

# Formation of Moroccan Diaspora in France: An Impact of Colonisation

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## ABSTRACT

Moroccan Diaspora in France was formed as a result of migration of Moroccans to France. Moroccan migrated to France during the World Wars as labourers or soldiers. This paper seeks to understand the colonization of Morocco by France and what impact it has on the present.

North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria) experienced colonialism at the hands of the Europeans during the period of 1830-1962. This colonization was due to the demand of labour in the European countries. This paper seeks to analyse the impact of French colonization on migration from Morocco and formation of the Moroccan Diaspora in France. It seeks to analyse the effects of French protectorate and also neo-colonisation effects of France today on Morocco and migration. The results of establishment of French protectorate in Morocco in 1911 and it lead to the migration of Muslim and Jewish population to France. Later on migration was seen in terms of family forming migration in France of Moroccan. After this women even started to migrate in search of better opportunities in France. This led to the formation of Moroccan Diaspora in France.

Diaspora refers to people of a particular origin who have spread to different parts of the world. Diaspora also plays a vital role in the process of development. Here the country in question is Morocco. The host country here is France. This paper will show that the Moroccan Diaspora was formed as a consequence of colonization of Morocco by France and the problems faced by the Moroccan Diaspora in France. Colonisation led to the different patterns of migration of Moroccan to France.

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## 1. Introduction

Colonisation has impacted a lot of countries as it has impacted Morocco. In Morocco an impact of colonization can be seen in terms of formation of Moroccan Diaspora.

Morocco was a French colony, which led to migration of Moroccans as labourers and soldiers in France due to the demand of cheap labour in France. This migration continues till date and has led the formation of massive Moroccan Diaspora in France.

The migration patterns since the establishment of French protectorate in Morocco in 1912 reasons out the formation of Moroccan Diaspora in France and the problems Moroccans face in France. Moroccan form the largest migrant group in Europe and France is the country having the largest North African population (Bures, 2008). The problems faced by the Moroccan Diaspora are a result of difficulty in integration after migration to France.

The scenario of colonialism hasn't changed even now after the establishment of French protectorate in Morocco during 1912 and 1956. The fuel to the fire is added by the indiscriminate treatment by the French society showered upon the Moroccans on religious lines. For decolonization, the Muslim Moroccans were transformed into the warrior class to be used as service class as labourers and warriors during the World Wars. This practice was not just followed by the French but also by the Spanish. Moroccan Jews were used as property owners and merchants. But these roles were maintained by the Moroccan Jews even after migration to France as the Jews didn't face a cultural contrast on migration

to France. The Moroccan Jews were treated preferably by the French society than the Moroccan Muslims. This was seen in terms of privileges extended to the Jews by the French society. On the other hand Moroccan Muslims faced discrimination in terms of ethnic, religious and economic overtones. This differential colonial treatment among the Moroccan Muslims and Jews had created a sectarian division amongst them. Though both the Moroccan Muslims and Jews were offered various opportunities none of them could integrate well into the French society. The pattern of French colonialism in Morocco was similar to that of the British in South Africa of racial apartheid. It is similar to the British colonialism in the sense that British also colonized South Africa with tools of racial discrimination. Similar to the British the French divided the Moroccan migrants in France on the basis of race and tried to give preferential treatment to the Moroccan Jews. This did not come up well among the Moroccan Muslim population. The French followed a typical pattern of stratification and segregation based on language, race, religion and ethnicity. According to Skeldon (1997), Morocco has become a "labor frontier country" which sends its skilled labor to other countries to feed their economies.

Colonisation of Morocco has resulted in migration from Morocco to France and in turn has led to the formation of massive Moroccan Diaspora in France and the problems associated with it such as problems in assimilation, integration into the French society and also problems of racism and Xenophobia.

