

**Religion, Acculturation and the Choice of Food Retail Outlets by Algerian Origin  
Muslim Women in France: Developing Research Propositions**

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## **Abstract**

Within a context of increased globalization of migrations, understanding consumption acculturation process for ethnic minorities has become a challenging task for national and international marketers. If ethnic marketing approaches have long been developed in immigration countries like the United States or Canada, it is still a taboo in a country like France because of a specific assimilationist model of immigration, and this in spite of a long tradition of immigration since the 19<sup>th</sup> century that provided France with the largest European population basis of various multicultural origins. The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of how religion and generation in particular impact on the choice of food retail outlets, in France, in the case of the Algerian Muslim immigrant population. A literature review is first proposed articulating previous research on religion, acculturation and consumer and patronage behaviour. Exploratory research propositions are then developed that focus on how Algerian origin Muslim women of different levels of religiosity and of both first and second generations may negotiate their religious and/or ethnic identity through the choice of food retail outlets and food products in France.

**Key words: acculturation, religion, Muslim consumer behaviour, Food retailing, France**

## **Introduction**

International immigration is not new in human history and moving to another country is always a challenging experience. The International Organization for Migrations (OIM, 2010) considers migration as one of the defining global issues of the early twenty-first century, as more and more people are on the move today than at any other point in human history. There are now about 214 million people living outside their place of birth, which is about 3% of the world's population. Most migrations occur from developing to industrialized countries like United States and France which have a significant population of national citizens whose parents were originally born in another country.

Among the many cultural elements that migrants bring to the host country, religion is an important component because it is generally developed at an early age and therefore it plays a

significant role in establishing behavioural prescriptions, especially in the domain of consumption and buying (Berkman, Lindquist and Sirgy, 1997). Understanding religion and its impact on immigrants' shopping behaviour is therefore important for host countries' producers and retailers in order to design effective adapted or ethnic marketing strategies that allow satisfying potentially specific needs. This is specifically true regarding food consumption where religious prescriptions are many in all religions (Faulk and Usunier, 2004).

Religious affiliation is a core component of ethnic identity and it is an element involved during culture contact and impacted by the changes occurring in the identities of immigrants (Sandicki, 2006). Prior studies about religion and religiosity in consumer behaviour research have been limited to very few product categories like television or stereo, and the majority of these studies have been realized for the Catholics and the Jewish, in United States or in United Kingdom (Mokhlis, 2006), both countries characterized by a multicultural or "patchwork" immigration paradigm where immigrants or minorities may preserve their original religious identity and behave according to their religious values and traditions without challenging the founding principles of the host national cultures belonging to a different religious tradition. Only after the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, American researchers started to investigate Islam (Mokhlis, 2006).

In Europe, France has the longest immigration tradition since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which gave birth to a phenomenon that most of its neighbouring countries ignore, like the emergence of second and even third generations of "originally" or previously immigrant people. In 2007, about 5 millions of the 63 French million inhabitants are immigrants or have a foreign origin, 2 millions among them having the French nationality (Héran, 2007). In spite of such a high degree of multicultural origins, the French republican secular assimilationist paradigm of immigration has made ethnic marketing a genuine taboo among professionals, and it is only in the very recent years that producers and retailers try to figure out how to tap market opportunities from these minorities.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of how religion impacts the choice of food retail outlets in France in the case of Algerian Muslim immigrant population. A literature review is first proposed articulating previous research on religion, acculturation and consumer and patronage behaviour. Exploratory research propositions are then developed that focus on how Algerian origin Muslim women of different levels of

religiosity and of both first and second generations may negotiate their religious identity through the choice of food retail outlets and food products in France.

## **1. Acculturation and consumer and patronage behaviour**

### **1.1 Acculturation and immigration**

Searching for a good job or better social conditions, better climatic conditions, a cleaner environment, societies where human rights are actually practiced, or for education facilities, many people migrate from developing to developed countries and bring with them their beliefs and religious values. As a result, different ethnic groups come to live together and societies become varied and culturally plural. At the core of every culture, there is a common set of habits, values, ideals and assumptions about life that are shared by members of the group. The values are transmitted from one generation to the next through the process of learning and interacting with one's environment, and not through the genetic process (Ferraro, 1994). These learned values and behaviours influence the members of the society to behave and think in a particular and expected way considered as socially acceptable by the other members in the group.

According to Berry (1997) minorities in the new home differ from the host society in numerical, political and economic power. Some of them immigrate on a voluntary basis, some are obliged to do so like asylum seekers, some of them migrate temporarily like international students while others immigrate for ever. When getting into contact with the host culture, a process of acculturation takes place. Acculturation has classically been defined as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield *et al.*, 1936, p.149). Berry (1997, p. 7) on the other hand defines acculturation as "the general process and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of intercultural contact".

The outcome may include not only changes to existing phenomena, but also some novel phenomena that are generated by the process of cultural interaction (Sam and Opp. edal, 2002). Acculturation changes can happen at the individual and group levels and refer to changes in languages, identity, values, behaviours, attitudes, habits, social institutions and the

like. Acculturation changes are normally geared towards adaptation, i.e., to ascertain that the individual or the group is able to meet the challenges arising from living in the midst of two (or more) different cultures.

