

WOMEN OF MAGHREBI ORIGINS' CONSTRUCTIONS OF WELL-  
BEING IN FRANCE: A FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

SOPHIE BERTEAU

U1320478

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the study is to explore how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being in France, by adopting a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA).

In the first chapter, a critical review of the literature is offered, which highlights how ethnic minorities' well-being is produced. Constructions of Muslim/Maghrebi women as depicted in society and literature and analysed through a poststructuralist perspective. To understand the conditions of possibility out of which these constructions have emerged, the social, cultural and political context is presented. A brief historicity of migration from the Maghreb is outlined.

A moderate social constructionist epistemological position was adopted throughout this thesis in order to allow for the exploration of the constructed nature of well-being. In line with FDA, discourses and subject positions taken up and resisted by women of Maghrebi origins are identified and described. Implications for subjectivity and practices are presented. Processes of subjectification and technologies of the self are attended to.

The study then presents the analysis which made use of semi-structured interviews to explore how eight women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being. The transcripts were analysed using FDA. This research identified that women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being in three main ways. They produced well-being by positioning themselves within western knowledges. Simultaneously, they made sense of well-being by drawing upon Maghrebi/Islamic traditions. And lastly, well-being was generated by amalgamating both western and Maghrebi/Western discourses. Women of Maghrebi origins equally created coping strategies to enhance well-being. In this sense, multifaceted ways of constructing well-being co-exist.

This research recommends that counselling psychology should be exported to France in order to encourage the development of more pluralistic and intercultural approaches.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION/LITERATURE REVIEW**

“Superiority? Inferiority? Why not simply try to touch the other, feel the other, discover each other?”

— Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Waves of human migrations from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco to France have been traced to the onset of the 20th century and continue to unfold to the present day (Touati, 2012). The geographical proximity and the French colonisation of the region (frequently referred to as the Maghreb) are considered contributing factors. It is estimated that approximately 4.1 million Muslim people live in France (6% of the population) (*L’Observatoire de la laïcité*, 2019), most of whom migrated from the Maghreb (Hussey, 2015). The literature suggests that more than half of them are women. This study pertains to second, third and fourth-generation women of Maghrebi origins, that is women born in France whose parents or great/grand-parents migrated from the Maghreb.

The aim of this research is to understand how women of Maghrebi origins living in France construct well-being in a country where their cultural heritage can be problematised. The dominant discourses of assimilation, contemporary secularism, universalism and neo-colonialism offer subject positions from which the woman of Maghrebi origins is required to silence her cultural background. Although these subject positions can be resisted, the constructions of the Maghrebi/Muslim woman as Other inherent to these discourses will undoubtedly have implications for subjectivity and practices. For some scholars such as Scott (2018), dominant discourses are imbued with anti-Islamic stances. Other academics have emphasised the prevalence of the discourse of Islamophobia across a wide range of social spheres (Geisser, 2003; Plenel, 2016), including intellectual, political, artistic and public, wherein Islam is constructed as a threat to the secular Republic (Roy, 2005; Asad, 2006; Harrison, 2018). While the increased visibility of Islam (i.e. the wearing of the veil, street prayers, the display of halal products etc.) has affected the practises of both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, the main problem is how the majority views Islam (Göle, 2015). Although certain scholars such as Said (1975) suggested that the problematisation of Islam is not a new phenomenon, others have identified more recent historical specificities. For example, Baubérot (2005) and Göle (2015) argued that the conditions of possibility out of which negative constructions of Islam have emerged can be traced back to 1989. Both sociologists asserted that from 1989 to 2004, a number of incidents occurred in state schools when young women were asked to remove their headscarf but refused to comply.

The first incident to receive considerable media coverage was in September 1989 - seven months after the Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa* calling for the death of the British writer Salman Rushdie following the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. Both Baubérot and Göle posited that these events contributed to the construction of Islam as a 'radical' religion, which violates the principles of freedom of speech and gender equality. The passing of the 2004 law (Law No. 2004-22 of Mar) which bans the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in state schools (such as the Islamic veil for example) ensued. This situation might exemplify the point of application of power in a process whereby "complex differential power relations extend to every aspect of our social, cultural and political lives" (Sarup, 1993, p.8). For Foucault, relations of force operate within an apparatus (defined by Sarup (1993, p. 65) as "a structure of heterogeneous elements such as discourses, laws, institutions"). Importantly, for Killian (2006), women are the prime 'victims' of the passing of such laws. Additionally, in the wake of the 2015 Paris attacks, Islamophobic actions have increased (Plenel, 2016); especially towards women (*Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme* (2019)).

Yet, importantly, while religion is situated in the foreground, other pressing issues have receded into the background. Thus, issues pertaining to social and economic conditions and the effects of migration, racism and postcolonialism have not been given priority (Jansen, 2013). Placing greater emphasis on religion rather than poverty or discrimination is a practice that is taking place despite statistics showing structural inequalities. For example, inequalities based on 'race' were evidenced in the latest report published in July 2019 by *L'Observatoire de la laïcité* (the government's advisory council on issues pertaining to secularism). In the report, the Muslim population was highlighted as being amongst the most disadvantaged socio-professional categories. Yet, the status quo remains despite an abundance of literature outlining the detrimental effects of discriminatory practices and poverty on well-being (Tribe & Bell, 2017). In other words, it appears that not only are women of Maghrebi origins more likely to be affected by poverty than their white counterparts, they face discourses which have the potential to oppress. Additionally, other forms of discrimination have been outlined in the literature in relation to women of Maghrebi origins.

Within the discourses of intersectionality and Muslim feminism, women of Maghrebi origins are positioned as being required to face a double oppression: as a woman within a gender-based traditional Maghrebi discourse and as the Other in western discourses (Freedman & Tarr, 2000; Ali, 2012).

Despite the complex social, economic, political, and cultural context that women of Maghrebi origins live in, they have, until recently, been underrepresented in literature (Killian, 2006). As regards contemporary literature, there is a paucity of studies specifically addressing women of Maghrebi origins' psychological well-being (Killian, 2006; Delphy, 2008; Giuliani, Tagliabue & Regalia, 2018). Rather, contemporary studies tend to focus on whether this group has successfully 'integrated' or not. Additionally, present-day studies have been critiqued for providing an account of women of Maghrebi origins' experiences exclusively in relation to stereotypical issues such as the wearing of the veil. By contrast, the aim of this study is to explore how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being. It must be noted that this study is neither a review nor a genealogy of well-being. Instead, the focus is on how women of Maghrebi origins make sense of well-being in the context of contemporary France. As such, this study has striven not to impose any pre-conceived ideas about what well-being means. For the reader to understand how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being, the context will be highlighted throughout this research. Furthermore, the importance of the context is emphasised by counselling psychology and Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA).

This study is informed by Foucauldian principles. Thus, one of the aims of this thesis is to identify and describe the discourses invoked by women of Maghrebi origins when constructing well-being, alongside implications for practices. However, it would seem pertinent to first briefly outline Foucault's understanding of well-being. Within poststructuralism, subjects are described as produced within discourses, and not outside discourses (Hall and Du Gay, 2006). Thus, poststructuralists are not interested in "discovering" individual differences or pre-social realities which might reside inside us. The practices of knowing oneself in order to combat feelings of ill-being advocated by some psychological discourses were rejected by Foucault. Foucault explained that when the subject endorses the idea that he/she has discovered some truths previously hidden inside himself/ herself is when power has been exercised over his/her body (Rutter, 2012). Instead, in his lectures, Foucault constructed well-being and health in relation to the process of governmentality, namely Biopolitics, which refers to the distant control of population within disciplinary societies. Here, biopolitical modes regulate the conducts of the population in relation to birth, mortality rates, sexual practices etc. In this context, the development of health and human sciences were encouraged so that human practices and subjectivities could be measured and implicitly controlled (Wright, 2013). In this sense, power, which is immanent in all relations, is constructed as productive rather than repressive. For Foucault (1975), power and knowledge are intertwined. "The Birth of Biopolitics" emerged out of industrialisation, a period where human beings were disciplined to maximise economic

productivity (Wright, 2013). At present, neoliberalism underpins Western democracies, whereby the self is produced as autonomous and responsible for his/her practices, including the good management of his/her health and well-being (Rose, 1990). Neoliberal societies strive to limit state interventions whilst encouraging the development of the self as enterprise (McNay, 2008). Within this context, the neoliberal subject ought to manage his/her well-being efficiently (with the help of psychological interventions if necessary). The effects of neoliberalism on the subjectivities and practices of women of Maghrebi origins will be explored.

The identification and description of discourses invoked by women of Maghrebi origins will allow for the delineation of culturally available ways of constructing lived experiences (Kitzinger, 2004). In this sense, the discursive resources available to women of Maghrebi “facilitate and limit, enable and constrain” (Willig, 2012, p.130) what they can say and do. In parallel, their experiences will also be coloured by the way in which they are positioned within available discourses. Additionally, this study will explore what fragments of discourses have been internalised by this population through a process of subjectification (that is, the making of subjects). To understand how this process unfolds, technologies of the self and technologies of power will be examined (see methodology chapter for details).

This study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter outlines how the Muslim/Maghrebi population and especially women have been portrayed in the literature, with particular emphasis on well-being. Chapter two describes the methodological approach used. Chapter three presents the analysis of the interviews conducted with eight women of Maghrebi origins. Finally, chapter four discusses the findings pertaining to the analysis through a critical lens. In this last section, implications for counselling psychology, limitations and recommendations for future research will also be explored, alongside reflexivity.

In the following section, comments on the language used will first be provided, followed by information on the literature search. Since it has proved difficult to locate studies which have specifically addressed women of Maghrebi origins' well-being, the population criteria were expanded. As such, the subsequent section will outline how the Muslim population's well-being has been depicted in literature. As this study is informed by Foucauldian principles, a poststructuralist critique of these studies will also be provided. Next, the reader shall be introduced to how women of Maghrebi origins are represented within literature from a feminist perspective. This section will be followed by a brief history of migration to gain an understanding of the circumstances under which migration became problematised. For the reader to understand how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being, the context will be highlighted. This section will be followed by a description of the values underpinning the

discipline of counselling psychology and the rationale for the study. Finally, the research question will be presented.

### **1.1. Language**

The language used in this thesis is aligned with the chosen methodology (FDA), its underlying epistemological position, the discipline of counselling psychology, and the participants' recommendations.

Throughout the study, the group studied shall be referred to as 'women of Maghrebi origins'. While a participant reported being unable to identify with the description 'French woman of Maghrebi origins', another objected to the word 'origin' and preferred to be recognised as 'French woman whose parents are of Maghrebi origins'. Others opted for a dual identity such as 'French Moroccan woman' for example. Thus, although not ideal, 'woman of Maghrebi origins' emerged as the most neutral description. This population can also be referred to as 'Muslim' or as 'French of Muslim confession of faith' in the literature. I will avoid the use of such designations since not all women of Maghrebi origins identify with the Muslim faith. None of the participants objected to being referred to as 'woman'.

The concept of 'well-being' has been constructed by academics in a multitude of ways over thousands of years. Rather than providing a genealogy of this notion, this study will focus on how participants construct well-being and how literature has constituted ethnic minorities' well-being.

The language used in the study will be tentative in order to reflect FDA's moderate social constructionist epistemological stance and counselling psychology's pluralistic approach. Specifically, I, as the researcher, do not position myself as a detached and objective observer, whose aim is to discover one sole existing reality. The current account, influenced by my own subjectivity, constitutes one narrative amongst a multitude. The development of this narrative was grounded in literature. A succinct description of the literature search will be provided next.

### **1.2. Literature search**

Several sites were used in order to gather literary material: UEL library's generic search engine, PsychINFO, Scopus, and Google Scholars.

The following terms were included in the advanced searches:

- Well-being AND immigration
- Women AND migration AND France
- Well-being AND immigration AND France
- Women's well-being AND immigration AND France
- Mental health AND immigration AND France
- Women's well-being AND immigration AND Europe
- Therapy AND immigrant women
- Counselling psychology AND immigrants

Articles and books were also searched for on French websites including Googlescholars.fr and purchased following advertisement on sites such as oumma.com and mediapart.com. French bookstores in France and London provided further literary material. Having thoroughly searched for studies pertaining to how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being, several studies were selected for their insights and relevance. These will be outlined and critiqued in the following sections.

### **1.3. Constructions of Ethnic Minorities' Well-Being in Literature**

Since it proved difficult to locate studies pertaining specifically to women of Maghrebi origins' constructions of well-being, this section will address both men and women's well-being. This 'gap' is significant in that it demonstrates that women of Maghrebi origins are exclusively given importance in relation to stereotypical issues, and that their well-being is not explored comprehensively. The silencing of the accounts of 'unproblematic' women of Maghrebi origins is a great loss to society. Indeed, their narratives would not only enrich society, they would contribute to the development of a pluralistic framework which could inform clinical practice within counselling psychology in the near future. Firstly, this section will address well-being within decoloniality. Thus, the similarities between the positioning of the 'colonised' and the inhabitants of the *banlieues* will be outlined whilst exploring how the Muslim population has been problematised. Secondly, the tensions between the discourses of poststructuralism and decoloniality will be briefly delineated. In the third part of this section, a contemporary alternative to decoloniality discourse will be provided. The last part of this section will critically explore the constructions of the Muslim population's well-being in a quantitative research.

