» female-headed families, «even if the woman could find work». They were invited to return to Algeria. Anyone thought to be a drain on the welfare state – whether extended families or single mothers – had to be prevented from permanently living in France.61

These regulations implemented to curb Algerian migration had little success. Families found a myriad of ways to settle anyway, successfully navigating the system and or avoiding housing certificate requirements when necessary. A growing number of Algerian women and children came to France on tourist visas or accompanied husbands and fathers already living in France, when the latter returned from vacation. In the absence of strict regulations for tourists, officials sought another way to track and deter family immigration. French authorities attempted to distinguish between families returning from a vacation in Algeria, families joining a husband or father already in France, and new migrants (whole families settling together). Families returning from a vacation in Algeria had to provide proof that the entire family actually lived in France by showing proof of housing, in the form of a housing certificate, a receipt or a bill.62 As with the medical exams and other regulations directed principally at male immigrants, the housing certificates intended to slow im-
migration, generate more accurate records, and ensure that those families entering France had the means to live without becoming a burden on the welfare system.

The penalty for Algerians who ignored the regulations remained mild, in most cases. No policies in place in the mid-1960s authorised automatic or immediate deportation. Instead, experts, including those at the migration studies journal *Hommes et Migrations*, increasingly viewed migrants as having come to France «irregularly». Irregular status helped Algerians labelled as undesirable, or as unable to integrate into French society to circumvent monitoring and to evade requests to return to Algeria voluntarily. The line between deportation and voluntary departure blurred; the only aid offered to those deemed inassimilable was one-way transportation to Algeria. Those who became irregular immigrants, whether by migrating as tourists or avoiding contact with the state after being labelled as undesirable, often had to forgo aid for which they were otherwise eligible.

French policy continued to provide housing services following increasingly strict guidelines. In 1967, in an interministerial circular to the departmental Prefects, Social Affairs Minister Jean-Marcel Jeanneney and Interior Minister Roger Frey updated the housing certificate requirements. Apparently, Prefects had alerted the government about «multiple cases of fraud» concerning overcrowding in apartments approved for a nuclear family, which put the local community’s «demographic and social order» at risk. The new directives provided much greater detail about the «composition of the family», housing conditions, and the «verification» that needed to take place after the family’s arrival. With fraud as the main concern, the circular warned officials to watch for families that never moved into the approved apartment and to follow up after three months to ensure a family had not abandoned approved housing for cheaper, overcrowded dwellings. Those found in violation would be reported for «false declaration» and would be required to move into appropriate housing. Since the housing that officials required often fell outside Algerian family budgets, it seems likely that many families, even those attempting to follow procedure, found themselves in an irregular status by moving into more precarious and often unsanitary housing conditions.

Despite figures from the Bouches-du-Rhône that indicate the acceptance rate among applicants for family housing certificates remained high, experts viewed Algerians as purposefully evading the regulations. As one prominent aid organisation put it, «too often families already living in France for a period of time or entering our nation [do so] without a housing certificate». Moreover, experts viewed the

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64 Ibid.
66 The case files for family housing/residency permit applicants from 1965–1970 are available in cartons ADBR 146 W 28–32, 36–41. 45.
67 Commission d’aide nord-africains dans la métro-
decision as a choice based not on economic constraints or discriminatory housing practices, but instead on Algerians’ supposed backwardness and recalcitrance. According to the same aid organisation, family problems among Algerians resulted from «evolutionary backwardness, a lack of resources, or some type of instability» which was most often related to high fecundity and which supposedly caused the difficulties in finding adequate housing.\textsuperscript{68}

4. Conclusion

In one respect, the principle of freedom of movement as well as Algerian migrants’ ability to comply with or circumvent regulations made it possible for the population to continue to grow. According to Alain Gilette and Abdelmalek Sayad’s path-breaking study, in the decade after independence the Algerian population in France grew at «an unprecedented scale», with more than 25,000 children born in France each year.\textsuperscript{69} This growth, despite polices that worked to curb Algerians’ migration, inspired the state to amplify its efforts to control and limit Algerian family settlement.

Unable to control and keep track of the Algerian population in France, the government re-evaluated the agreement reached in Evian and altered in 1964. Another agreement, signed in 1968, readjusted the quota system, allowing for 35,000 Algerian workers to enter France annually. More importantly, a half-dozen years after the Evian Accords, the new agreement «implicitly abrogated» the freedom of movement clause, officially ending Algerians’ ability to enter France without more stringent controls. The new Accords also formalised practices already in place in France, requiring workers to pass a medical exam and issuing each male migrant a residency permit valid for five years, provided he found work within nine months of his arrival. Workers already residing in France at the time of the agreements had their situation regularised. The agreement affixed no specific limit on family migration, but it reiterated the necessity of acquiring a housing certificate before the state granted residency permits.\textsuperscript{70}

Thus, Algerian immigrants faced increasing restrictions when entering France in the 1960s, but the regulations remained porous and did not prevent workers or families from coming to France. Political agreements, the French desire to maintain influence in Algeria, Algeria’s desire to control migration and resources associated with migrant labour in France, as well as France’s continued need for cheap labour prevented the implementation of more stringent policies. As a result, while the government claimed it imposed strict limits on immigration, the Algerian family population grew and became further marginalised. While not labelled as «illegal» or...

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Gillette / Sayad, L’immigration algérienne, 86.
\textsuperscript{70} Text of the Accords appeared in the Journal Of...
«clandestine» migrants, Algerians’ status turned increasingly «ambiguous» as they became the targets of polices that sought to separate them from France. At the same time, individual and institutional interpretations of Algerians rights and status in France made the shift from French to foreign slow and uneven. The disconnect between Algerians’ transition in the 1960s and the larger history of irregular and illegal immigration in France is part of a larger effort to repress the history of colonialism from «collective consciousness»71 After the war, except for some social welfare providers that worked directly with Algerians and had developed personal relationships with their clients, few in France wanted to be reminded of Algeria, the Algerian war or Algerian migration – a process that Benjamin Stora has referred to as a «purposeful amnesia»72 As a result, Algerians continued to migrate to France, but they became increasingly invisible – even if they still possessed a French national identity card. Social programs, led by the FAS and other institutions, began serving all immigrants in France and forgot their historical relationship to Algerians and the Algerian war, even if Algerians continued to receive a variety of services. This transition made FMAs – officially considered «French citizens like all others»73 during the final decade of French rule in Algeria – irregular, foreign immigrants perceived as unwilling or unable to follow procedures relating to their legal status or to services like housing within a decade of independence.

French or Foreign? The Ambiguities of Algerian Migrants' Status and Rights at the End of Empire (1962–1968)

While the idea of clandestine immigration generally conjures images of recent immigrants and popular xenophobic reactions to recession and soaring unemployment, the case of Algerians in the 1960s suggests otherwise. Rather than focusing on irregular migration since the *trente glorieuses* went bust, this essay analyses the complex place of Algerians in the metropole immediately following the Algerian War (1954–1962). It argues, through a study of shifting policies and practices, that the process of decolonisation effectively limited Algerians’ legal, social and cultural membership in the nation. By examining several concrete ways France navigated the transition from the colonial to post-colonial era, this essay illustrates how a racialised category of citizens, known as *français musulmans d’Algérie* (FMA) before 1962, became a category of foreigners unlike any other.