Focusing on the research issue of acculturation in social sciences disciplines (sociology, anthropology, linguistics, psychology and others), Rudmin (2003) notes the profusion of acculturation constructs on the basis of the use of the fourfold framework promoted by Berry (1997) to organize the acculturation constructs into four generic types, depending on the relative importance of the first-culture (F) and the contact culture (C). These four ideal types have been symbolized as: 1) -F+C, 2) +F-C, 3) +F+C, and 4) -F-C. This means: 1) that the contact culture is favoured, 2) that the first-culture is favoured, 3) that both cultures are favoured, and 4) that both cultures are disfavoured.

## **1.2 Acculturation and consumer behaviour**

Consumer acculturation is a subset of the general process of acculturation. While acculturation is more general, consumer acculturation is specific to the buying and consumption processes. According to Lee (1988) consumer acculturation is a socialization process in which an immigrant or marginalized consumers learn the behaviours, attitudes and values of a culture that are different from those of his or her home culture. Consumer acculturation takes place both when buying and consuming goods and services, and involves learning the meanings attached to them; therefore, it is an “eclectic process of learning and selectively displaying culturally defined consumption skills, knowledge, and behaviours” (Penaloza, 1989, p. 110). Researchers used some factors to measure consumer acculturation like the spoken language, the reference groups, inter-communities marriage, identity, culture, religion, and media usage (Ogden, *et al.*, 2004).

### **1.2.1 Acculturation as a linear process of culture change**

Previous studies about consumer acculturation can be classified into two perspectives: the traditional and the modern one. The traditional perspective considers the process of acculturation as a linear process like Berry (1997) who classified the acculturation strategies according to two dimensions (the value attached to preserving one's culture, and the value attached to making contact and having relations with the host society) leading to four acculturation strategies, namely: (1) Assimilation : immigrants become assimilated when they

lose their original consumer culture and prefer to have contacts with and behave like people of the host culture; (2) Separation : immigrants become separated when they preserve their home consumer culture and refuse to make contacts with the host culture; (3) Integration : immigrants become integrated when they preserve home consumer culture and at the same time make interactions and communications with the host society; and (4) Marginalization : immigrants become marginalized when they both lose their original consumer culture and make no contact with the host society.

Close to this classification of the acculturation strategies, Holt and Ustuner (2007) found in their ethnographic study of poor immigrant women from Turkish villages to the squatters around the capital Ankara that mothers and daughters use goods and consumption practices like house decorations and cosmetics in order to construct their gender identities as brides, wives, and mothers. It was found that in dominant consumer acculturation context, the social class and the consumer culture and ideology impact on the acculturation process and result in three modes of acculturation namely: (1) Deterritorialization: first generation women recreate their village identity by indigenizing the new technology, constructing myopic aesthetics, and repurposing the village rituals in the squatters like knitting; (2) Assimilation: second generation women pursue collectively the dominant city ideology through ritual consumption like a myth; and (3) Giving up both village and city gender identities because of the reduced social, cultural, and economical capital that restrains these poor migrant women from completely adapting to the dominant modern ideology of the city and because they are far from their villages. This last strategy resembles Berry's segregation strategy in which migrants lose both local and host cultural identities.

### **1.2.2 Acculturation as a negotiation process of identity**

Contrary to the traditional perspective of consumer acculturation, the modern perspective contradicts the idea of a linear process and insists on immigrants' ethnic identity negotiation through consumption practices. According to Penaloza (1994) there are times when immigrants' consumption patterns might suggest assimilation, yet at other times, the way products are used suggests ties with the original culture. Many studies in United States and in Denmark focused on how immigrants negotiate their ethnic identity through consumption practices of certain goods and products.

Oswald (1999) introduced the concept of “culture swapping” meaning that rather than conforming to one ethnic category, immigrants constantly negotiate cultural identities and choose when and where to wear their ethnicity. In her study of Haitian immigrants in America Oswald found that Haitian immigrants switch unconsciously between the codes of Haitian elite and American middle class according to the situation. Askegaard *et al.* (2005) in their study about the Greenlanders in Denmark found similar results about the hybrid ethnic identity of migrants when they consume and use products. The authors suggest the idea of a “hyper-culture”: Greenland migrants depend on the Greenland commodified products in Denmark as ethnic identity resources.

More recently in France, Ozcaglar and Hadj Hmida (2009) in their study about how retail outlets distribute ethnic identities classified four different sources of resources offered by the retailers and used by the Algerian consumers to negotiate their ethnic identity, namely: economic resources, spiritual resources, experiential resources, and institutional resources. These authors insist on the idea of an immigrant’s hybrid identity and suggest that Algerian immigrants in France continuously change their affiliated ethnic identity by mean of retail outlets choice. While appreciating modern hypermarkets for low prices and variety of products, ethnic stores and traditional open markets are the essential source for ethnic products like Harissa sauce and Halal meat, especially during sacred times like the Ramadan festival.

In Turkey, Sandikci *et al.* (2006) developed three case studies of three Turkish immigrant women from the village to the suburbs of Ankara. They found that these immigrant women negotiate their cultural identity through consumption practices related to their body and physical appearance. In accordance with Penloza (1994), and contrary to the traditional perspective of acculturation, they found that immigrants continuously negotiate their cultural identity and feel simultaneously separated, assimilated, and marginalized. Religion and patriarchy are found to influence the process of acculturation of immigrant women: while a highly religious woman refuses to change her body appearance according to the city cultural codes claiming that any type of body change is an offense to God will, girls from a second generation of immigrants change their appearance each time they go to meet their boyfriends, but always put the Hijab in front of their parents.