#### 1.3.1. Locating Ethnic Minorities within Decoloniality Discourse



- *Colonisation and Neo-Colonisation within Postcolonial and Decolonial Discourses*

The devastating effects of Western colonisation and neo-colonisation on the native population and migrants living in Europe have been exposed by numerous discourses including decoloniality and postcolonialism. This section will delineate some of the features inherent to decoloniality and postcolonialism in order to situate prevalent constructions of native population and immigrants. Colonisation has been described by Fanon (1961, p.28) as the violent “exploitation of the native by the settler”, whose values have subsumed the ways of life of the native population. By constructing the traditions of the “indigenous” population as inferior to Western customs, the natives have simultaneously been positioned as “evil” (Fanon, 1961, p. 32). Neocolonialism has been defined as “the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies” (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998, p.1242). Both decoloniality and postcolonialism oppose colonialism and neo-colonialism, and advocate for the recognition of the rights and voices of native people and migrants. Unsurprisingly, both discourses have considerably changed over time, and do not constitute monolithic blocks. Divergent perspectives have co-existed within the discourse of postcolonialism (Nash, Kerr-Koch and Hackett, 2013) which will not be delineated in this thesis since the focus is not solely on this discourse. Instead, the differences between the discourses of decoloniality and postcolonialism will be briefly outlined. Whereas postcolonialism is underpinned by Western rationality and secularism (Nash et al., 2013), decoloniality discourse refuses to be grounded in European Enlightenment (such as Marxism and liberalism for example) (Mignolo, 2013). To be precise, one of the aims of decoloniality is to “delink” from Western knowledges in order to adopt local knowledges which have been disqualified through colonisation/neo-colonisation (Mignolo, 2013). In other words, unlike decoloniality, postcolonialism does not construct modernity as synonymous with violence (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). To conclude, the discourses of decoloniality and postcoloniality both strive to redress past imbalances resulting from the hegemony of the discourses of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Additionally, both discourses draw parallels between the status of the natives, migrants living in Europe and the inhabitants of the “Third World”. However, unlike postcolonialism, decoloniality refuses to espouse Western hegemonic constructions. Decoloniality is frequently drawn upon when exploring the lived experiences of migrants living in Europe.

- *A Brief Description of Decoloniality Discourse and How it Positions Population of Non-White Descent*

A decolonial discourse is frequently invoked to highlight similarities between the positioning of the “colonised” and the residents of the *banlieues* (*banlieues* refer to purpose-built housing usually erected on the outskirts of cities). A brief description of the discourse of decoloniality will be provided, alongside a succinct explanation as to how the Maghrebi population is positioned within this discourse. The decoloniality discourse, which emerged mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century from “Third World” countries, is concerned with “economic justice” and “global equality” (Mignolo, 2013, p.131). Put simply, this discourse strives to “delink” from all hegemonic European knowledges (Mignolo, 2013, p.133). Although European knowledges emerged locally (in Europe), their globalisation resulted in the subsumption of other local ways of making sense of the world. Within decoloniality discourse, pervasive European/American constructions are produced as only relating to the experiences of the dominants, and fail to recognise the lived experiences of the “Others”. The aim is for the “Others” to draw upon local histories so that their embodied experiences and memories can be narrated in a way that reflects their reality. Mignolo highlights that the “Other” is a purely discursive practice with no ontological foundation. This concept is reminiscent of Said’s *Orientalism*, in which a description of how the Orientals constructed the Orient is presented. For Mignolo, the “Others”, who are positioned as inferior by the dominants, represent individuals whose language is not part of the Euro-American complex, as well as migrants living in Europe/US. This is why Mignolo (2013, p.132) insisted on the existence of a connection between the “Third World” and an “immigrant consciousness”. Within the discourse of decoloniality, there are only three ways a migrant living in Europe/US can respond to his/her positioning as inferior: to assimilate, to accept his/her position as inferior in fortitude, or to “delink”. For Mignolo, “delinking” involves migrants resisting drawing upon dominant discourses. Such constructions, situated within decoloniality discourse, are available in France.

For example, Houria Bouteldja’s party *Les Indigènes de la République* (the Indigenous of the Republic) draws upon a decoloniality discourse - “Indigenous” refers to the term employed during the colonial era to designate the native population. For Bouteldja (2012), colonisation has not yet ended since prevailing discourses in France and former colonies continue to be informed by white cultural and ideological constructions. Importantly, Bouteldja argued that “les Indigènes de la République”, that is individuals of non-European descent living in France, are coerced into negating their cultural heritage to adopt white normative values. For the political activist and scholar, not only is migrants’ culture of origin (including Islam) denigrated, but this population is oppressed. The analysis presented in this thesis does not

fully support this narrative. Although the majority of the participants (all women of Maghrebi origins) presented Islam as a religion which is misunderstood (by most Westerners as well as fundamentalists) and disparaged (by dominant Western discourses), most resisted the position of “oppressed”. So, whereas discourses have the potential to oppress, most participants did not describe their subjectivity and practices as oppressed. In conclusion, by creating a connection between the positioning of the native population of former colonies and migrants living in Europe, decoloniality exposes continuous forms of inequalities. Both groups are positioned as oppressed, which is a position that was resisted by some participants during interviews. To be precise, the women of Maghrebi origins who participated in this study did not constitute a homogenous category. This aside, decoloniality provides insight into the different ways the Maghrebi/ Muslim population is problematised.

- *The Problematisation of the Maghrebi/Muslim Population, Well-Being and Potential Solutions*

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon specified how, under French colonial domination, North African towns were divided into two distinct zones: one occupied by the settlers, the other inhabited by the natives. Whereas the former was described as spacious and pleasant, and offering abundance, the latter was cramped, and living conditions were appalling (Fanon, 1961). For the scholar, both were strictly separated from each other and the possibility of disrupting the social order by a native, for example, living in the zone occupied by the settlers was inconceivable. This material reality has been re-emphasised by some contemporary researchers in order to outline continuous structural forms of inequality between France’s majority and its ethnic minorities. These will be delineated in the below section since power relations impact on well-being.

For Tarr (2005), the current spatial and social separation of minorities from the majority is reminiscent of France’s colonial past. As unequal power relationships are recreated, poverty remains a reality (high rates of unemployment are recorded) and police blunders punctuate daily life (Tarr, 2005). This material reality undoubtedly impacts on one’s well-being. Indeed, multiple studies have demonstrated that discrimination and poverty have detrimental effects on well-being (Tribe and Bell, 2017). Whilst poverty affects well-being, one’s positioning as inferior also has implications on subjectivity and practices. To be precise, the Muslim population has been problematised within both colonial and neo-colonial discourses (that is, contemporary and dominant French discourses). The positioning of the native population as inferior during the colonial era has been extensively researched. For Said (1978) the West created an imperialist and racist knowledge of the Orient to deal with its Otherness.

Specifically, secularism was put forward as evidence of enlightenment, progress, and the superiority of Western civilisation through a contrast with its religious Other, namely the Muslim population (Scott, 2018). Through this process, the Orientals were not only positioned as incapable of knowing themselves but also as a threat to Western civilisation (Said, 1978). According to Said, the Orientalists' prejudiced representations of Muslims stem from their fears of witnessing an Arabic domination of the world. Regardless of the reasons behind such negative constructions, colonialism and neo-colonialism have had enduring effects on the well-being of the Muslim population.

Indeed, the ruling of the Orient by the west resulted in the Muslim subject losing his/her "philosophy and religion" (Said, 1978, p.270). Similarly, Fanon described the effects of colonialism as having devastating outcomes on the psychological well-being of the colonised, mainly due to his/her loss of cultural identity. Hussey (2015) maintained that the lack of a sense of identity experienced by the native population has been transposed to the inhabitants of the *banlieues*, whom he portrayed as feeling alienated and angry. Similarly, Houria Bouteldja (2012) drew upon decoloniality discourse to stress that immigrants residing in France are oppressed by a neo-colonial system which oppressed previous generations. The scholar nonetheless delineated some distinctions between the positioning of the colonial subject under French ruling and the person of non-white descent living in France. For example, instead of explicitly positioning the natives as inferior, contemporary dominant discourses position migrants who have assimilated as successful (Bouteldja, 2012). In other words, individuals of non-white descent who have not assimilated to Republican norms are problematised. Furthermore, studies which have compared the constructions of Muslim women in colonial times and present days outline some striking similarities. According to Mahmood (2005), the positioning of Muslim women in colonial times as victims of patriarchal Islam from which they needed rescuing still prevails within contemporary Western democracies. Again, Islam is problematised. In brief, similarly to the colonial era, present day hegemony of Western discourses results in the relegation and/or negation of non-white constructions. This has led to conflicts between some people of Maghrebi descent and institutions representing the République.

According to Hussey (2015), the ongoing confrontations between the police and the inhabitants of the *banlieues*, and the terrorist attacks of 2013 and 2015 are a continuation of France's unresolved colonial past. Academics such as Plenel (2016) have argued that by acknowledging its oppressive colonial past, France could establish more harmonious relationships with younger generations of Maghrebi descent. In summary, within decoloniality discourse, the Muslim/Maghrebi population is positioned as having been relegated to a subordinate position throughout the colonial area up to the present day. Such

negative constructions of a whole population alongside unequal power relations and poverty will undoubtedly have detrimental effects on women of Maghrebi origins' well-being. This is of particular interest to counselling psychology as the discipline seeks to minimise distress by addressing multiple factors. Furthermore, counselling psychology advocates for social justice (Tribe *et al.*, 2017) and thus the redistribution of power, wealth and opportunities. Specifically situated within decoloniality discourse, certain scholars, such as Lemaire, suggest that a deconstruction of the colonial discourse must materialise. Until then, similarly to their ancestors, today's youth of Maghrebi origins will continue to construct their sense of identity as alien. In the following section, a poststructuralist critique of decolonial discourse in relation to how the Maghrebi population constructs well-being shall be provided.

### 1.3.2. A Poststructuralist Critique of Hussey's Decolonial Account, and the Relations between Islam and Decoloniality

Hussey's *The French Intifada* provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of the youth of the *banlieues*. Hussey's research is located within decolonial discourse and specifically focuses on this population and not individuals of Maghrebi origins who might reside outside the *banlieues*. This section will briefly delineate some of the findings in *The French Intifada* whilst offering a critical analysis through poststructuralism and feminism. Hussey's comprehensive study offers an understanding of local and subjugated knowledges, whilst advocating for social change. This is congruent with Foucauldian principles in that it is only possible to redress power imbalances by inducing social changes at a local level (Sarup, 1993). Hussey (2015) emphasised that social structural problems of inequality result in the continuous difficulties experienced by youth of Maghrebi origins from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Muslim population is therefore not positioned as responsible for the status quo on account of individual psychological problems. In this sense, Hussey does not invoke neoliberal discourse, which would constitute a subject position from which the Muslim inhabitant would have to bear responsibilities for not being an autonomous and responsible individual (Rose, 1990). Importantly, the young person of Maghrebi origins' awareness of this material reality creates feelings of anger. Additionally, by drawing upon discourse of decoloniality, the person of Maghrebi origins draws parallels between his status and that of previous generations who were positioned as "indigenous". It seems that the young person of Maghrebi origins solely occupies the positioning of "angry young man seeking revenge". It could be argued that whilst poststructuralism offers multiple perspectives, decoloniality provides "truths". This fixed and unique positioning might be necessary for political actions. Unless such "truths" are established and subjects are fixed, it might be extremely difficult to

change the status quo. In contrast, a poststructuralist approach would understand the construction of identification as a process which is in constant mutation and never complete (Hall et al., 2006). Additionally, one might argue that this unique and fixed way of positioning young Muslim people of Maghrebi descent is somehow essentialist and deterministic (although Hussey's study stresses that subjects are created within discourses). It seems that the subject has no choice but to occupy the subject position of "angry young man". This construction contradicts poststructuralist thinking in that subjects always have the possibility of resisting occupying certain positions.

Interestingly, Hussey's construction of a homogenous group differs from the main hypothesis presented in this thesis. Indeed, in this thesis, women of Maghrebi origins are produced as constituting a heterogenous group, whose practices and subjectivity vary whilst being in constant mutation. This allows for the formation of a space to share multiple perspectives (including subjugated ones). However, by offering homogeneity, Hussey is taking a more critical approach. This perspective might be more likely to prompt political and ideological changes. Yet, disconcertingly, Hussey did not provide any gender-based differentiations. Indeed, no distinctions were made about how dominant discourses and material reality might affect men and women differently despite literature suggesting that women's experiences differ from those of men amongst first and second generations of Maghrebi origins (Tarr, 2005; Ali, 2012, United Nation, A/59/287). In conclusion, Hussey's comprehensive study draws upon decoloniality to position young Muslim inhabitants of the *banlieues* in a homogenous way (angry). In line with decoloniality, a connection is created between how the natives of former colonies described their lived experiences with those of migrants living in France. Whilst poststructuralism offers multiple perspectives and decoloniality a more critical approach, the two discourses do not exclude each other. Decoloniality and postcolonialism can also be critical of Islam.