## 2. Colonisation of Morocco

Moroccan immigration to France is a result of Colonization of Morocco by France. As a consequence of which it has led to the formation of Moroccan Diaspora in France. After the establishment of French protectorate in Morocco during 1912 and till 1956 differential treatment amongst the Moroccan population based on religious lines (Moroccan Muslims and Jews) was witnessed. This was observed by the preferential treatment given to one over the other. This was seen in terms of the stringent steps taken by the French protectorate against the Muslim population. This led to the discrimination of the Muslim population and was an obstacle in the assimilation of the Moroccan Muslim population into France. These steps range from political influence, military control, educational and professional spheres. The main reason of French control over Morocco was that of availing of cheap labour and manpower from Morocco to serve France (Buchner, 1986; Fadlollah et al., 2000). During 1870, France had lost Alsace-Lorraine to Germany and this motivated France to regain this territory from Germany. To regain this territory France needed numerical strength which it lacked and saw Morocco as a source for it (Bidwell, 2003). As France had already employed this strategy with Algeria so it thought that this strategy would even be useful in case of Morocco. France took full advantage of its protectorate during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as compensation to its poor economic performance at home. As a result of this France tried to exploit its protectorates. This had a consequence of excessive migration a century later from these countries which were a part of the French protectorate and France had to bear the brunt. During 1911 as Germany and France were looking forward to extend their borders to North Africa. In the same year France extended military troops to Morocco and similarly The Germans dispatched their gunboat to the port of Agadir. This led to the 'Agadir crisis'. This 'Agadir Crisis' was the reason behind the outbreak of the First World War. On 30<sup>th</sup> March 1912, The Treaty of Fez was signed by Moroccan Sultan "Abd-al-Hafid", recognizing a French protectorate in Morocco. It also led to the resolution of the 'Agadir crisis'. The colonial rule of French in Morocco was similar as that of the British rule in India and French rule in Algeria (Pennell, 2003). British rule in India was indirect and it led to the retention of power with the local leaders but French rule in Algeria was seen as transfer of power in the European hands. The highly militarized approach for colonizing Algeria resulted in a bloody war so the French followed a middle path towards colonizing Morocco. The middle path created from both the British strategy and the French Strategy towards Algeria. As a consequence of this the "Treaty of Fez" did not strip Morocco of its sovereignty. Therefore the power of Moroccan sultan to rule was kept intact. The French understood that it was better to maintain cooperation between colonial and native. This was a better strategy to rule (Bidwell, 1961). This shifted the French strategy of rule from direct to association. This policy of association was characterized by simplicity, flexibility and practicality. After the establishment of the French protectorate in Morocco the French separated the Moroccans from the Berbers. They saw Berber population as French as their ideals were not Islamic. (Pennell, 2003). Similarly within the Moroccans the French distinguished between the Muslims and Jews and saw the Jews as better than the Muslims. Also they saw the potential in the Jewish population to absorb the French culture. The Jewish population migrated to Morocco in 1492

after being excluded from Spain. As the Jewish population was already migrant population, they did not have that much difficulty in integrating into the French society as compared to their Muslim counterpart.

The French settlers in Morocco treated Moroccans differentially in terms of economy. As the Moroccans were stripped of their land in order to control and benefit from them. This led to the economy of Morocco being controlled by the French. The colonization of Morocco also occurred due to French interest in Morocco's raw material. French expanded their control to the Moroccan agriculture sector and crops beneficial to international market were grown such as olives, dates and wine (Stewart, 1964). The French pushed the local Moroccan population to work as agricultural labourers and for their own benefit. This also resulted in the local Moroccan population not being able to work in the other higher sectors of the economy. With time the French were able to establish a protectorate throughout Morocco by acquiring Moroccan territory public, private, religious or otherwise. In 1952 Europeans accounted about 6 percent of the total population of Morocco (Kreienbrink, 2016).

This reflected on the colonisation and control of Morocco by France for their own benefits and interests in the raw material and cheap labour available in Morocco.

### 3. Post-colonial Migration from Morocco to France

In 1970s the Moroccan migration to France was temporary migration and male dominated migration (Berriane and Aderghal, 2008). Similar to Algerians, Moroccans migrated to France for better opportunities such as job opportunities and for sending remittances to their families back in Morocco. These migrants wanted to return back home but rarely returned back. Most migrants want to temporarily migrate to support their families back home and purchase land in their home countries (De Haas, 2007). It is similar to that of Algeria, where family reunification served as a purpose to migrate to France. During the period of 1962-1972 European economic growth happened and as a result more demand for labour came up. This led to increased emigration from Morocco to France. As a consequence of which during 1965-1975 Moroccans residing in France increased from 20,000 to 2,00,000 (De Haas, MPI). The "Office Nationale de l'Immigration" (ONI) during 1963 and 1964 led to signing of bilateral agreement between France and the other three countries of North Africa mainly focusing on Morocco and Tunisia. The share of Algerian migration in Europe fell by 62 percent from 85 percent during 1962 to 1974. In 1975 the share of emigrants from Morocco was 2,60,000. This migration was considered as temporary migration from Morocco to France. But the migrants did not return back to Morocco and settled in France. The migrants became more adapted to the host country's (France) environment and also socially they became more similar to the host country's population (Kreienbrink, 2016). Also the next generation became more adapted to the host country and did not want to return back to their country of origin i.e. Morocco. Even if they returned the return was seasonal or short. In 1960s, Morocco devised a policy to control its population growth and in 1965 a "royal memorandum" was declared which contained the birth control