In Canada, Cleveland and Chang (2009) suggest that different generations of immigrants from Korea cope with contradicting values like ethnic identity, religiosity and materialism. The

first generation of Koreans who were born in Korea have a stronger ethnic identity, a higher degree of materialism (people from developing countries were found to be more materialistic and to like expressing their social position by possessions and products' accumulation) and a lower degree of religiosity than second generation who were more religious and more acculturated to the Canadian environment. The authors concluded that religiosity is a largely overlooked construct in consumer research, and that while theory suggests that religiosity and materialism are opposite in nature, their findings for the second generation imply that for some individuals these dispositions may be compatible.

Finally, Penaloza (1989) described a comprehensive set of factors that impact consumer's acculturation process in the host country. She found that in addition to age, education, income, occupation, marital status, gender, ethnicity, social class, and family life cycle, there are other factors influencing immigrants' learning process of goods and services in the host country such as: (1) Cultural consumption values: many cultural values impact consumer's acculturation process like individual versus group oriented values, active versus passive values, and present versus future time oriented values; (2) Language: it is the most important influence on the process of consumer acculturation because it impacts on the consumer's ability to communicate and learn consumption practices and behaviours and values attached to certain products and services; (3) Intensity of affiliation: this depends on the consumer's preference for one culture over another, this ranges from the culture of home country to the culture of the host country or a third hybrid culture; (4) Environmental factors: the context, and the immediate environment affect the immigrant's ability and willingness to learn and display cultural consumption attitudes and behaviours, immigrants are more likely to exhibit previous consumption behaviour if they are accepted in the new country; (5) Generation: it was found that first generation immigrants exhibit lower levels of assimilation to the host culture than second or third generations, partially because the later develop beliefs and cognitive structures related to the host culture; and (6) Consumer acculturation agents: sources of consumer information like family, peers, and mass media.

## **2. Religiosity, ethnicity and consumer and patronage behaviour acculturation**

The majority of studies on consumer behaviour acculturation focused on ethnicity and nationality as the primary factors that play the essential role in shaping consumer behaviour, with far less attention given to religion which is an important component of ethnic identity. Ethnicity as defined by Debarbieux *et al.* (1999, p.74) is « an active process that permits the



organization of identities and interactions by describing the barriers and the relations of social groups ». For Max Weber (1968) ethnicity is based on the idea of a common identity which is related to descent, language, religion, tradition, and other common experiences that a certain group uses for establishing barriers and limitations which separate it from other groups

While many studies talked about ethnic identity negotiations, very rare are the studies that talk about religious identity negotiation. McDaniel and Burnett (1990, p. 110) define religion as “a belief in God accompanied by a commitment to follow principles believed to be set forth by God”. This definition takes into consideration not only the faith in God, but also the degree to which one employs his or her religious beliefs as a basis for how to act and live. A definition of religiosity by Worthington (2003, p. 85) proposes that it is “the degree to which a person uses adheres to his or her religious values, beliefs and practices and uses them in daily living”. Two streams of research about ethnicity, religiosity and consumer behaviour acculturation can be identified: studies about religious identity negotiation process, and studies about the impact of religion and religiosity on consumer behaviour, including food consumption.

## **2.1 Religious identity negotiation process**

In the first research stream about religious identity negotiation process, Zwick and Chelariu (2006) observed the mobilization of Hijab and Islamic identity negotiation in the context of a matchmaking website. They showed how Muslim men and women through a matchmaking site mobilize the symbol of Hijab to construct desirable digital identities. “In the symbolic space of the Internet, identities have to be constructed through language, pictures and cultural symbols of identity such as the Hijab” (p. 382). An interesting finding of this study is that while women use Hijab to construct a digital identity of a religious woman that enable them to clutch a suitable religious man, men focus on Hijab to obey normative Islamic roles. Highly educated Muslims were found to refuse Hijab as an identity tool in order to express openness, individuality and freedom of thinking.

Another study about religious identity negotiation through dressing codes was realized in Turkey in a secular university where most of the students are Muslim girls who insist on wearing a headscarf to impose their identity which is not appreciated positively by the university administration and staff (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). In this ethnographic study, authors showed how the collective identity of the university is fractured, contested, and multilayered because the Islamic headscarf was not only “symbolic vector for the opp.osing

narratives of Kemalism and Islam but also for the polarizations between urban and rural Turkey, the secular and the religious, the old and the young, and elite and mass models of education” (p. 944).

Ethnographic studies of consumption in particular religious settings are not many. This type of studies aims to understand how consumers give spiritual meanings to religious products like the one realised by Zaidman and Lowengart (2001) who investigated the interaction between consumers and retailers in the marketing of religious goods and services at the time of Jewish pilgrimage to Saints’ thumbs in Israel. The researchers attempted to analyze the exchange process in private religion where sacred goods like Jewish textbooks, and candles and services like blessings and healings are transferred directly from an individual marketer to an individual consumer. They found that the meaning attributed to religious goods, or the process by which goods acquire sacred meaning, involves not only the goods or the context but also the marketers themselves who embed authenticity into the products or services they market, and that this authenticity is related to the retailer’s proximity to the consumer’s cultural world.