- *Islam within Postcolonial and Decoloniality Discourses*

Women of Maghrebi origins frequently drew upon an Islamic discourse to construct their well-being. It would therefore seem pertinent to locate Islamic discourse within postcolonial and decoloniality discourses. Interestingly, there have been much debates within both decolonial and postcolonial discourses in relation to Islam. For example, whereas decoloniality discourse specifically advocates for "delinking" from Western knowledges, Islam is not constructed as a viable alternative because of Islamism (Mignolo, 2016). As for postcolonialism, some scholars within this discourse have also relegated Islam (Nash et al., 2014). Despite postcolonialism's combat to give a voice to individuals from former colonies,

it has been critiqued for being grounded in Western secularism and failing to represent the struggles of Muslims in the West (Nash et al., 2014). In conclusion, it appears that tensions exist between Islamic discourses and postcolonialism and decoloniality. A discourse distinct to decoloniality will be presented in the following section.

### 1.3.3. An Alternative Discourse to Decoloniality Discourse

Unlike decolonial discourse, Roy (2005) depicted the Maghrebi population as having achieved a secure sense of identity and enhanced well-being.

According to Roy (2005), the inhabitants of the *banlieues* who have experienced a rupture with French society are not representative of the Muslim majority. In other words, acts of radicalisation attract considerable media coverage whereas successful integration, a social reality, is scarcely mentioned (Roy, 2015). For the political scientist specialised in Islam, a significant number of Muslims have deserted the *banlieues* and joined the ranks of the middle-class (this new social category can sometimes be labelled 'bourgeoisie' - in reference to bourgeoisie, but where the slang term '*beur*' refers to the children of North African immigrants). This population has allegedly gained economic and social mobility and claims its adherence to both republican and Islamic values. This process, Roy maintains, enables this population to construct a secure sense of identity. This suggests that social and economic gains have a considerable impact on one's sense of identity and well-being. Similarly, Touati (2012) has argued that the economic and social realities of younger generations of Maghrebi women differ from those experienced by their mothers. For example, younger generations are depicted in literature as having fewer children, educated and in employment - despite earning less than their French counterparts (Touati, 2012).

For Roy, the majority of the Maghrebi population has achieved economic stability as well as a secured sense of identity by amalgamating both French and Maghrebi traditions. This process, Roy argues, leads to an enhanced sense of well-being. Unlike Roy, the following quantitative study asserts that well-being is not a material reality for the Muslim population of Europe.

#### 1.3.4. Constructions of Ethnic Minorities' Well-Being through the Lens of Quantitative Research

The effects of migration on well-being will be examined through a quantitative study informed by Berry's (1997) model of acculturation (Willig (2012) recommended including quantitative research for an array of perspectives). Giuliani *et al.*'s (2018) study explored how the current European context affects Muslim inhabitants' mental health. Similar recent research specific to the French context did not seem available.

Berry's model defines acculturation as the process by which migrants adapt to the host majority's culture. This process affects the well-being of migrants and their children (Berry, 1997). The model takes into account different criteria: the migrant's 'attitudes' towards his/her cultural heritage and towards the dominant culture, as well as the constructions of ethnic minorities available within the host society (Goforth, Oka, Leong & Denis, 2014). Berry's model asserts that societies in which migrants are able to combine both their cultural heritage and dominant culture will experience greater psychological well-being (Stuart, Ward, & Adam, 2010). The successful amalgamation of both cultures is referred to as "integrationism". An integrationist acculturation orientation is preferred over assimilationism by the Maghrebi population ( Bourhis, Barrett, Personnaz & Personnaz, 2004).

Inspired by Berry's model, Giuliani *et al.*, (2018) analysed the well-being of first and second-generation Italian Muslims. Unsurprisingly, the authors deplored the paucity of research addressing European Muslims' well-being. This recent study is of particular interest as it explored the impact of the broader social context, depicted as rife with Islamophobia, on well-being. Giuliani *et al.*, have argued that European Muslims rarely achieve a hybrid identity; that is, a sense of identity based on the successful amalgamation of their cultural heritage with the dominant culture. Moreover, perceived discrimination was found to lead to higher rates of depression and a stronger sense of affiliation to religion amongst the second-generation. A weaker sense of identification as a 'national' ensues. From a poststructuralist perspective, this study, although insightful, contains flaws.

Whereas, according to the authors, Europe (including the UK) is characterised by Islamophobic sentiment, the United States is accommodating. This view seems highly questionable considering the abundance of literature that suggests the existence of discriminatory practices towards Muslim Americans (Lajevardi & Oskooii, 2018).

Unfortunately, the authors' biases are left unexplored. Reflexivity (the process of exploring how a researcher's subjectivity impacts on the knowledge that is produced) is not encouraged in quantitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Most quantitative studies are



underpinned by a realist ontological position and adopt a postpositivist epistemological position, wherein subjective influences are removed as much as possible (see chapter on methodology for more details). Moreover, it could be argued that the participants' individual voices are lost and that Muslim immigrants are constructed as a homogenous group. Put simply, diversity and nuances are missing. So, not only is it impossible to differentiate between accounts but it seems that all Muslim Italians have taken up the subject position of 'victims'. The possibility of resisting this positioning is not acknowledged. The coping strategies (if any) adopted by Muslim Italians at a local level are not depicted either. Consequently, the opportunity to use techniques devised by Muslim migrants when working with minorities in therapeutic settings is lost. Such omissions contravene counselling psychology's intercultural approach (Tribe *et al.*, 2017).

In summary, some quantitative studies equate the development of a hybrid identity with well-being. However, for the authors, forging a hybrid identity is a difficult enterprise for European Muslims, especially given the rise of Islamophobia. Conversely, Roy argues that most French Muslims, whose integration is going apace, have achieved financial and emotional stability and forged a secure sense of identity. In stark contrast, the postcolonial discourse draws parallels between the positioning of the 'colonised' and *banlieues* residents to stress feelings of alienation. The next section will describe how women negotiate their sense of identity.

#### **1.4. Negotiating a New Sense of Identity and Constructing Well-Being: a Feminist Perspective**

Having outlined some constructions available in the literature in relation to the Maghrebi population's well-being, the study will now examine how women of Maghrebi origins negotiate their sense of identity and construct well-being from a feminist perspective.

##### 1.4.1. Intersectionality

Within intersectionality discourse, women of Maghrebi origins are positioned as standing at the intersection of a double oppression. While they are positioned as Others within French society, they are also located in an Arabo-Berber-Islamic gender system based on patriarchal values (Freedman *et al.*, 2000; Tarr, 2005). However, this population is frequently described in literature as having made cultural and psychological adjustments to cope with demands of both Maghrebi and Western discourses.

Fadela Amara (2003, p.146), a woman of Maghrebi origins, and the founder of *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* (Neither Whores Nor Doormats), asserted that women of Maghrebi origins are

stuck in a position where they have to fight both male domination within Maghrebi culture and exclusion from mainstream French society by being shut away in *banlieues* “dominated by poverty and exclusion”. Research suggests that there exist multiple issues second-generation women must face within Maghrebi discourse, including “male authority, female virtue, the segregation of the sexes and arranged marriage” (Freedman, 2000, p.6). Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco (2002) have argued that male adolescents enjoy more freedom than their female counterparts and that girls are the only ones required to perform house chores. However, women of Maghrebi origins do not constitute a homogenous group and sub-categories based on socio-economic status, parents’ place of origin and visions of Islam for example have implications for subjectivity and practices. Most importantly, Freedman et al., (2000) warned against making assumptions about the status of these women and positioning them as victims. In other words, although the discourses (both western and Maghrebi) have the potential to oppress, women of Maghrebi origins might resist taking up the subject position of oppressed. To be precise, literature suggests that second and third-generation women are taking part in a variety of projects. Thus, they are described as involved in public debate on integration and equality whilst being politically and civically active by, for example, creating associations to help other women (Wihtol de Wenden, 1998). Their attempts at combining their cultural heritage (i.e. traditional family demands) and their new roles within French society (i.e. writers, entrepreneurs, social workers, researchers etc. (Tarr, 2005)) are constructed as mostly successful (Wihtol de wenden, 1998). Put differently, these women are depicted as aspiring to the freedoms enjoyed by their white counterparts whilst striving to retain a link with their cultural heritage and family (Tarr, 2005; Flanquart, 2003). By making day-to-day adjustments and implementing strategies based on compromises and negotiations, women of Maghrebi origins are in the process of successfully forging new inter-cultural identities encompassing aspects of both Maghrebi and French cultures (Freedman et al., 2000; Wihtol de Wenden, 1998). It appears that most have taken up the enviable subject position of having the possibility of making sense of the world by drawing upon multiple discourses and using different languages. However, others are positioned as belonging to neither French culture nor Maghrebi culture Tarr (2005). Unfortunately, the implications of experiencing a split identity for subjectivity and practices are not explored into any great depth in the literature. Tarr (2005, p. 8) only briefly described feelings of “anguish and pain” associated with the phenomenon. Other limitations include a lack of explicit reflections on how successful negotiations impact well-being. Similarly, psychological adjustments are not detailed. Thus, these studies (mainly conducted by sociologists) could not inform best practice in therapeutic settings. When working within a CBT framework, for example, the therapist cannot draw on such research as the interconnections of thoughts and somatic sensations, behaviour and emotions are not

delineated. This 'gap' might reflect an ethnocentric approach within psychology in France. Unsurprisingly, counselling psychology is not recognised either.

In contrast, Tarr (2005) argued that the constitution of a hybrid identity engenders many benefits. From a poststructuralist perspective the deployment of a hybrid identity is discursively possible. However, dominant discourses and institutions might hinder the circulation of inter-cultural identities, especially assimilation and universalism wherein differences are constructed as a threat to the Republic's unity. Citing Barlet, Freedman et al., (2000) suggested that France continues to expect its postcolonial Others to fully assimilate and adopt dominant ways of being in the world and that the construction of diversity as an enriching experience is unlikely. Conversely, Qribi (2017) asserted that younger generations are able to negotiate a hybrid identity (next section).

Whereas some women of Maghrebi origins are depicted as successfully negotiating both cultures, others can be left feeling as if they do not belong anywhere. The following two sections will explore recent studies pertaining to how women of Maghrebi origins negotiate their sense of identity. It seems that in recent years, Islam has attracted more attention.

#### 1.4.2. Combining Islam and Alleged Republican Principles

According to Qribi's (2017) qualitative research, drawing upon several cultural discourses enables the development of an enhanced sense of creativity amongst younger women of Maghrebi origins. Similarly, it is by invoking multiple cultural repertoires that these young women create their sense of identity. Qribi outlined how this population successfully amalgamates values learnt at school (such as equality and freedom) with their religious and cultural heritage. This process can, for example, involve redefining Islamic concepts through an egalitarian and emancipated lens. However, Qribi equally highlighted the coercive effects of institutional power on how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being. Specifically, institutional power is presented as engendering personal tensions for having to conform to dominant cultural norms. Additionally, the pluralistic creativity with which these women construct their ways-of-being in the world encourages social change as well as the development of diversity-oriented institutions (Qribi, 2017).

Although some younger women might position themselves as coerced into drawing upon dominant discourses, they have nonetheless taken up the subject position of having the ability to combine religious beliefs with egalitarian values. Islamic feminists engage in a similar process.

### 1.4.3. Locating Islamic “Feminisms”

Although Muslim women’s difficulties vary depending on numerous factors (i.e. geographical, cultural etc.), most face similar forms of gender discrimination (i.e. violence, discriminatory laws, inability to access to political and economic resources) (Barlas, 2012). Whilst discussions relating to women’s rights and gender equality have always been held within Islamic traditions (Seedat, 2013), the more contemporary discourses labeled Islamic “feminism” emerged in the 1990’s (Kynsilehto, 2008). The term “feminism” has been passionately contested at times and some Muslim women scholars have strongly objected to being positioned as such (see section xxx for details). This debate aside, all Islamic “feminists” claim they fight for women’s rights and gender equality whilst drawing upon an Islamic discourse (Badran, 2012). Before describing Islamic “feminism” it might be helpful to, first of all, broadly define Islam and feminism from an Islamic perspective. The following *hadith* (“... the term hadith has acquired in Islamic literature the very specific meaning of reports about what the Prophet said, did, approved, and disapproved of, explicitly or implicitly”, in Qur’an Studies) reported in *Sahih* Muslim 8 by Umar ibn al-Khattab explains Islam as follow: “Islam is to testify there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, to establish prayer, to give charity, to fast the month of Ramadan, and to perform pilgrimage to the House if a way is possible”. For Zakiyah Munir (2003) peace, salvation and justice are values which are inextricably linked to Islam, whose followers must aim at internalising. Feminism has been defined by Al- Hakim (2005, p.92) as follow: “feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged in comparison to men and that this oppression is illegitimate or unjustified”. For Saied Reza Ameli (2005) feminism also entails the practice of liberating women and protecting their rights. Ziba Mir-Hosseini (2004) argued that since a multitude of varied and ever-changing versions of Islamic “feminisms” co-exist, it is difficult to provide a specific definition of the discourse. However, Badran (cited in AlJazzera by Fawcett) defines Islamic “feminisms” as “... a feminist discourse and practice that derives its understanding and mandate from the Qur’an, seeking rights and justice within the framework of gender equality for women and men in the totality of their existence. Islamic feminism explicates the idea of gender equality as part and parcel of the Quranic notion of equality of all insan (human beings) and calls for the implementation of gender equality in the state, civil institutions, and everyday life.” Although this discourse has been marginalised within both dominant Western discourses and more traditional and orthodox Islamic traditions, it is gaining prominence. Women of Maghrebi origins living in France frequently drew upon Islamic “feminist” discourses during interviews. It could be argued that it allowed them to amalgamate their religious beliefs and certain practices which could be deemed more Western (see analysis for details). Badran

(2012) supports this point by describing women of Maghrebi origins as frequently feeling trapped between the dominant values of the country they live in and Islamic traditions; and that Islamic “feminisms” offer a way out of this binary impasse. However, since the primary language of Islamic “feminisms” is English, women of Maghrebi origins might struggle to access these discourses. Zahra Ali (2012) pointed out that her book comprising a collection of texts on Islamic feminisms is the first of this kind to be published in French. This aside, rather than offering a comprehensive description of Islamic feminisms, this section will attempt to delineate and situate contemporary Islamic “feminist” discourses. It will outline the conditions of possibility out of which Islamic “feminisms” emerged, and the different constructions available within these discourses.

