Chapter 4

Integration Measures in France: An Evolving Process between Integration and Migration Issues

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Traditionally, the integration of third-country nationals has not really been a major political issue in France. Since the adoption, just after the Second World War, of an ordinance governing the entry and residence of foreigners,¹ which took into account the management of migration flows and the integration of third-country nationals, the migration side of the policy took over from integration issues.² This position could nevertheless be explained by French culture regarding integration. In fact, for some time, France has refused to set up a real integration policy considering, on the one hand, that such a policy would stigmatise foreigners and, on the other hand, that it

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had succeeded in integrating foreigners in the past without such a policy. Nonetheless, the changes affecting society and, more particularly since 1973 and the oil crisis, have undermined some integration factors. In this context, in addition to the decision to stop immigration for work purposes, a decree adopted in 1977 restricted family reunification to family members who agreed not to engage in employment. Although this decree was cancelled by the French Council of State, it clearly demonstrates that immigration worries took over from integration issues.

Since the 1980s, integration issues have become more salient in France due to the transformation of the perception of migration flows. In fact, the idea of temporary migration for work purposes was overtaken by family migration, which had to be considered a lasting phenomenon. In that context, integration issues emerged as a key question and were formally institutionalised in 1989 with the creation of the Haut Conseil à l’intégration and the appointment of a secretary of State dedicated to this issue. In the field, several civil movements and rioting, occurring mainly in the 1990s, shed light on the lack of integration policy in France, mainly within French cities suburbs. These movements involved principally French citizens of the second generation. In fact, integration concerns were pointed out by French citizens, highlighting their difficulties in becoming fully integrated into society, and demonstrated the lasting phenomenon of migration for family reunification. This movement was clearly anchored in the public debate and required an answer. As a consequence, the theme of integration started to be dealt with within immigration laws in 2003, around the concept of ‘Republican Integration’ and the word ‘integration’ appeared in the title of immigration laws adopted in 2006 and 2007. From an institutional point of view, the political sensitivity of migration issues and the political will to give them an important place within

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4 On this text, see Julien-Laferrière 2000: 26–27.
5 This movement was summarised by a Member of Parliament who stated, in 2006, ‘Il ne se passe pas une semaine sans que l’intégration ne soit, sous une forme ou sous une autre, au centre de l’actualité dans notre pays, et que la France ne s’interroge sur l’échec supposé de son modèle d’intégration’, Mariani, T., *Rapport d’information sur les politiques d’intégration des migrants dans l’Union européenne*, Rapport n° 3502, Assemblée nationale, 6 December 2006, 150 p., esp. 11.
6 Loi n° 2006-911 du 24 juillet 2006 relative à l’immigration et à l’intégration, NOR: INTX 0600037, *Journal Officiel de la République française*, 25 juillet 2006 [this can be changed on each occasion, including the date].