Another ethnographic study registered in this stream of research is the one of O’Guinn and Belk (1989) who showed how in Heritage Village in USA, a Christian religious park, the profane daily used objects were imbued with sacred qualities. The shopping mall located near to the church was perceived as a sacred place, time spent there was a sacred time. Consumers perceived secular objects like makeup and perfume as sacred when they were framed within the context of a sacred place, a sacred time and a sacred journey to a religious-based theme park. It was found that Christians think they do not have to feel guilty about enjoying opulence and luxury in this city because in heaven they are supposed to have the finest.

## **2.2 The impact of religion on consumer behaviour**

The second stream of research about ethnic religiosity and consumer behaviour relates to the impact of religion and religiosity on consumer behaviour where researchers explore the relation between religion, religiosity and consumption behaviour. Two domains of research can be identified, studies about the general impact of religion on consumption, and studies about the specific impact of religion on food consumption in particular.

### **2.2.1 The general impact of religion on consumption**

This stream of research considers religion as a socio-economic segmentation variable like age, gender, and race. Hirschman in a series of successive studies explored the impact of religious affiliation on consumer behaviour. In 1983 she suggested that when a person is born in a religious tradition, he or she can develop a religious identity or affiliation through the action of its institutional influences like Sunday school, and church attendance. Religious affiliations therefore can be depicted as “cognitive systems” of the society. That is, believers of the same religion share a common cognitive system of beliefs, values, expectations and behaviours, thus people who adhere to a certain religion have different consumption behaviours from those of other religions.

Hirschman (1981) examined the differences between Jewish and non-Jewish consumers in information seeking and processing. She found that Jewish subculture differs significantly from non-Jewish subculture in three characteristics: Information seeking from mass media, innovativeness, and transfer of information to others about products. She found that the greater the Jewish ethnicity, the more likely consumers were to exhibit these three buying characteristics. Hirschman (1982) demonstrated the presence of distinct differences between Catholic, Jewish and Protestant consumers in inherent novelty seeking and information transfer. The study showed that Jews indicate a higher level of inherent novelty seeking compared to Protestants and Catholics, and that Jews and Catholics have higher level of information transfer compared to Protestant consumers. Finally, Hirschman (1983) found that Jews, Catholics and Protestants use different evaluative criteria for weekend entertainment, transportation, housing and family pet decisions.

Researching shopping behaviour, Essoo and Dibb (2004), in their comparison between Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus, suggest specific shopping behaviour for a television set depending on religious affiliation. Catholic consumers are more thoughtful than Muslims and Hindus because they attach more importance to bargains and friends’ advices before making a purchase. They were found to be more traditional because they trust advertisements and they are more likely to search the media for bargains. Catholics were found to be more demanding as well, attaching greater importance to product quality. Muslims were found to be more practical in their shopping behaviour, attributing a great importance to price deals, promotions, and store credit facilities. Muslims would try any new product and new retail outlets. Hindus were found to be passive in their purchasing behaviour because of the

characteristics of fatalism and the importance attached to their religious beliefs such as self control, calmness, detachment and compassion. They do not make any effort to acquire new products, better quality of service, or low prices. They even might accept poor quality and high prices.

### **2.2.2 The specific impact of religion on food consumption**

For many faiths like Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam, food is an important part of religious observance and spiritual rituals. The role of food is vital for any human being (if one does not eat, one dies), and in religious practices, it is complex and it varies between individuals and communities. Nevertheless, some common reasons can explain why the social function of religious factors surrounding food is so strong (Faulk and Usunier, 2004): food practices can be understood as a mechanism of communication with the deity (through sacrifice, deprivation or ritual), they demonstrate faith (obedience to dietary law) and rejection of worldliness (self-denial or bodily discipline, taken to an extreme in asceticism) and finally they enhance identity and belongingness (a public affirmation of faith and difference from others).

In Christianity food regulations differ from Roman Catholic, to Orthodox, or Protestant Christians but these are faiths that do not prescribe too many food restrictions. Fasting in Christianity is considered as praying with body, it is believed to improve spiritual discipline by focusing on prayers and overcoming the sensation of physical world. Christians also may fast to express their respect for people who experience hunger around the world. Some Catholics and Orthodox observe many feast and fast days during the year, for example they may fast or avoid meat during Fridays, and eat fish instead.

In Judaism, Kashrut refers to the law pertaining to food in Jewish religion. “Kosher” means “permitted”. Food such as pork and shellfish are strictly forbidden, and food prescriptions form an integral part of a practicing Judaism. Food must be prepared according to the Kashrut law, especially animals that should be slaughtered in a specific way to be Kosher. There are restrictions about not mixing dairy products and meat, and ritualized fasting is included in Judaism especially in Yom Kippur festival.

Hindus don't eat meat or any food that involves taking of life or causing pain to animals, otherwise they believe they will accumulate a negative Karma or spiritual load to be carried

from this life to the next one. Karma should be balanced through good actions and learning in this life. Many Hindus are vegetarian and almost all of them would not eat beef because the cow is a highly sacred animal.

Muslim Population is estimated according to Essoo and Dibb (2004) at more than one billion and increasing by 25 million per year. Muslims should eat only “Halal” food, that is food “permitted by Allah”. According to Chaudry *et al.* (2000), goats, beef, lamb, rabbit, buffalo, deer, cattle, camels and giraffes are acceptable animals for Muslim consumers. Permitted birds include turkey, chicken, fowl, hens, geese and ducks. The most noted exclusion of common meat sources is pork and all pork derived ingredients are “Haram” or “forbidden” (e.g. alcohol and any other meat that is not prepared according to Islamic principles).