#### 1.4.3.1. Opposing the Constitution of a Monolithic Islamic Discourse

Although the construction of Islam as a multifaceted and dynamic discourse might not prevail, it is nonetheless a representation which has been previously delineated. The production of Islam as a unitary discourse has been vehemently critiqued by Said (1978). In *Orientalism*, Said denounced the Orientalists’ production of Islam, the Arabs and the Orient as a monolithic and static block. Orientalists can be defined as Western scholars, artists, and writers, whose understanding and depiction of the Orient was generated through ethnocentric lenses. Said argued that the process of constructing Islam as a unitary form (unlike any other religion) resulted in the creation of generalisations about this religion. Thus, Islam became synonymous with totalitarianism, women’s oppression, ignorance, and backwardness and has been positioned as inferior to hegemonic Western discourses (Scott, 2018). Simultaneously, the Orient and Islam became entities to be feared and to be dominated (Said, 1978). For Lamrabet (2012), Orientalism, colonisation and current geopolitical relations are all contributing factors to the formation of stereotypical representations of Muslim women. Typically, within dominant Western discourses, Muslim women are positioned as passive victims (Hamidi, 2012; Scharff, 2011; Scott, 2018). Zahra Ali (2012) argued that these fixed and essentialist representations encumber the development of Islamic “feminisms”. Similarly to Islamic discourses, multiple Islamic “feminist” discourses co-exist (see below section for an overview of Islamic “feminisms”). This material reality is emphasised by Lamrabet, who insists that Muslim women live in distinct geographical locations (i.e. Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Europe etc.) and in different cultural environments. Consequently, their status, roles, aspirations and needs are not homogenous.

#### 1.4.3.2. Positioning of Women within Islamic Traditions and Muslim Scholars' Discontent

- Um Salama

Examining a sample of Islamic literature on gender relations (“feminist” and non-“feminist”), it became apparent that discontent with the status of women is not a new discursive construction. Disaffection with the positioning of women in Muslim traditions arose whilst the Prophet was still alive (Ali, 2012). For example, Um Salama, who was married to the Prophet, questioned why the Revelation solely addressed men in an explicit way. Zahra Ali (2012) explained that Um Salama’s inquiry was answered through the revelation of two verses (verse 195, chapter 3, and verse 35, chapter 33):

*Verse (3:195) The Family of Imran:*

*And their Lord responded to them, "Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another. So those who emigrated or were evicted from their homes or were harmed in My cause or fought or were killed - I will surely remove from them their misdeeds, and I will surely admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow as reward from Allah, and Allah has with Him the best reward." (Translation from Sahih International)*

*Verse (33:35) The Combined Forces:*

*Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward." (Translation from Sahih International)*

Despite the existence of verses redressing past imbalances, it seems that discontent continued and possibly increased. Some dissidents argued that women enjoyed greater rights whilst the Prophet was alive (Ali, 2012). According to Zahra Ali (2012) many Muslim women contested hegemonic Islamic discourses, which they constructed as patriarchal and in direct opposition to the Prophetic way of life (*Sunna*). Other reformists include Al-Afgani.

- Al-Afghani

Some men scholars also opposed Islamic jurisprudence (*al-fiqh*), which constitutes an ensemble of laws deduced from the Qur'an and the Sunna by male jurists in a specific social and cultural context (Ali, 2012). Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), for example, has been frequently hailed as such a "reformist". Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (aka Al-Afghani) was an Islamic ideologist and a political activist, whose aim was to end British domination and to promote a more authentic understanding of Islam (Keddie, 1968). Although Al-Afghani did not specifically address women's rights, he is frequently quoted as a 19<sup>th</sup> century reformist who fought against a rigid and traditionalist understanding of Islam. Al-Afghani's aim was to improve the lived experiences of Muslims (Munir, 2003). Munir established a dichotomy between Al-Afghani's dynamic and liberating Islam and Islamic fundamentalist discourses underpinned by a rigid understanding of Islamic family law, which subjugates women and imposes severe restrictions on them. As such, Al-Afghani was very critical of traditional *ulama* (religious scholars). Keddie (1968) suggested that Al-Afghani favoured an approach by which Islam would be modernised by partly incorporating Western scientific principles into it. Similarly, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), one of Al-Afghani's disciples, insisted that Muslims could only improve their living conditions by examining the Qur'an through the discourses of reason and rationality (Ameli, 2005). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Al-Afghani's efforts to incorporate Western ideologies into Islamic discourses were praised by the Orientalist Ernest Renan. Yet, importantly, Al-Afghani simultaneously promulgated a non-orthodox understanding of Islam, entailing a re-reading of the Sources (Qur'an and *Sunna*) (Ali, 2012). This would involve circumventing a more orthodox discourse drawn upon by the traditional *ulama*. Al-Afghani argued that for this process to unfold, the use of the Islamic tool *ijtihad* was necessary (Munir, 2003). Ali (2012) defined *ijtihad* as a process which requires an intellectual effort in order to elaborate laws based on Islamic sources (the Qur'an and *Sunna*) within a specific context. *Ijtihad* had previously been employed by the traditional *ulama* to develop a patriarchal understanding of the Sources (referred to as "knowledge" or "*fiqh*"). In other words, Al-Afghani favoured a return to the essence of the Qur'an and *Sunna* (Ali, 2012). Understanding Al-Afghani's work is crucial as it informed other reformist movements including Islamic "feminisms".

- Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Muslim Feminists

Another key figure in the development of alternative discursive resources is the Lebanese Nazira Zayn ad-Din, who published *Removing the Veil and Veiling* in 1928. Similarly to other Islamic "feminists", Nazira Zayn ad-Din explored women's rights within Islamic discourses (Ameli, 2005). Nazira Zayn ad-Din argued against the jurists' (*ulama*) understandings of the

sacred texts in relation to veiling and women's seclusion, which she strongly opposed (Kassab, 2013). Having studied the Qur'an and the Hadiths, Nazira Zayn ad-Din maintained that the jurists' interpretations were in direct contradictions to the sacred texts. Additionally, the scholar also highlighted that the co-existence of multiple constructions in relation to veiling and seclusion demonstrated their invalidity. As a result, Nazira Zayn ad-Din encouraged women to return to the sources of the Qur'an by studying the sacred texts themselves (Kassab, 2013). So, unlike most Western feminists, Muslim women who fought for gender equality did not necessarily draw upon secular discourses. Importantly, a return to the religious could demonstrate an anti-colonial and national stance amidst growing opposition to Western domination. Referring to the work of Leila Ahmed, Zahra Ali (2012) explained that the use of religious signifiers such as the wearing of the veil formed a way of denouncing social injustice whilst rejecting Western ideals. For Barlas (2012), the wearing of the veil can be associated with a desire to reclaim one's identity whilst reinforcing one's difference to Western hegemony during the colonial era. Interestingly, the scholar argued that in this sense, Western colonisation consolidated certain pre-Islamic practices which she constructs as discriminatory. Paradoxically, Western powers frequently drew upon Western feminist discourses to justify their enterprise. For Scott (2018), Western powers used principles inherent to Western feminism to justify their occupation: one of the aims of the *mission civilisatrice* was to liberate Muslim women from patriarchal Islam. Mir-Hosseini (2004) explained that during this period, women whose concerns related to women's rights could not draw upon Western feminist discourses for fear of being positioned as dissidents to anti-colonial and nationalist discourses (Western feminist discourses were commonly equated with the colonial project). In parallel, nationalist and anti-colonial discourses did not necessarily provide an answer to their quest for gender equality (Mir-Hosseini, 2004). To conclude, 20<sup>th</sup> century Islamic feminisms objected to Western ideals as the only way of becoming emancipated whilst also questioning traditional and patriarchal understandings of religious texts and the marginalisation of women figures in Islamic history (Ali, 2012). With independence from Western powers and a growing number of women attending university, Muslim women began to vehemently oppose traditional orthodox discourses (Ali, 2012). Out of this context, contemporary Islamic "feminisms" emerged. The term has, however, resulted in vigorous academic discussions.

#### 1.4.3.3. Debate around the Label "Islamic Feminism"

There have been heated debates between researchers who have opted for Muslim women's equality work to be labelled Islamic "feminism" and those who opposed this term (Seedat,



2013). The reasons will be succinctly delineated below in order to situate Islamic “feminism” in relation to Western hegemonies. Certain Islamic “feminist” scholars such as Kausar explicitly oppose their gender equality work to be located within a feminist framework. Within this Islamic discourse, feminism is constructed as inextricably incompatible with Muslim women’s emancipation since it is antithetical to Islam (Hamidi, 2012). Others have been less critical of the term feminism. For example, whereas Badran promoted the use of the term “Islamic feminism” to describe Muslim women’s equality work, Barlas objected to the convergence of Islam and feminism as Islamic feminism. Badran (2012) clarified that although the term “feminism” was coined in Western Europe, it is not essentially Western and it is certainly not a monolithic and fixed discourse. Rather, according to the scholar, “feminism” has been employed by women from various continents as a means to successfully reach multiple and distinct goals. Furthermore, for Badran, the term Islamic “feminism” allows for the development of one common language between all Muslim feminists (Seedat, 2013). By contrast, Barlas (2012) objected to the amalgamation of Islam and feminism into the label “Islamic feminism”. This disapproval is characterised by Barlas’ (2012) construction of Muslim women’s emancipation as needing neither Western ideals nor secular feminism. Instead, the teachings of the Qur’an are generated as sufficient for the establishment of gender equality.

Similarly to Barlas, Seedat (2013) objected to the labelling of Muslim women’s equality combat as Islamic “feminisms”. For Seedat the construct feminism is inextricably linked to European intellectual discourses and fails to value differences (equality can only be achieved once distinct perspectives are valued). Here, Seedat is referring to both second- and third-wave Western feminisms despite the latter’s attempt at recognising women’s differences (including ethnic and religious ones). So, as this project failed and differences remained unacknowledged (Seedat, 2013), Western feminist discourses continued to homogenise women’s differences. From a poststructuralist perspective, this process could be understood as a form of disciplinary power whereby all subjects must strive to attain a standard norm, namely the norm of the dominants. For this reason, some Islamic “feminist” scholars rejected the label Islamic “feminism”. Moreover, the word feminism is inextricably linked to Western/secular feminism by some scholars. Western feminisms are frequently produced as secular discourses which construct all religions as purveyors of gender inequalities as seen in Ameli’s *Feminist Expectations and the Response of Muslim Women*. Scott (2018) outlined that within Western societies, Islam is specifically and disproportionately constructed as patriarchal. Thus, from a certain Islamic “feminist” perspective, Western feminism is unable to facilitate Muslim women’s emancipation. Instead, for most Islamic “feminists”, gender equality can only be attained through authentic readings of the Qur’an.

Additionally, for Seedat and others, the term feminism is essentially synonymous with the colonial project, and its neocolonial forms. For example, the so-called “war on terror” and its alleged liberation of Muslim women through the implementation of “liberal democratization policies” in Muslim-majority nations have been described as leading to instability and a lack of autonomy in the region (Seedat, 2013, p.33). For these reasons (and others), some Islamic “feminists” have disapproved of their combat for gender equality to being termed Islamic “feminism”. This has resulted in some Islamic “feminists” such as Wadud resisting neocolonial feminist hegemonies, but adopting feminist methods to conduct their work (Seedat, 2013). In summary, whereas some Islamic “feminist” scholars have embraced the label Islamic “feminisms”, others have rejected it since it is constructed as a Western concept. Their main objection relates to the failure of Western feminism to recognise the heterogeneities of women’s struggles and to be continuously underpinned by Eurocentric and colonial/neo-colonial principles. A brief description of Islamic “feminisms” will be provided in the next section.

#### 1.4.3.4. Islamic “feminisms”

Islamic “feminism” is a discourse which mainly circulates amongst the realms of academia. Its proponents argue that misrepresentations of the Qur’an in relation to women’s status prevail in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Although the colonial enterprise has been partly hailed responsible for the situation, most Islamic “feminists” blame Muslim male scholars for the prevalence of patriarchal understandings of the Qur’an and the Sunna. These erroneous constructions have affected the lives of many Muslim women, whose status has been considered precarious (Lamrabet, 2012). The work of Islamic “feminists” involves redressing past imbalances. However, the positioning of women and the methods advocated to combat injustice vary greatly within the discourses of Islamic “feminism”. Thus, it seems more appropriate to talk about Islamic “feminisms” rather than a monolithic discourse. This section will present a succinct description of the main Islamic “feminist” discourses together with their relevance to the lived experiences of women of Maghrebi origins in France.