plan. This plan produced the desired results (Bures 2008). As a consequence of which the birth rate fell from 3.17 percent to 5.9 percent in the 1990s. In the year of 1973 oil crisis occurred which hindered the economic growth in France and other western European countries. This led to low demand of low skilled labour in France and as a result France did not welcome new immigrants. So the workers staying France continued to remain in France thus, permanently settling in France. The 1973 oil crisis led to a massive shift in migration happening between Morocco and France. The migration was categorized into three types i.e. legal, illegal and seasonal. This period was also marked by an increase in female migrants and young migrants from Morocco. . The year of 1960 was marked by an increase in the family forming migration (Fargues, 2004). This period also brought with it seasonal migrants. As the European countries started to close their borders for the immigrants this led to an increase in illegal migration in these countries (Collyer, 2004). In 1970, Morocco followed a liberal economic policy and opened its market to foreign direct investment. This opening of market also led to an increase in the unemployment rate in 1970s and 1980s (Bures, 2008). After the oil crisis in 1973 Europe tried to close its borders for immigrants but this did not stop migration as it took place in terms of family forming migration. This family forming migration took place amongst the Moroccan immigrants received during 1960s. Migration patterns shifted from temporary type of migration to family forming and permanent migration Family-forming migration led to a 300 percent increase in immigrants i.e. about 1.2 million in 1992 (De Haas, 2007). This process of family unification occurred in two ways: First was in 1980s, when women and children joined the male migrants who migrated earlier and second was in 1990s, when the spouse of children of previous immigrants joined them in France. The return migration to Morocco in case of migrants who migrated to France was very low (Fadloulallah et al., 2000). In 1960s Morocco also started to encourage migration due to the benefits of migrant remittances to the Moroccan economy. Also emigration from Morocco helped in solving the problem of unemployment in the nation. During the period of 1990s Morocco maintained a tight control over Moroccans living abroad by not letting them integrate into the French society (De Haas, 2007). As in Morocco's vision integration of emigrants into the host country i.e. France would have a negative effect on the remittances received by Morocco, which was really important for Moroccan economy. In 1989 King Hassan II denied the Moroccans the right to vote in France. He thought that integration of Moroccans in France would be betrayal of their original identity. These policies didn't go well with the French society as it led to alienation of Moroccan in the French society. But these ideas and policies didn't go down well with the ties between Morocco and France. In fear of decrease in remittances received from the Moroccan in France the Moroccan government changed its policies. The Moroccan government shifted its approach to dual citizenship and attainment of naturalization.

The recent trends and pattern of Moroccan migration to France reveal that many Moroccans want to marry a partner from classic destination countries such as France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium etc. Also Moroccan migrants prefer to

marry a person from the same country of origin i.e. Morocco (Lievens, 1999).

Also as earlier women just migrated for family forming migration recently single, independent women are migrating to France and have changed the demographic profile of migration from Morocco (Fadloulallah et al., 2000; Salih, 2001).

#### 4. Problems in Integration of Moroccan Diaspora in France

The huge migration of Moroccans in France led to the formation of massive Moroccan Diaspora in France. Though a part of French society, these Moroccan continue to face the problems of integration and segregation in the French society

After the migration of Moroccans in France the Moroccan immigrants faced hardships in terms of integration into the French society. These problems of integration was reflected in their differentiated settlement pattern in Paris. In Paris, the North African immigrants got isolated in the suburbs of Paris in the periphery. This was done so that these people are surrounded by people of their origin. But these suburbs were accompanied by crimes, ghettoization, racism by French society (Laurence and Vaisse, 2007). While Jewish Moroccan immigrants were better integrated into the French society. Surrounded by an environment that looks at Moroccan Muslims with a negative lens, the Moroccan Muslim population in France found it difficult to integrate into the French society.

Moroccan migrants in France are "among the oldest and most numerous migrant groups in Europe" (Bures, 2008).

Job opportunities are being kept for high skilled and native French population thus discriminating with the migrant Moroccan population.

If seeing a historical narrative it is seen that North African Muslim migrants were not welcomed as Saracen and Ottoman armies posed a threat against Europe and Muslims were seen as enemies (Laurence and Vaisse, 2007). As the migration of Moroccan increased during 1970s and 1980s led to a negative impact in the mind of French society. It led the Moroccan migrants to be seen with biases and prejudice. And the Moroccan enclaves were considered as enclaves of criminality and homelessness. Till now the Moroccan Muslim community in France continues to face discrimination in the French society and also difficulty in assimilation into the French society. This discrimination is also experienced at the job front. In the French society which keeps religion out of public sphere still religious discrimination is faced by Moroccan Muslims in France. Integration also depends on migrant's perspective. Some migrants may want to integrate into the French society economically but may want to maintain their cultural values (O'Reilly, 2012). The migrants who are willing to integrate and assimilate completely into the French society may also want to follow their own religious beliefs. Xenophobia exists in the host country and the ability to integrate may be curtailed by this factor. If the Moroccan immigrants might want to maintain their specific identities through enclave it might lead to their segregation from the host country i.e. France.

## 5. Conclusion

Colonisation of Morocco by France has led to the formation of Moroccan Diaspora in France. After the establishment of French protectorate in Morocco the demand for Moroccan population (cheap labour) led to the increase in immigrants from Morocco in France. This demand of Moroccan masses was also felt during the World Wars, as there was a need for mass soldier population to fight on behalf of France. This further led to the demand of cheap labour in the French economy. This Moroccan migrant population was mainly men. After the economic crisis, the French government closed its

borders for further immigration and this led to immigration in terms of family forming migration (women and children). Further the migration of spouses for the children of earlier migrants took place. Now even migration of single Moroccan women and singles is taking place. This migration flows led to the formation of massive Moroccan Diaspora in France. But with this migration also comes the problems of integration of Moroccans into the French society. The problems of racism, xenophobia continues to haunt the Moroccan migrants, which are a product of Colonisation of Morocco by France.

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