### **3. Religion, immigration and consumer acculturation in France**

Having presented acculturation and consumer behaviour studies, with an emphasis placed on the impact of religion and cultural changes and consumer behaviour, especially in the domain of food consumption, we now focus of the specific context of France. In spite of a large proportion of immigrants, notably from a Muslim origin, very few studies have attempted to understand the consumer acculturation of these consumers in France. Reasons for it may be first traced back to the specificity of the French paradigm of immigration and of social representations of religion.

#### **3.1 Immigration and religion in France**

France is a member of the European Union located in the western region. It is the largest state by area in Europe (it covers 547.030 square kilometres) with an estimated population of 65.4 million people in 2010 making the country the twentieth most populous one in the world (INSEE, 2010). It is one of the most industrialised countries representing the fifth largest economy by nominal GDP. It enjoys a high standard of living as well as high infrastructures’ and public services’ levels. It is one of the most globalized nations in terms of international trade and FDI attractiveness.

Contrary to United States which has often been called a salad bowl because different people from different cultures, nations, and ethnic identities have mixed together but have maintained their diversity by retaining and valuing important ethnic and cultural differences (e.g. in not sharing living space or in not exhibiting a high degree of intercommunity wedding), France is

an assimilationist country in which minorities or ethnic communities are not officially recognized and differences in language or culture, including religion, are confined to the very private sphere. France does not officially recognize any racial differences among its citizens, it does not keep statistical trace of racial data, nor institutes racial quotas or affirmative action programs. It does not allow any religious or non-French cultural items to be showed off in schools or any public places. France is a deep secular society in which there is a fundamental separation between political and religious lives. During the twentieth century, secularity evolved to mean equal treatment of all religions, although a more restrictive interpretation of the term has developed since 2004 when the law confirming a prohibition on the wearing of ostensible religious apparels (garments, jewels and the like) at schools was passed by the French parliament.

According to Marthaler (2008) about 70% of latecomers immigrants to France come from former colonies in North and West Africa and the largest immigration community is from the Maghreb area, especially from Algeria and Morocco. Algeria was France's major settler colony, and Algerian immigration to France was initiated in the late nineteenth century, and accelerated by the presence of Algerians in French factories and the army during First and Second World Wars. Male labour immigration became an established component of the colonial economy from the early 1920s. There is recently a growing Turkish community, producing overall a significant Muslim community of an estimate of 4 million people, making up around 7 % of the population, i.e. the largest percentage of Muslims in any European Union (EU) member state. Since the suspension of labour immigration from non-European countries in 1974, the main source of immigration to France has been family reunification. In 2005, 70 % of immigrants entered the country for this purpose and only 7 % for work (Marthaler, 2008).

According to the most recent statistical studies (INED, 2008), in 2005, 2 millions (5%) of people in France whose ages range between 18-79 years old declared being Muslims compared to 35 millions (80%) who declared being Catholics, 900.000 (2%) being Protestants, 800.000 (2%) other confessions, and 5 million (11%) who declared not being affiliated to any religion. In addition, this study revealed that Muslims have the highest degree of religiosity in France comparing to Catholic and other religions: 34% of men who declared being Muslims go more than two times per month to their place of worship (mosques) comparing to 4% of the Catholics, and while 14% of Muslim women visit mosques more than

two times per month, only 8% of Catholic women do so. Muslim population is concentrated in France mostly in the large suburban areas of Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and Strasburg cities.

The sociologist Sayad (2010) devised Algerian immigration into two stages: (1) before 1945: Algerian immigration was almost exclusively male, Algerians worked in coal-mining, iron, steel and in car manufactures, and were concentrated in Marseilles, Lyon, Lille and the industrial east around Strasburg in addition to Paris and its suburbs. It was organized by tightly controlled networks. Immigration during this period was largely temporary and provided vital economic support to the impoverished village communities in Algeria; (2) after 1947: this wave of immigration was not only quantitatively significant (by 1956 there were 300.000 Algerians in France), but also qualitatively different because the Kabyle-Berbers, who had long dominated Algerian immigration, were increasingly replaced by Arab immigrants whose networks in France were much less well structured and who were progressively joined by their entire enlarged families. According to Sayad (2010), Algerian immigration remained extremely problematic from a State perspective because France had always looked to encourage European immigration, judging Algerians to be ethnically distinct and undesirable, precisely because harder to assimilate. France's duty as a colonial power had left governments with no choice but to accept greater Algerian immigration to ease the increasingly tensed political situation in Algeria itself. At the time being, Algerians represent the second largest minority after Italians in France, and according to Hérán (2007), the most numerous minorities of second generation in France are from an Italian origin, followed by Algerian, Spanish, Portuguese and Moroccan origins.

### **3.2 Muslim consumer acculturation in France and food patronage behaviour**

Beisel (1993) defines retailing by any activities involved in the sale of products or services to the ultimate consumers for personal or household consumption. In the broad sense any time a seller exchanges a product or a service, and in this exchange both the buyer and the seller intend that the product will be used for personal or non business purposes, then the activity of retailing has taken a place. These retailing activities might be within a store or without a store. Vending machines, house parties, door to door selling, and mail order are all examples of non store retailing. Retailing activities also include services performed for the consumer, such as dry cleaners, television repair men, restaurants, and barbers.