Islamic “feminists” draw upon an Islamic discourse to combat the positioning of women as inferior to men in Muslim societies (Lamrabet, 2012) with the view to ending gender-based discriminations (Ali, 2012). For most Islamic “feminists”, the Qur’an is inherently anti-patriarchal and promotes gender equality. Barlas (2012) explained that the Divine discourse has been erroneously constructed in a patriarchal way, which contradicts the authentic features of the Qur’an. In this sense, the *fiqh* does not reflect the legitimate message within

the sacred texts, and must be understood as a social construction that ought to be challenged (Lamrabet, 2012; Barlas, 2012). By using some of the methods employed in social sciences and anthropology, new readings of the Qur'an can be presented (Ali, 2012) underpinned by social justice. It must be noted that this specific discourse differs from a more traditionalist Islamic "feminist" discourse in the way gender roles are constructed for example.

A more traditionalist Islamic "feminist" discourse would argue that men and women are spiritually equal, but biologically different (Ali, 2012). Although men and women are assigned different roles, both must be treated in an egalitarian way (Ali, 2012). This discourse places great emphasis on the construction that women, by inhabiting an Islamic discourse, occupy a respected position (Ameli, 2005). In this sense, men and women complement each other, which allows for the development of a unified and balanced family unit (a necessary component for a contented society) (Araki, 2005). By contrast, Lamrabet insisted that this exegesis contradicts the Qur'an's promulgation of women's rights. Whilst biological differences are acknowledged in the Qur'an, these do not entail specific normative practices (Barlas, 2012). Gender roles are therefore constructed by some Islamic feminists as un-Islamic. For example, Wadud (1999) maintained that, in the Qur'an, men and women are both positioned as human beings with equal potentials. Interestingly, during interviews, some women of Maghrebi origins expressed resentments at having been positioned as "dutiful daughters". These subject positions were described as warranting particular gender-based practices such as performing house chores and remaining indoors (i.e. Cyan and Yasmina), unlike their brothers. It could be hypothesised that unlike their own mothers, certain second- and third-generation Maghrebi women resisted these subject positions by drawing upon an Islamic "feminist" discourse. For some participants this led to family conflicts. Importantly, some participants explained that they would not confine their daughter to traditional gender-based roles. Hamidi (2012) acknowledged this change by stressing that amongst second-generation Muslim women living in Western democracies, fewer are positioned in relation to their roles as daughters, wives etc. Instead, Hamidi noted that Muslim women were increasingly positioned as individuals. However, in some instances it seems that current Islamic "feminisms" are unable to provide viable solutions to women of Maghrebi origins. For example Cyan (pseudonym) described how she vehemently contested her mother's unequal share of their father's inheritance on account of gender differences. Cyan explained that despite her protests, her brother inherited more than she did, which further strained her relationship with her mother. Barlas (2012) justified the reasons as to why men inherit more than women by outlining the context whereby men are usually positioned as the financial providers. However, in this instance, it could be argued that this

perspective offers limited relief to forms of gender inequality faced by women in modern societies. To conclude, whereas Islamic “feminisms” can help women of Maghrebi origins resist being placed into specific subject positions (i.e. daughter, mother etc.) other constructions fail to provide an answer to a sense of injustice. For Lamrabet, whereas Muslim women have been assigned specific duties and obligations, Muslim men have been allocated rights. One way of combatting those is to explore the contexts.

- *Exploring the Context*

Barlas (2012) explained that anti-Islamic and patriarchal readings of the Qur’an emerged out of specific contexts by using particular methods. For the scholar, these unauthentic constructions were produced in patriarchal societies, by using conservative means adopted by men during the middle Ages, with the help of the State. Thus, the process of replacing patriarchal interpretations by new and authentic (and therefore egalitarian) readings of the Qur’an must entail an exploration of the context in which ancient representations were developed (Barlas, 2012). Only then, will the authentic messages of the Qur’an circulate. Similarly, in order to end injustice, Ziba Mir-Hosseini argues that a distinction must be made between the Shari’a (“the “path” found in the Qur’an and the Prophet’s practice”) and an obsolete *fiqh* (zibamirhosseini.com). Yet, whereas Barlas constructs the Qur’an as inherently anti-patriarchal, Hidayatullah does not.

- *Going Beyond the Text and Emphasising Allah’s Attributes*

Instead, Hidayatullah invites the reader to go “beyond” the text to seek justice (Hidayatullah cited in Seedat, 2016, p.141). It seems that in this context, the reader’s experience of what is considered ethical and what is not is produced as decisive. Here, the emphasis is on the reader’s experience. By generating Islam as a discursive object, it seems that Hidayatullah strives to produce Islam as a religion which is constantly evolving. Thus, Hidayatullah constructs the Qur’an as a discursive object, which is “becoming” (Seedat, 2016, p.142). For Barlas, this way of understanding the sacred texts is no longer religious but secular instead (comments to which Hidayatullah objected). This debate can be understood in relation to verse 4, chapter 34 (numerous translations exist).

*Verse (4:34) The Women:*

*Men are the protectors and maintainers of women<sup>56</sup> because Allah has made one of them excel over the other,<sup>57</sup> and because they spend out of their possessions (to support them). Thus righteous women are obedient and guard the rights of men in their absence under Allah’s protection.<sup>58</sup> As for women of whom you fear rebellion, admonish them, and remain*

*apart from them in beds, and beat them.<sup>59</sup> Then if they obey you, do not seek ways to harm them. Allah is Exalted, Great. (Translation from: Islamic Foundation UK)*

Unlike Hidayatullah, Wadud (cited in Barlas, 2012) analyses the different meanings of the term “protectors”, “absence”, and “rebellion” in the Arabic language to emphasise that “protection” solely relates to finances and that this verse does not justify abuse. Other texts explicitly construct gender and ethnic equality as a way of life:

*Verse (49:13) The Dwellings:*

*O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted (Sahih International)*

Other ways of constructing Islam as anti-discriminatory involves studying the qualities attributed to Allah. Such is the work of Barlas, whom, by studying His “Unity”, argues that His power cannot be shared and that consequently men (fathers, husbands etc.) should not be positioned as mediators between women and God. In this sense, men do not have any power over women (Barlas, 2012). In conclusion, multiple constructions of the Qur’an co-exist within the discourses of Islamic “feminism”, which are dynamic and multifaceted. Although Islamic “feminist” discourses are often silenced by both Western traditions and Orthodox Muslim discourses, these discourses are nonetheless gaining prominence amongst the Muslim diaspora. These discursive resources can undoubtedly offer a much needed way of combining Western values and Islamic principles to some women of Maghrebi origins living in France. It might be especially important to this population since Islam is so highly stigmatised in France (Geisser, 2013; Plenel, 2016). In other words, Islamic “feminisms” can enable women of Maghrebi origins realise their potential whilst retaining their spiritual and religious affiliations. Within Islamic “feminisms”, women are encouraged to study, work and actively participate in the development of a society in which human beings enjoy greater equalities and social justice (Hamidi, 2012). For Hamidi women themselves contribute to the development of the positive changes which are unfolding. Islamic “feminisms” are increasingly informing the lived experiences of women of Maghrebi origins who are gradually objecting to traditional constructions of Islam ((Göle, 2015). This analysis echoes these perspectives. Although the women of Maghrebi origins who participated in this study do not constitute a homogenous group, some frequently drew upon Islamic “feminist” discourses to construct well-being (see the analysis for details). Having outlined some of the discursive resources available to women of Maghrebi origins, the next section will provide a very succinct history of migration from the Maghreb to France.

### 1.5. Immigration from the Maghreb to France: a History

Repetitive and salient waves of human migration from North Africa to France have been traced to the onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sayad, 2006). Four main phases have been identified in literature. For Sayad, the Algerian-born sociologist based in Paris, the first phase relates to a period beginning in 1920 and ending in 1939. The second phase occurred between 1945 and 1962. This year marked the end of the Algerian War of Independence from France and Algeria. The onset of the third phase is situated in 1974 following the passing of several pieces of legislation, which led to the feminisation of migration and settled migration (Sayad, 2006; Touati, 2012). The last phase, beginning in 1990 is characterised by women pursuing employment and academic opportunities (Touati, 2012). While various ways of constructing migrants emerged throughout each phase, new immigration policies were implemented. In the next sections, all phases will be described (except the latest one), alongside the effects of structural constraints. The latest phase (beginning in 1990) will not be explored since it is outside the scope of this study. To be precise, more recent women migrants were not born in France and encounter difficulties which differ from those of second-, third- and fourth-generation women of Maghrebi origins born in France (sometimes due to their illegal status for instance). Finally, a poststructuralist perspective will be presented.

It must be noted that this section has been largely inspired by Sayad's qualitative research into the lives of male Maghrebi migrants since, significantly, there is little research relating to Maghrebi women. Similarly to most of his counterparts, Sayad scarcely explored the lived experiences of women (Killian, 2006; Wihtol de Wenden, 1998). It could be considered that the paucity of research in relation to Maghrebi women reflects a wider lack of societal interest. Nevertheless, emphasis was placed on sociological studies for several reasons. Firstly, the sociologist provided a non-ethnocentric perspective. This aspect seems important since research pertaining to ethnic minorities is still conducted through an ethnocentric lens (Qribi (2017) citing Belhandouz (2005)). Additionally, incorporating an intercultural stance is essential when conducting research in counselling psychology (Tribe *et al.*, 2017). Secondly, exploring how first migrants were positioned can enable researchers to understand the continuous tensions occurring in deprived areas (Hussey, 2015). Highlighting social structural problems of 'race' inequalities is in line with FDA in that it is concerned with issues such as power relations and social change (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). Thirdly, Sayad's historicity of migrations is congruent with Foucault's genealogy, whose aim is to deconstruct historical 'realities' in order to provide alternative discourses. Finally, although Sayad's research was directed at migrants born in the Maghreb, their experiences will certainly affect

their children through a process of “transgenerational scripts” (Byng-Hall, 1995, p.33). Script theory suggests that patterns of interaction from previous generations are transferred to present interactions (Byng-Hall, 1995).

#### 1.5.1. The First Two Phases (1920-1974): Immigration as Temporary

Migrating was constructed as the only way out of poverty. This practice, characterised by a sense of temporality, came to be considered as ‘natural’ (Sayad, 1998) and involved men primarily (Freedman et al., 2000; Touati, 2012). Through a process of subjectification, migrants themselves contributed to the constitution of their stay and therefore status as transient since they claimed that their aim was to return to their country of origin. The discursive object “immigrant in transit” was equally perpetuated by the French majority. During the post-war reconstruction period, France capitalised on the option of using cheap temporary manual labour to boost its economy. According to Sayad (2006), migrants were solely allowed to reside in France on the basis of their subjugation to labour. Institutions such as *L’Office national d’immigration* were created (in November 1945 in this case) to control this process. The construction ‘immigrant in transit’ permeated all spheres of society by being simultaneously promulgated by institutions and individuals alike. However, the positioning of migrants as inextricably linked to labour and therefore in transit impacted on multiple areas of their life (Sayad, 2006, p. 50).

#### 1.5.2. Forms of Structural Inequalities and Implications for Well-Being

The hegemony of the construction ‘Maghrebi workers in transit’ affected migrants’ obligations, status, and rights and, in turn, living conditions and well-being (Sayad, 2006). Nowadays, these social structural problems of inequality are often invoked by younger generations (see section 1.3.1).

For Sayad, the fact that France, as a country of immigration, stood in a powerful position inevitably influenced the power relations between the majority and the immigrant population. Additionally, the construction of migration as temporary hindered the possibility of positioning migrants as nationals. Positioning migrants as foreign and Others instead served to justify discriminatory practises and structured forms of inequalities (Sayad, 2006). For Sayad, the socio-political context, combined with the practice of migrating engendered a sense of guilt, anguish and homesickness. Literature has evidenced that poverty and discrimination have an adverse effect on mental health (Saraceno & Barbui, 1997). Similarly, the possibility of being expelled created feelings of fear (Sayad, 2006). Sayad argued that migrants were

coerced into entering selected low-paid professions, while residing in designated accommodation, separated from the host majority (it could be argued that such spatial and social separations were reactivated with the erection of estates situated on the outskirts of cities, namely *banlieues*). Thus, most Maghrebis lived in appalling conditions in slums, shantytowns or hostels specifically designed for migrant workers (*foyers*) (Cohen, 2014). Hostels can be seen as an exemplar of discriminatory practices. Hostels were specifically erected within the vicinity of factories to provide accommodation and 'education' to migrant workers, who, according to Sayad (2006, p.122), were frequently placed in the position of "children", incapable of adhering to rules. Such positioning allowed for the development of restrictive and dehumanising policies such as the "no visitor policy" in hostels. It could be considered that disciplinary power was decidedly exercised onto migrant workers residing in hostels by closely monitoring, governing and therefore "normalising" their conduct. Against this background, the sociologist constructed the practice of migrating as a source of pain.

In brief, for Sayad, discriminatory practices were justified by dominant discourses by positioning Maghrebi migrant workers as temporary and therefore Others. However, this subject position was to be subsumed into one of fathers/husbands, whose stay would become permanent (Sayad, 2006). This process unravelled with the migration of Maghrebi women (Freedman *et al.*, 2000). Nonetheless, despite allegedly acquiring a permanent status, migrants continued to be positioned as Others (Sayad, 2006). In parallel, the presence of men and women migrants became increasingly problematised (Sayad, 2006). The next section gives a brief account of how women migration led to permanent migration.