Berry and Guzlin (2009) described the structure of food retail outlets in France as complex and sophisticated. The food retail sector is generally composed of six types of stores, the first five accounting for about 75% of the retailing market: hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores, hard discounters, department stores, traditional outlets. From an anthropological perspective, Arnold and Thompson (2005) consider the marketplace as preeminent source of mythic and symbolic resources which proposes a very big choice of identities, but it is the consumer who should choose the identity that he likes to inhabit “using the means and the materials produced by marketing that forge a coherent overall self that is diversified and fragmented” (p. 871). According to Cova (1995) the role of marketplace in the process of social identification and construction is very important comparing to the traditional places of socializations (work, church, and family) which lose grounds in this domain.

According to Ozcaglar and Hadj Hmida (2009), who looked at the arbitration between ethnic retailing and general retailing when these two options co-exist, research in this area can be divided into two categories: the first one concentrates on the utilitarian dimensions that consumers look for like the price, the time needed to arrive at the store, the quality of products, the facility of access and parking places, the atmosphere of the shop, the hospitality, or the social relation between the vendors and the consumers. The second category of studies concentrates on the individual and social factors that impact the frequency of store visits like preference and ethnic identity negotiations in a similar vein to the study of Mexican immigrants in USA (Penaloza, 1994). When it comes to understanding Muslim acculturation consumer behaviour, Bergeaud-Blackler (2006) outlines that there is no European or French law defining and regulating the use of the term Halal. However the ritual slaughter is distinguished from other modes of killing animals by national and European regulations which provide an exemption from the requirement to stun animals before bleeding. Any ritual slaughter carried outside slaughterhouses is considered illegal according to the decree No. 80-791 of October 1st 1980. The orders of December 15, 1994 and June 27, 1996 gave the approval to the largest mosques (The grand mosque of Paris, the mosque of Lyon, and the mosque of Evry) to empower butchers exercise the ritual slaughter, but not to give Halal certification. So the standard quality of Halal food is left to the discretion and control of private companies competing for the monopoly of the definition of Halal. Muslim religious authorities neither specify the meaning of ritual slaughter nor inform how it could be applied in an industrial context, and nothing obliges the private certification companies to be controlled by religious authorities.



These pseudo-religious actors successfully entered the Halal markets responding to changes in cooking and food habits of French Muslims. Small Moroccan and Turkish shops and restaurants offer Halal meat in order to attract the youth to purchase Halal pizza, and Halal kebabs. Increased demand for processed Halal products, ready to cook or eat, lead to a change within the French retailing system. There are now in France certified private companies run by Muslims, which form the backbone of the “Halal market”. According to Ozcaglar and Hadj Hmida (2009) ethnic products that were for a long time exclusively available in the specialized ethnic stores, Halal butchers, and open market, are now available even in large modern retail chains that offer special departments for Halal amongst exotic products categories.

In Islam, there are a lot of desirable manners concerning shopping that Muslim should respect and follow, for example going to the market for shopping should be done in a hurry. Wasting time for shopping in the markets is not favourable so Muslims should buy what they need rapidly and go back home or to their works. Prophet Mohammad asked Muslims to respect certain manners in the streets and roads by replying the salutations and not staring at others. It is not acceptable for Muslim vendors to stand in front of their shops looking at pedestrians, nor is it nice for men to stand in the streets yelling and shouting. In case of shopping in groups a Muslim should wait for others as he or she likes them to wait for him or her. If a man goes shopping with a woman, he should protect her by walking close to the side of passing cars and she should walk on the pavement close to shops. A man should carry heavy bags and in case of many bags, a woman can carry only some of them because heavy duties in Islam are men responsibility rather than women due to the fact that women are seen as weaker than men physically.

We conclude from this brief literature review about religion, immigration and food consumer and patronage behaviour in France that: (1) food retailing system in France depends essentially on the modern large retailing chains of hypermarkets like Carrefour; (2) Halal food market in France is growing, autonomous and independent from other production and distribution systems; and (3) very rare are the studies in France about the retail outlets as cultural mediators that allow ethnic consumers, specially Muslim Algerians, to experiment different identities according to the context and situation (except Ozcaglar and Hadj Hmida, 2009, who found that Algerian immigrants in France negotiate their ethnic identity through the choice of food retail outlets in France). Our research is interested in understanding how

Algerian Muslim immigrants negotiate their religious identity through the choice of food retail outlets. The next section will present the research propositions of this paper.

#### **4. Research propositions: Algerian Muslim immigrant women shopping behaviour acculturation patterns in France**

This research aims at understanding how Algerian Muslim immigrant women negotiate their religious and/or ethnic identity through the choice of food retail outlets in France. It does not depend on a previous model that's why propositions rather than hypotheses are formulated. Depending on the post-assimilationist approach (Asekegaard *et al.* 2005) which states that in immigrant's world, consumers use products and consumption practices to negotiate differences between home and host cultures while extracting contingent identities derived from these differences. Following Arnold and Thompson (2005, p. 871) we consider the marketplace as "preeminent source of mythic and symbolic resources which proposes a very big choice of identities, but it is the consumer who should choose the identity that he likes to inhabit using the means and the materials produced by market that forge a coherent overall self that is diversified and fragmented." We consider religiosity as a swing identity between highly religious and casually religious people according to the context of consumption. The consumer is understood as a culture creator who uses the retail outlets and the proposed products to construct his or her identity.

The following propositions attempt to figure out how Algerian Muslim immigrant women, according to their degree of religiosity (high versus low) and generation (first versus second), may negotiate their religious and/or ethnic identity through the choice of food retail outlets in France. We chose to focus on women rather than men because according to Holt and Ustuner (2007), women's identity construction is more strongly tied to consumption practices than men's identity. In addition, according to Kotler *et al.* (2008, p. 247), "almost everywhere in the world a woman is traditionally the purchasing agent for the family especially in food areas".

##### **Generation and the choice of food retail outlets**

Starting with the generation effect, it was found in the literature review that different immigrants' generations experience different levels of acculturation. Cleveland and Chang (2009) found that in Canada, which is a multicultural society, second generation Korean

immigrants are more acculturated and adapted to the Canadian culture than first generation Korean. Penaloza (1989) also found that first generation immigrants are less assimilated to the host country than second generation ones. Compared to the second generation, first generation Algerian Muslim immigrant women are used to the traditional open market in Algeria and have difficulties in speaking French. The possibility to speak Arabic with the vendors in the traditional market might drive them to go there instead of shopping from modern retail stores.

**P1:** First generation Algerian Muslim immigrant women preserve their national identity through the choice of food retail outlets and shop in traditional stores more than second generation Algerian Muslim immigrant women.

### **Religiosity and the choice of food retail outlets**

As we saw in the literature review, highly religious consumers differ in their behaviours comparing to those who are casually religious. It was found by Essoo and Dibb (2004) that casually religious consumers are trendier and more innovative in their shopping behaviour than highly religious consumers. Devout customers are more reluctant to try new products or services and wait for others to do so first. McDaniel and Burnett (1990) found that highly religious individuals were more likely to attach a greater importance to the friendliness of the point of sales's staff due to their sense of sociability and spirituality. We propose that traditional market is the most suitable place of shopping for highly religious Muslim women who wear Burqa in France because marketplace, contrary to modern French secular modern retail chains, does not exhibit a profane environment: vendors there don't sell alcohol or pork, there is no advertisement showing naked men and women, or sexually connotated music that might disturb highly religious consumers. Also, most of the vendors and clients are Muslims who are used to see the traditional Islamic dress Burqa and who don't reject it.

**P2:** Highly religious Algerian Muslim immigrant women shop in traditional food retail outlets and casually religious women prefer modern secular supermarkets and hypermarkets.

### **Generation and religiosity in the choice of identity through the choice of food retail outlets in France**

Combining the effect of the generation and of the degree of religiosity on the choice of food retail outlets by Muslim immigrant women in France leads to consider that the first generation of immigrants, who is less assimilated to the host culture than second generation immigrants

(Cleveland and Chang, 2009; Penaloza, 1989) when highly religious, will be less trendy and less innovative when shopping than casually religious consumers (Essoo and Dibb, 2004), and will also be more likely to attach a greater importance to shops that propose sociable and helpful vendors (McDaniel and Burnett, 1990).

Since highly religious women are more sensitive to sociability and traditions in their behaviour, we propose that they prefer the traditional open market for shopping and sightseeing because there is a possibility for negotiation with the vendors in Arabic to get a better quality and lower prices, as well as an opportunity for talking with other clients. And because traditional markets welcome their Islamic traditional dress represented by Burqa which is rejected in France elsewhere, this food outlet does not exhibit the profane environment of modern secular French retail chains. In addition to this, these first generation women were born in Algeria and are used to the traditional open market which is the principal provider of fresh vegetables and fruits in their country. So we propose that these women will preserve their religious and ethnic identity through the choice of the traditional food retail outlets and shop in the traditional open market as a means to preserve their respect for Islamic and Algerian traditions.

**P3:** First generation highly religious Algerian Muslim immigrant women preserve their religious identity through the choice of traditional food marketplaces in France (Segregation acculturation food shopping behaviour)

Concerning second generation highly religious women in France, considering that they were born in France, we propose that contrary to their mothers they are used to the French modern retail chains distribution system. But since they are highly religious Muslims, we suggest that they might shop in traditional open markets that welcome and appreciate their Islamic dress represented by Burqa, and that do not present any sign of profane environment like alcohol, pork, sexually connotated music, or advertisement of naked men and women that might create a pressure and make them feel guilty because of committing sins and transgressions. So we propose that these women negotiate their religious identity through the choice of food retail outlets and shop in both traditional and modern food retail outlets. We suggest that they feel simultaneously segregated (shopping in traditional markets), assimilated (shopping in the modern French supermarkets), and marginalized (when experiencing the pressures of the profane environment in modern retail stores that reject their Burqa and that are secular and profane by nature).

**P4:** Second generation highly religious Algerian Muslim immigrant women negotiate their religious identity through the choice of food retail outlets and cope simultaneously with modern (Assimilation acculturation food shopping behaviour) and traditional food retail outlets in France (Segregation acculturation food shopping behaviour). When shopping in modern profane store, they could also feel marginalized (Marginalization acculturation food shopping behaviour).

Concerning the first generation of casually religious women, since they were born in Algeria, they are used to the traditional market which is the basic provision source of fresh food in this developing country. But being casually religious on the other hand gives them the possibility to shop in the profane secular supermarkets in France without any feeling the need to strictly obey to religious prescription or feeling guilty. So we propose that they negotiate their religious identity and ethnic through the choice of food retail outlets in France and feel simultaneously assimilated when shopping to modern supermarkets in a profane environment for dry grocery products, and segregated concerning traditional market especially for Halal meat or fresh vegetables.