### 1.5.3. The Feminisation of Migration or the Construction of Migration as Permanent

Although the migration of Maghrebi women led to permanent settlement, equality between migrants and the majority was not attained (Sayad, 2006). This material reality is depicted in the modest body of literature addressing this topic. It could be considered that the paucity of research pertaining to Maghrebi women and their daughters reflects a wider lack of interest.

Despite a lack of statistics (Touati, 2012) research ascertains that the arrivals of women rose sharply following the passing of the 1974 family reunification law (Cohen, 2014). The law, which was passed despite the Government's attempts at nullifying it, allowed women from North Africa to join their husbands working in France (Freedman *et al.*, 2000). Research suggests that Maghrebi women's aim in migrating was to join their husbands and live a better life (Freedman *et al.*, 2000) with the view to settling in France. Thenceforth, migration became constructed as permanent. For Sayad (2006), the settlement of families and the visibility of the elderly and children led to the depiction of migration as increasingly



problematic since it was deemed less beneficial. Indeed, this construction directly contradicts the very purpose of immigration, whereby gains must outweigh costs (Sayad, 2006). Within dominant discourses, the positioning of Maghrebi women as mothers and procreative validated the construction of migrant women as not only a threat to national identity, but a financial burden (Freedman *et al.*, 2000). Such negative representations led to the passing of the Pasqua and Debré laws in 1986/1993 and 1997 respectively, in order to limit the rights of residence of certain migrants (Freedman *et al.*, 2000). In this sense, it could be argued that women migrants' well-being was relegated to the background and that the alleged interest of the majority took precedence. The paucity of records pertaining to Maghrebi women could be constructed as a reflection of this trend. Given these conditions, it seems unsurprising that there has been a dearth of research exploring the lived experiences of Maghrebi women (Killian, 2006), let alone their well-being. The depiction of their status as precarious (i.e. illiterate, with limited command of French, and no professional qualifications) (Wihtol de Wenden, 1998) in the few available studies did not seem to bring about change. Furthermore, the allocation of permanent residency does not necessarily guarantee equality of treatment (Scott, 2018). This notion is exemplified in the continual confinement of Maghrebi families into purpose-built housing (*banlieues*), separated physically and culturally from the French majority (Hussey, 2015). For Hussey (2015, p. 10), *banlieues* represent 'Otherness', in the sense that this particular geographical space contains "the exclu[ded]", "the repressed", and "the fearful and despised". The homogenous positioning of the Maghrebi population as 'victims' will be critically explored in section 1-3-3. Although Sayad's studies provide invaluable insights into the lived experiences of migrants of Maghrebi heritage, it seems that this population is constructed as occupying one subject position. It could be argued that there is no scope for the development of a dynamic and intercultural way of constructing a sense of identity. This monocultural way of constructing identity will undoubtedly have implication on well-being. In the next section, the construction of identities as monocultural will be critiqued from a poststructuralist perspective.

#### 1.5.4. The Construction of a Sense of Identity as Rigid: a Poststructuralist Critique

For Sayad, migration was synonymous with being uprooted and belonging nowhere. The effects of these constructions will be explored.

From a poststructuralist perspective, the positioning of migrants as torn "in-between two societies" and "two cultures" (Sayad, 2006, p.158, p.162, translation mine) could be deemed unhelpful. Such notions might contribute to the circulation of an 'either/or' discursive impasse, in which migrants are required to choose between two cultures, instead of a

'both/and' world of possibilities. The sociologist insisted that integration into the country of residence entails dis-integration from the country of emigration. Sayad produced bicultural identities as antitheses to human condition. These constructions stand in stark contrast to poststructuralist ideas in that they postulate the existence of pre-social, inherent, and defining human characteristics and coerce migrants into adopting a fixed sense of identity. Poststructuralist thinking, by contrast, emphasises the continually changing aspect of social life and refutes the notion of the existence of universal features (Gergen, 1973). Instead, subjects are presented as a product of power relations (Sarup, 1993) and identities as fluid and dynamic. An alternative discourse to 'identity as unicultural' will be outlined in section 1-4-2. In brief, while Sayad constructs identity as unitary, a poststructuralist approach advocates for the generation of this notion as ever changing and encompassing multiple cultures.

In summary, this section attempted to provide a history of migration from the Maghreb to France. Although temporary migration developed into settled migration with the arrival of Maghrebi women, literature suggests that equalities of rights and treatment were not attained. Providing a history of migration whilst highlighting the subject positions offered to migrants allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the current broader context and the contemporary constructions of women of Maghrebi origins within it. In order to understand how this population construct well-being, it is necessary to focus on the broader context. Thus, the following section will outline the current context.

## **1.6. The Current Context**

Article 1 of the French constitution reads as follows: 'France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs [...]' (constituteproject.org, 2008, p.3).

Foucault emphasised the necessity of studying the economic, social and cultural context in which individuals are located. He maintained that the subject's practices are found in his/her culture, social group and power relations and not exclusively through technologies of the self (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The dominant discourses of secularism, assimilation, universalism and republicanism will be briefly outlined below alongside their inherent constructions of Islam and Muslim/Maghrebi women.

### **1.6.1. Contemporary Secularism, Assimilation, Universalism and Republicanism**

Discourses of secularism (*laïcité*) and assimilation permeate all public institutions ( Bourhis *et al.*, 2004). Contemporary constructions of secularism and assimilation have led to the implementation of policies which have had a direct impact on the subjectivity and practices of some women of Maghrebi origins.

Göle (2015, p.37), citing Baubérot (2004), explained that the strength of secularism lies in its ability to establish a political system in which all individuals can live together (*'un vivre ensemble'*). Secularism discourse is constituted by four fundamental rules: the separation of church and state, public authorities' neutrality towards all beliefs, freedom of conscience and equality of rights (Göle, 2015). However, for Baubérot (2015), secularism has recently been constructed in a way which contradicts some of its original and more tolerant characteristics. For the historian, the current requirement that all individuals must display religious neutrality in public schools should, in fact, only apply to state representatives. Other scholars, unlike Baubérot, have depicted the display of religious symbols by pupils as contravening the principles inherent to secularism (Asad, 2006). For example, for the French feminist philosopher Badinter, 'the headscarf is a terrible symbol of submission', which contravenes the neutrality of public spaces (The Guardian, 2004, February, 1). For Baubérot (2015), this hegemonic misconception of secularism is not only taken at face-value but serves to stigmatise the Muslim population, and legitimate certain practices and policies. Thus, the 2004 and 2010 laws, which respectively banned the display of conspicuous religious symbols in public schools and the wearing of the burqa in public, were implemented. For clarity, it must be noted that in France, the public school is positioned as a key institution, whose role involves the propagation of dominant and contemporary versions of secularism. Asad (2006, p.104) argued that the Republican school strives to transform its pupils, including migrants' children, into a 'secular-subject citizen'. This aside, other justifications for the passing of the 2004 law include the constitution of the ban as providing freedom of choice to women who are forced to wear the veil. Some saw in the signifying veil a symptom of the rise of fundamental Islamism, which had to be stopped (Wing & Nigh Smith, 2006). In contrast, for the sociologist Killian (2006), these policies of exclusion represent a violation of fundamental liberties and confirm the notion that women are often the direct victims of the fear of the Other. Göle (2015) noted that the ban has now been unlawfully extended to other public spheres such as public transport and school outings (for a summary of the situation, see Mediapart. Fr, 2019, May, 24). The Muslim Council constructed secularism as no longer generous but instead repressive, although some Muslim organisations endorsed the 2004 law. Asad (2006) maintained that since power is not equally distributed amongst all religious groups, Muslim subjects face greater constraints when attempting to influence public policy. Additionally, the state's alleged claim to political neutrality towards all religions has been

disputed by some scholars (i.e. Balibar, 2004; Bauberot, 2005). Indeed, it could be argued that institutional power privileges certain versions of reality which support a non-Islamic interpretation of events.

Although much has been written on these highly debated controversies (Asad, 2006; Teeple Hopkins, 2012), little research has been conducted in relation to the well-being of women of Maghrebi origins (Delphy, 2008), their sense of self or sense of power. Low-mood and anguish have been briefly mentioned by Hajjat & Mohammed (2013) and Asad (2006), respectively. Yet, most importantly, it appears that women of Maghrebi origins are only heard when facing stereotypical issues in which they are depicted as subjugated to Islam. In contrast, women who are not directly involved with these controversies appear to receive little attention. The possible silencing of these women and the ensuing lack of knowledge as to how they produce well-being would certainly affect the quality of the therapeutic process when working with them. Vasquez (2007) stressed how important it is for clinicians, especially those who are unlikely to have experienced racial discrimination, to be aware of structural inequalities in order to empathise with clients from ethnic minorities. Such issues would be of particular relevance to counselling psychology as social justice is a fundamental principle underpinning the discipline (Tribe *et al.*, 2017), whose aim (amongst others) is to redress past and present imbalance (Cooper, 2009).

Inherent to the Republican discourse are the ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity. And, since the Republic is constructed as an ensemble of citizens, differences are depicted as a threat to the Republic's cohesion (Tarr, 2005). Within this context, assimilation has gained prominence. Assimilation can be defined as a process which entails the abandonment of one's cultural heritage in order to adopt the majority's cultural repertoire. Consequently, whereas there is little demand on the majority to explore the flaws pertaining to its culture, positioned as superior, the Others must espouse its values (Jansen, 2013). For Plenel (2015), assimilation requires that the Muslim subject not mention his/her religious affiliations. Such dichotomies would most certainly reinforce unequal power relations between the majority and minorities. Specifically, assimilation policies and illusionary republican ideals have been increasingly challenged by various generations of men and women of Maghrebi origins (Wieviorka, 1998; Jennings, 2000; Barrette *et al.*, 2004) often resulting in incidents of violence (Hussey, 2015). Situated within universalism, French moral principles are produced as an *etic* concept in that they transcend all nations regardless of culture, religion, sexual orientation and nationality (Göle, 2015). Sayad (1998) labelled this hegemonic discourse 'ethnocentrism' rather than 'universalism'.

Having briefly outlined the main discursive resources available, the constructions of Islam and especially Muslim/Maghrebi women inherent to these dominant discourses will be explored in the next section.

### 1.6.2. Constructions of Islam and the Muslim Woman within Dominant Discourses: An Intervention Located within Counselling Psychology

Some scholars such as Said have argued that anti-Islamic stances have featured in western discourses since the rise of Islam. Western discourses have equally produced specific constructions of Muslim women which suit western imagination. In the following section, these representations will be highlighted since they have implications for women of Maghrebi origins' subjectivity and practices. Within this context, the reader shall be introduced to some of the principles underpinning counselling psychology. Finally, a poststructuralist perspective will be outlined.

Social constructions of women affect how 'real' women are treated and should be considered when analysing 'real' women (Barlas, 2012) since representations play an important role in the fight for equality (Tarr, 2005). The Muslim woman, Islam, and the Maghrebi population are frequently defined in negative ways, placed in direct opposition to secularism and Western democracy by not only the media and neopopulist parties, but by intellectuals (Rancière, 2010). For example, in their studies into the experiences of women of Maghrebi origins in France, Dakan-Kalev & Marzel (2012) not only constructed this 'group' in a homogenous way, but made biased generalisations. They wrote (p.6): "Education is perceived by girls as the path to escape all that Islamic society forbids: achievement, independence and economic success." Certainly, these colonial and stereotypical representations would not only reinforce the circulation of Islam as oppressive, but could serve to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims by positioning them as Others and therefore inferior. The Republican school, by contrast, is constructed as liberating. Such ethnocentric dichotomies would certainly reinforce western hegemony. Some more inclusive and specific views situated within intersectionality discourse will be outlined in section 1-6-1.

It must be emphasised that it is not my intention to deny that traditional Maghrebi discourses can promote gender inequalities. Rather, as a trainee counselling psychologist, I wonder how women of Maghrebi origins might feel, living in a society where their cultural heritage is not validated and how this might impact on their sense of self-actualisation. Situated within humanistic discourse, counselling psychology emphasises the importance of self-actualisation (Woolfe, 2016). As a trainee counselling psychologist, I would be curious as to how self-actualisation might be constructed within Maghrebi discourses and how clients might or might not amalgamate these constructions with Western discourses. As Tribe *et al.*,

(2017) pointed out, having open discussions with the client about different ways of making sense of the world remains crucial to achieve positive therapeutic outcomes. Importantly, as a both a white trainee counselling psychologist I am encouraged to be aware of both my own privileged position and my biases and how these might affect the therapeutic alliance when working with ethnic minorities. Counselling psychology recommends embracing the pluralistic nature of society whilst ensuring one's practice is empowering and based on high standards of anti-discriminatory practises (BPS, 2005). Additionally, counselling psychologists must be mindful of the effects of dominant discourses and how they maintain the power imbalance. Redressing power imbalances within therapeutic settings might involve inviting the client to decide on the focus of therapy for example (Cooper & McLeod, 2011). In brief, counselling psychology discourse aims at addressing forms of oppression by exploring the personal and the wider socio-political context (Parritt, 2016). To shed light on the current context, some dichotomies will be highlighted below.