**P5:** First generation casually religious Algerian Muslim immigrant women negotiate their religious and ethnic identity and cope simultaneously with modern (Assimilation acculturation food shopping behaviour) and traditional retail outlets in France (Segregation acculturation food shopping behaviour).

Finally, considering second generation and casually religious women, since they were born in a strong secular country and were socialized in French at school, we propose that they totally accept the modern profane French retail chains that do not cause any religious pressures or moral disturbance. We propose that contrary to their mothers, they are used to these modern retail outlets and at the same time that they don't have any religious constraints since they practice Islam only casually (typically for Ramadan festival). Having an ethnic French identity separated from the religious one makes them the most assimilated to the modern French shopping and consumption behaviour.

**P6:** Second generation casually religious Algerian Muslim immigrant women don't need to negotiate their religious identity and assimilate to the modern French shopping behaviour (Assimilation acculturation food shopping behaviour).

Table 1 below summarizes the research propositions combining the degree of religiosity and generation effect (P3-P6).

Table 1: Religiosity and generation effects on the choice of food retail outlets by Muslim women in France

<b>G</b> <b>R</b>	<b>First Generation (G1)</b>	<b>Second Generation (G2)</b>
<b>Highly Religious (HR)</b>	P3: Segregation acculturation food shopping behaviour	P4: Assimilation acculturation food shopping behaviour <i>and</i> Segregation acculturation food shopping behaviour <i>and</i> Marginalization acculturation food shopping behaviour
<b>Casually Religious (CR)</b>	P5: Assimilation acculturation food shopping behaviour <i>and</i> Segregation acculturation food shopping behaviour	P6: Assimilation acculturation food shopping behaviour

## Conclusions

This research proposed to extend the mostly Anglo-Saxon acculturation literature to a very different sociocultural context, namely to the strongly secular assimilationist country of France. Our study also emphasized the impact of religion on consumer acculturation process which is a largely neglected factor in acculturation studies. We tried to integrate previous researches about religiosity and consumer behaviour, with research on acculturation and food consumption. We also integrated the impact of generations of immigrants (first or second) on acculturation. Finally the store type (food retail outlets) were chosen as a core domain of consumer acculturation in order to formulate the exploratory propositions about how Algerian

Muslim immigrant women negotiate their religious identity through the choice of food retail outlets in France.

We propose that the religious and ethnic identities emerge together and make the first generation of highly religious women segregated in their choice of food retail outlets in France. The high level of religiosity of these women, who wear Burqa and who consider Alcohol and pork prohibited products, separates them from modern and secular distribution outlets and drive them to purchase from the traditional open markets that welcome their burqa and suit their religious thoughts and beliefs while resembling the traditional market of their country of origin, Algeria, including the possibility to speak Arabic language.

We propose that the second generation of highly religious women have ethnic-religious identities negotiated through the choice of food retail outlets in France and feel simultaneously assimilated and segregated. Assimilated to the modern retail outlets because they were born in France and are used to them, and because they speak French. Segregated because they prefer window shopping and sightseeing in the traditional open markets that welcome their traditional Islamic dress Burqa and that respect the Islamic traditions and values. And marginalized when experiencing the pressures of the profane environment in modern retail outlets that reject their Burqa and that are secular and profane by nature.

We propose that the first generation of casually religious women also have ethnic-religious identities negotiated through the choice of food retail outlets in France and that they feel simultaneously assimilated and segregated in France. Because they were born in Algeria, these women are less assimilated to French culture and more used to shop from the traditional market which is the main source of Halal meat in Paris. They don't trust modern retail outlets concerning Halal in France, but being also casually religious these women don't have any moral refrains to go to modern store. So they are assimilated concerning modern outlets and segregated concerning meat that should be Halal purchased from a trusted Muslim vendor.

Finally we propose that the second generation of casually religious women have ethnic-religious identities separated from each other and that this situation make them the most assimilated to the French culture because they were born in France and they are used to its food retailing system. Being casually religious, they don't have any religious moral constraints that would refrain them to shop at to the modern retail chain.

Future research should empirically test these propositions. Using qualitative in-depth interviews with Algerian Muslim immigrant women of both first and second generation and both highly religious and casually religious to investigate how they behave toward different kinds of food retail outlets in France which is a secular assimilationist country. Using the scenario method by presenting women in different situations concerning food retail outlets is recommended to go more deeply in the psychology of these consumers specially that religion and religiosity are sensitive subjects and interviewees might resist speaking about their special preferences and opinions due to social fear and taboo, specially for Muslims who don't like to speak about their religious behaviour that is not appreciated in France.

Limits of our study must be outlined that should lead to further conceptual investigation. From a theoretical point of view, the literature basis we used regarding consumer acculturation of Muslim immigrants in France suffers from the relative lack of indigenous French perspectives because of the specificities of the French paradigm for immigration (the assimilationist republican secular model). A detailed understanding of the impact of the many food product categories on the choice of food retail outlets (e.g. meat versus fresh vegetables versus dry grocery products) was not proposed even if the product category does have an effect, as suggested for the Halal meat category. The impact of religious social tempo was not taken into consideration either, even if religious festival times probably impact on the choice of food retail outlets (e.g. during Ramadan festival, food retail choice may change). As a consequence, understanding religiosity and acculturation must be considered both as a very managerial and academic relevant and challenging issue, especially in a traditional immigration country like France.

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