Scharff (2011) highlighted the prevalence of a dichotomy between the west as free and liberated and the Muslim world as oppressive and totalitarian. Simultaneously, western women are positioned as self-determining individuals able to pursue their desires whereas Muslim women lack agency, and autonomy (Scott, 2018). Other binary oppositions include the construction of Islam (the inassimilable Other) as sexually repressive and secularism as a purveyor of gender equality. The 'covered' woman can be defined as sexually repressed and inferior (Hamidi, 2012) whilst being simultaneously positioned as a terrorist or a victim of Muslim men, who might be accorded the subject positions of Islamists, sexual predators (i.e. gang rape, polygamy) and controlling (coercion to wear the veil etc.) (Scott, 2018). Positioning the practicing Muslim woman as having achieved a sense of liberation and well-being through Islam does not seem to feature in dominant discourses.

For the 'Foucauldian analysts' Scharff and Scott, the insistence with which Muslim women are positioned as victims of 'Islamic patriarchal oppression' serves to draw attention away from enduring gender/racialised inequalities (see discussion chapter). Scott maintained that such dichotomies are inherent to the clash of civilisation discourse and secularism. However, it could be argued that Scott has omitted the more tolerant features of secularism. For example, certain left-wing political parties invoke secularism to advocate for religious tolerance. Here, Muslim subjects can be positioned as "victims of Islamophobia" (Roy, 2005, p.16), confined to the *banlieues* where poverty is a reality (Amara, 2006).

### **1.7. Locating Counselling Psychology and Rationale**

Whereas much has been written on well-being per se, the exploration of Maghrebi women's well-being in the context of France has not benefited from enough academic scrutiny

(Delphy, 2008). The significance of this 'gap' is examined by exploring past and current studies as well as the broader socio-political context. This dilemma is particularly relevant to counselling psychology as the discipline seeks to understand the individual by addressing the personal level and the socio-political and ideological context in which he/she is located, while moving away from an individualist and pathologising discourse (Parritt, 2016).

Until the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was a paucity of research pertaining to Maghrebi women and their daughters (Teepie Hopkins, 2012). In contemporary literature, second- and third-generation women of Maghrebi origins tend to be afforded the subject positions of 'traditionalist' or 'assimilated' (Killian, 2006). Whereas studies often centre on stereotypical issues such as the veil, or the lack of integration of the Maghrebi population (Asad, 2006), these women's concerns are rarely addressed (Teepie Hopkins, 2012). Thus, it could be considered that literature gives more importance to the concerns expressed by the majority than the views of ethnic minorities. For Geisser (2003), a renowned sociologist, literature is contributing to the circulation of stereotypes and prejudices against Islam throughout all spheres of society. Living in a society in which her cultural heritage is not validated will undoubtedly affect how the woman of Maghrebi origins constructs well-being. However, there is a dearth of research examining the impact of discrimination on well-being in France (Delphy, 2008) despite some studies highlighting the adverse effect of perceived racism on well-being (Fernando, 2014). Another possible limitation of contemporary literature seems to be the lack of integration of research with clinical practice. More specifically, research pertaining to ethnic minorities tends to be grounded in sociology or psychiatry, with an exclusive focus on the wider context or pathologies, respectively. Thus, it is unlikely that the voices of women of Maghrebi origins inform evidence-based psychological interventions. It must be noted that counselling psychology is not recognised in France despite attempts at introducing the discipline (Bernaud, Cohen-Scali and Guichard, 2007). Counselling psychology advocates for social justice by, for example, addressing issues of discrimination with the client in the therapeutic room (Tribe *et al.*, 2017).

Research has repeatedly shown that a fundamental element to any successful therapy is the establishment of a therapeutic alliance. When working with clients from ethnic minorities, the forging of a positive therapeutic alliance implies the psychologist having an understanding of the norms, values and beliefs embedded in that culture (Vasquez, 2007). Promoting a culturally informed therapeutic environment would resonate with some frameworks more than others. Indeed, it could be argued that systemic therapy, with its insistence on the exploration of family and community beliefs would be best suited. However, Parritt (2016) insisted that, regardless of the approach, the counselling psychologist ought to acquaint

himself/herself with the discursive resources available in the client's culture. This process involves constructing differences in a positive and enriching way and represents a move away from ethnocentrism. For Moodley (2009), the history of psychotherapy is underpinned by an ethnocentric, masculine and individualist construction of the world. In contrast, the richness of counselling psychology lies in its ability to construct meanings by drawing upon a variety of cultural discourses. This pluralistic and inter-cultural approach allows for the development of multiple answers to psychological and scientific dilemmas (Cooper *et al.*, 2011). In stark contrast, the Republican discourse would oppose the practice of embracing differences. This aside, the facilitation of an inter-cultural process to empower those whose voices have not been heard (inside and outside the therapeutic environment) entails the development of certain therapeutic skills. For example, the counselling psychologist is encouraged to identify his/her own biases (Vasquez, 2007), explore the personal, political and socio-cultural context and involve the client when choosing the focus of therapy (Parritt, 2016). Most importantly, with any client group, the counselling psychologist must be a self-reflecting practitioner (Woolfe, 2016).

Exploring the 'gap' in literature addressing women of Maghrebi origins' construction of well-being seems particularly relevant considering the existence of potentially oppressive discourses (Tarr, 2005). This dilemma is relevant to counselling psychology in that the discipline advocates for social justice. Moreover, the coping strategies established by this 'group' could inform best practice when working with ethnic/religious minorities in the UK.

### **1.8. Research Question**

This study aimed at addressing a broad question:

- How do women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being?



The next chapter shall provide the reader with an explanation of the methodology used to answer the above listed questions in regards to ethics, recruitment and participants, data collection, interview stages of analysis and reflexivity.

## **CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY**

The discipline of counselling psychology places great emphasis on the therapist's awareness of his/her ontological and epistemological positions together with the ensuing methodology. Indeed, the work of the researcher and/or practitioner will be informed by his/her epistemological position in both clinical and research settings. Harper (2011) explained that certain questions are better addressed using particular methodologies and epistemological positions, and stressed that these must be in congruence.

FDA was used to address the question 'how do women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being'. As such, a moderate social constructionist approach was adopted. Firstly, this section will present the rationale behind the chosen methodology whilst highlighting the social and political context within which the question is situated. Secondly, a brief description of where counselling psychology is located in relation to a theoretical framework will be offered. The research question will also be addressed in relation to a moderate social constructionist approach. And lastly, in the last sections, moderate social constructionism and FDA will be succinctly described.

### **2.1. Rationale**

Taking up the subject position of woman of Maghrebi origins, and possibly Muslim, in a society where her cultural heritage may not be validated (Plenel, 2016) will undoubtedly impact on psychological well-being. As the socially constructed object 'gender' varies considerably between Catholic France and Muslim Maghreb, acculturation and therefore well-being is rendered particularly difficult for Muslim Maghrebi women (Killian, 2006). A dichotomy has been established between Islam as oppressive and secularism/ present-day Western Christianity as liberating (Scott, 2018). In this context, negative constructions of the Muslim woman circulate, which affect their experiences and sense of well-being. In this context, the use of FDA seems particularly relevant since it assumes that there exists a material reality which has real effects on subjectivity. Additionally, the heated debate around the Islamic veil has been depicted by some scholars, including Noiriél, as an evidence of the fear of the Other, which has been enacted on women's body and only serves at further secluding them (Killian, 2006; Jansen, 2013). FDA will be used to analyse the conditions of possibility out of which these constructions emerged as recommended by Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008).

Despite these pressing difficulties, it seems that male immigrants were the sole focus of research, until recently. Killian (2006) acknowledged that although there has been an increase in research exploring second-generation women of Maghrebi origins living in France, they are either constructed as traditionalist or assimilationist. Interestingly, Delphy (2008) posited that one reason for the research gap might be correlated to France's refusal to use systems of classification of ethnicity. Thus, possibly denying the existence of problems relating to racism: "If there is no race, there is no racial problem!" (Delphy, 2008, p.28). For the feminist sociologist, one of the problems is that minority, or Others, often question whether they are being discriminated against or not, which contributes to distress and feelings of humiliation. However, this dilemma has never been addressed by researchers in France (Delphy, 2008). Although the number of studies on discrimination is increasing, the suffering of the victim is still left unexplored (Delphy, 2008). Again, the use of FDA seems particularly applicable here in that it allows for the exploration of groups which have been identified as oppressed including "women and the colonised" (Sauvêtre, 2016, p.82, Le Point References). Having said that, it must be stressed that although discourses have the potential to oppress, women of Maghrebi origins might not position themselves as oppressed or 'victims'. Given the context, it would seem valuable to address how women of Maghrebi origins, when taking up this subject position, construct their experiences, the hybrid spaces they inhabit and what coping strategies, if any, they use to construct well-being.

To address this dilemma, discursive resources must first be highlighted. FDA was considered the most appropriate methodology to identify and describe dominant and subjugated discourses. Since this study pertains to well-being, it seemed relevant to explore how taking up certain subject positions within discourses might affect subjectivity and practices. FDA was also chosen for its emphasis on local knowledges and local struggles (Sarup, 1993). Although not a genealogy, one of the aims of this study is to identify local and disqualified knowledges. This process allows for an understanding of how knowledges are hierarchised and what constitutes 'true' knowledge. As such, mechanisms of power and their functioning will be examined. Specifically, Foucault was interested in how the body, which he constructed as a political reality, is enmeshed in power relations (Sauvêtre, 2016, in Le Point References). In other words, FDA was chosen for its emancipatory features and its emphasis on the political context and power relations. Additionally, FDA seems to be in congruence with counselling psychology, whose aim (amongst others) involves redressing power imbalances (Cooper, 2009). In line with FDA, this study adopted a moderate social constructionist approach.

## 2.2. Locating Counselling Psychology within a Theoretical Framework

One current debate in counselling psychology concerns the approach used by researchers within the discipline, with many arguing against the use of quantitative methods and their associated realist epistemological positions. Realist epistemologies infer that universal and direct knowledge can be attained by collecting and classifying a set of observations about certain phenomena grounded in data (Willig, 2012). Quantitative, 'scientific' research would favour this approach (Gough & Mcfadden, 2001). Searching for a truth is of no interest to qualitative research and counselling psychology, as the latter posits that there is no objective discoverable truth (BPS, 2014). Both adhere to a relativist ontological position, which refutes the existence of a stable reality but embraces a multitude of co-existing subjective realities (Howitt, 2010). Exploring meanings and the processes by which they are constructed by individuals forms the basis of qualitative research (Braun *et al.*, 2013). In light of the above, counselling psychology is a branch of psychology which adheres to principles often distinct from the ones embraced by mainstream psychology. Instead, counselling psychology shares many of the values and goals underpinning critical psychology and qualitative research.

Counselling psychology is a discipline embedded in phenomenological and humanistic values (Cooper, 2009), whose characteristics lie in the notion that all human experiences are subjective as each individual is unique, and will consequently attribute specific meanings to events. These interpretations of events will undoubtedly be influenced by the social, economic and political contexts, whose implications on well-being are of particular interest to counselling psychology (Cooper, 2009). Thus, the construction of distress by clients/participants will be carefully explored whilst examining the historical and cultural contexts rather than 'individual differences'. Moderate social constructionist counselling psychologists would consider the Western concept of an intrinsic self that resides inside as unhelpful and would instead emphasise how one's identity or self was created within particular cultural and historical discourse communities (Hedges, 2005). The context in which the interview/session is conducted will also impact on how meanings are co-created by the participant and the researcher/therapist, whose position is not that of an objective observer. In this sense, the process of reflexivity is a highly valued tool within counselling psychology. Most importantly, counselling psychology strongly advocates for the therapist/researcher to redress past imbalances (Cooper, 2009) by not positioning himself/herself as an expert for example.

### **2.3. Locating the Research Question within a Theoretical Paradigm**

The power relations present in an interview between the participant and the 'knowledgeable' researcher will be reflected upon. Counselling Psychology strives to address social injustice by partly attempting to give oppressed groups a voice; a process often referred to as action research. Consequently, the production of knowledge in counselling psychology and qualitative research is perceived as a dual process involving both the participant and the researcher, allowing for multiple interpretations. In light of the above, a research question addressing how women of Maghrebi origins, when taking up this subject position construct and manage their well-being, would seem pertinent to the discipline. My research question aims to explore which discourses women of Maghrebi origins draw upon in a country where the prevailing cultural norms stem from assimilationist policies (Plenel, 2016) whilst Islam might dominate the private sphere and how these might shape their subjectivity and practices. As the knowledge produced by this study is constructed as subjective, a moderate social construction epistemological position was deemed favourable. An outline of this approach will be presented in the next section.

### **2.4. Social Constructionism**

Social constructionism is an epistemological position which has been adopted by some researchers in qualitative research. Epistemologies address questions relating to the nature of knowledge. When the research conducted is informed by a social constructionist paradigm, the analyst does not strive to produce objective knowledge. However, various methodologies can be employed which are underpinned by different ontological assumptions (the relation between human constructions and reality, Braun *et al.*, 2013- the nature of reality). This section will start with a brief description of social constructionism. This will be followed by the delineation of two approaches informed by social constructionism principles but with distinct ontological assumptions: relativist social constructionism and critical realist social constructionism. Contrasting the two approaches will clarify the reasons as to why this thesis espoused a critical realist social constructionist epistemological stance and how this informed the analysis of the data. FDA adheres to a critical realist social constructionist epistemological position (also known as moderate/weak social constructionism).

Elements of social constructionism can be located in both the discourse of poststructuralism (also known as Foucauldian discourse analysis) and postmodernism (Harper, 2011). For context, social constructionism emerged in the 1980's amidst disillusionment with the dominant paradigm in psychology. Mainstream Western psychology's discontents rejected the notion that difficulties were internal to the individual (or situated at a cognitive level).

Instead, social constructionists argued that the social and cultural contexts, alongside interrelations must be fully explored (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). This paradigm shift not only affected therapy (through the development of certain approaches such as systemic therapy) but also the positioning of the therapist/researcher. Within the discourse of social constructionism, the therapist/researcher is no longer positioned as an objective and detached observer. Instead, his/her knowledge production constitutes one subjective reality amidst numerous other possible constructions. Harper (2011, p.92) explained that social constructionism refutes the concept that “there is a direct relation between account and reality”. In this sense, language cannot be used as a vehicle to “discover” a coherent and unitary truth located out there. Researchers who adhere to a social constructionist epistemological position highlight that we cannot know of a pre-social objective reality (Pearce, 2005). Instead, great emphasis is placed on what language does. To be precise, language is generated as producing rather than reflecting reality (Burr, 2003). Yet, the language we use to make sense of the world varies depending on the geographical and historical contexts we live in. That is, different constructions are produced by different languages or “culturally shared concepts” (Harper, 2011). Importantly, certain constructions are more powerful than others (Harper, 2011) and allow for certain social practices to seem more reasonable than others. Social constructionism strives to challenge hegemonic constructions produced as truths (Burr, 2003). In conclusion, social constructionism argues that multiple realities co-exist depending on the historical and cultural context, and highlights the subjective nature of taken-for-granted “truths” (Burr, 2003). Since social constructionism is not a fixed and uniform discourse (similarly to all discourses) many various approaches co-exist. The section below will offer a brief descriptions of two main approaches, namely relativist social constructionism and critical realist constructionism.

#### 2.4.1. Dominant Approaches within Social Constructionism

##### 2.4.1.1. Relativist Social Constructionism

Relativist social constructionism is situated near the relativist end of the realism-relativism continuum. Relativist social constructionism argues that multiple knowledges are produced (within and outside the realm of academia), and adheres to a relativist ontological position. This section will outline the core characteristics of this approach.

A variety of methodologies adopt a social constructionist epistemological stance. These approaches differ in relation to their location on the realism-relativism ontological spectrum. Discursive analysis, for example, could be located close to a relativist ontological position (although they do not adhere to a strict relativist ontological position in that they do not claim

that they do not know whether there is a world or not) (Harper, 2011). Rather, discursive analysts adopt a relativist social constructionist epistemological position, whereby emphasis is placed on solely exploring what is available to us: transcripts of talk (Harper, 2011). Put differently, relativist discursive analysts claim that human constructions inevitably shape our understanding of the nature of reality. Thus, relativist critical analysts preclude the exploration of phenomenon external to transcripts and refrain from going “beyond the text” (Harper, 2011). To sum up, relativist social constructionism proposes a plurality of knowledges, and an impossibility to access reality without it being moulded by our own human constructions of the world. By contrast, critical realist social constructionism adopts a critical realist ontological position.

#### 2.4.1.2. Critical Realist Social Constructionism

Foucauldian discourse analysis adheres to a critical realist social constructionist perspective (both terms will be used interchangeably). An outline of the amalgamation of these two distinct principles (critical realism and social constructionism) will be presented here in order to facilitate an understanding of what specificities are searched for in the data. Harper (2011) specified that FDA is informed by both social constructionist and realist principles: it is underpinned by a realist ontological position whilst being also informed by a relativist epistemological stance (hence the name critical realist social constructionism). Thus, on the one hand, the knowledges produced are constructed as multiple, local and subjective. But, on the other hand, a certain material reality exists. It is precisely this pre-social material reality which has an impact on discourses (Harper, 2011). Parker (1992, p.5) defined discourses as: “a system of statements which constructs an object of which it speaks”. Thus, for example, our understandings of the self or identities are shaped by discourses. To summarise, although discourses are socially constructed (depending on the historical and cultural contexts), they induce practices and subjectivities, which are considered real. The below comments made by Foucault (1980, p.193) illustrate this point:

I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions. I do not mean to say, however, that truth is therefore absent. It seems to me that the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth...

However, subjects are not inextricably imprisoned to particular discourses. Foucault (1980) stressed that subjects can draw upon certain discourses and refute others whilst resisting

occupying certain subject positions. This aside, making sense of the world through a critical realist social constructionist lens entails an analysis of the transcripts as well as an exploration of the wider cultural, historical and social context from which participants' constructions emerged (Braun *et al.*, 2013). Hence, the importance of going beyond the text. Unlike relativist social constructionists, FDA researchers insist that unless the real negative impacts of discourses (on society, the individual and his/her subjectivity and practices) are outlined, change will not materialise (Braun *et al.*, 2013). By contrast, relativist social constructionists do not explore entities such as feelings and thoughts since they argue then cannot be grasped (Braun *et al.*, 2013). From an FDA perspective, the analysis of the real effects of discourses involves understanding how discourses put limits on what can be said and done (Willig, 2012). Indeed, occupying a subject position within a discourse will allow for the development of certain subjectivity and practices and not others. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argued that in every society the body is subjugated to very tight powers, which force upon it constraints and obligations. Again, this process is considered real. Foucault's (1973) *I, Pierre Riviere, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister, and My Brother...: A Case of Parricide in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* illustrates this point nicely (although in the foreword, Foucault explained that it is a study about the relations between psychiatry and criminal justice). Here, Foucault narrated the story of a young peasant boy who killed three relatives in 19<sup>th</sup> Century France. The reports written by the boy during his imprisonment explaining the reasons for the murder were studied by representatives of two discourses, namely psychiatry and criminal justice. Both discourses produced distinct knowledges in relation to the boy's mental state. Although the discourse of criminal justice, which advocated for the boy's death, was more powerful, the discourse of psychiatry outlined his mental fragility and was victorious. Consequently, Pierre Riviere was sentenced to life imprisonment and not capital punishment. This story illustrates how the authority of a discourse has real effects and how different discourses warrant different practices. Discursive fields contain discourses which compete with one another to gain authority, whose implications must be explored by FDA analysts.

In conclusion, FDA is located within a critical realist social constructionist paradigm. Harper (2011) stressed that critical realist social constructionism is informed by a relativist epistemological position as well as a critical realist ontological position. Whilst discourses are historically and socially constructed, they are nonetheless influenced by a pre-social material reality, and have real effects on subjectivity and practices. Consequently, the ways we see the world and the ways we are in the world vary according to the discourses available to us and the ones we invoke. However, drawing upon a realist ontological perspective and a relativist epistemological stance has been critiqued for lacking in congruence and enabling a



process whereby phenomena are selectively problematised (Harper, 2011)-see section xxx for more details.

## 2.5. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

This research will follow Willig's (2012) stages. According to Willig (2012, p.132), FDA is concerned with how discourses construct "ways-of-seeing the world and ways of being- in- the world". Taking up certain subject positions will have implications for subjectivity and practices. Additionally, FDA explores the "relationships between discourses and institutions" (Willig, 2012, p.130). Implementing FDA entails following six stages:

1. The examination of how the object (here well-being) is constructed throughout the data.
2. The identification of the wider discourses within which different constructions exist.
3. The identification of the functions of such constructions (action orientation)
4. The identification of the subject positions available within discourses.
5. The analysis of the implications for practice of the identified subject positions.
6. The analysis of the implications for subjectivity of the identified subject positions.

Since Willig did not place great emphasis on the process of subjectification, this study will simultaneously draw upon Arribas-Ayllon *et al.*'s (2008) work. Subjectification refers to the making of subjects through technologies of power (the human species) and technologies of the self (the human body) (Arribas-Ayllon *et al.*, 2008; Sarup, 1993). Whereas technologies of power refer to the control of the population on a larger scale (by controlling birth rates for instance), technologies of the self pertain to how the subject self-disciplines. Technologies of the self entail a process of internalisation (Sarup, 1993) whereby the individual becomes a subject constituted by the mechanisms of power or practices present in the discourse inhabited (*i.e.* the subject of psychology). Since power creates subjects, Foucault constructed power not as repressive but as productive.

Foucault (1975) affirmed that by shifting from sovereign power to a process of governmentality, weapons and terrors are no longer necessary to subjugate individuals/bodies in Western democracies. Instead, an indirect style of social control, which relies on an assemblage of techniques (*i.e.* administrative), is being exercised to govern conduct (Sarup, 1993). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault described how the body has become a direct political reality whilst being enmeshed in power relations. Consequently, the body is suffused with an assemblage of technologies and local knowledge which conduct its very actions and gestures before we can relate to it as a subject (Sauvêtre, in Le Point

Références 2017). Foucault (1975) argued that the aim is to create bodies which can be utilised as productive forces. In neoliberal societies, this is rendered possible by encouraging the individual to become autonomous and responsible by actively participating in his/her own subjugation (although unconsciously). For Rose (1990), this process has been partly enabled by the “psy” disciplines (*i.e.* psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry *etc.*), whose aim is to create functioning individuals in a neoliberal system. According to McNay (2009), Foucault highlighted how, in Western neoliberal societies, the welfare state is relegated to the background. Through an implicit style of social control, this modern form of governance has allowed for the development of the self as responsible for his/her own life story (McNay, 2009). In this sense, structural forms of inequality are negated. Interestingly, Foucault also suggested that within neoliberal societies, differences based on ethnicity will vanish. Thus, one can wonder about the style of power that is currently being exercised in France. For Asad (2006), the 2004 law exemplifies sovereign power.

Notwithstanding the style of power currently exercised in France, a key element to the process of subjugation is how power/knowledge is distributed. Foucault explained that disciplinary regimes (the authorities or disciplines which claim expertise over a specific area of study, such as psychology) generate specific constructions (regimes of truth), which are perceived as true by society. As a process of normalisation and individualisation ensues, neoliberal subjects strive to meet the recommendations of these ‘experts’ by adapting their practices accordingly. Knowledge is therefore associated with power and together they form discourses. Foucault defined discourses as ‘practices that systematically form the objects [and subjects] of which they speak’ (cited in Denzin *et al.*, 2011). Individuals therefore engage in a process of self-surveillance and self-discipline, exemplified in the allegory of the Panopticon.

Referring to Karl Marx’s German Ideology (1970), Hebdige (2012) explained how ‘common sense’ assumptions, which are situated underneath consciousness, prevail in society. This idea was later developed by Althusser (cited in Hebdige, 2012), who emphasised that this system of representation should not solely be characterised by images and concepts but rather by structures, imposed upon individuals. Consequently, the way we relate to one another will be shaped by how relations are represented within these taken-for-granted structures. Structures can be physical (as in the arrangement of a classroom for instance) or refer to political, educational and cultural institutions but, most importantly, their illusory naturalness creates a sense of immutability amongst most individuals (Hebdige, 2012). Furthermore, for Marx and Gramsci, these symbolic formulations or ideologies allow for the creation and maintenance of a hierarchical and bipolar system, in which one class (the

proletariat) is oppressed by the dominant class (the bourgeoisie). For Foucault, however, social control and power are not detained by the ruling class. Rather, 'power is...an open, more or less coordinated...cluster of relations' (Gordon, 1980, p.199 cited in Gergen, 2009) in which the individual plays an active part and contributes to his/her own subjugation. Foucault rejected Althusser's understanding of ideology wherein state power is constructed as monolithic (Arribas-Aylon et al., 2008). Instead, Foucault, whose ideas were greatly influenced by Nietzsche, conceptualised power as operating at a local point within certain historical conditions (Arribas-Aylon et al., 2008). This aside, the next section will present details of the process involved in the research.

## **2.6. Ethics and procedures**

### 2.6.1. Ethics

The BPS's (2009) *Code of ethics and Conduct* encompasses four principles, namely respect, competence, responsibility and integrity, which all researchers are compelled to adhere to (Braun *et al.*, 2013). These were strictly adhered to.

### 2.6.2. Procedure

#### 2.7.2.1. Sampling

In accordance with the aims of qualitative research, the sampling for this study was purposive to produce "insight and in-depth understanding" (Patton, 2002:230). A homogenous sample was selected: all participants were women of Maghrebi origins born in France (one came to France as a baby). All were raised in France and still reside there except one, who moved to the UK five years ago. This participant was recruited to reduce costs and travels. Certain exclusion criteria were applied, including women under 18 years of age. Exclusion criteria relating to specific generations (i.e. second, third etc...) were not applied as Killian (2006) stressed that differences mainly occur between Maghrebi women born in North Africa and Maghrebi women born in France rather than between later generations themselves. No religious criteria were enforced as this study attempted to understand how religious and non-religious women alike construct their subjectivity. Social and economic backgrounds were also not taken into considerations as the aim of the research is to identify discourses.

### 2.6.2.2. Recruitment

Eight women were recruited as recommended by Braun et al. (2013) for small-scale projects. All were recruited through friends and family. One pilot interview was conducted.

### 2.6.2.3. Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for the production of rich data (Harper, 2011), and for their provision of “opportunities for both researcher and participant to explore areas of interest” (Gough et al., 2001, p.64). Unfortunately, as I do not speak colloquial Arabic, interviews were conducted in French. All interviews were conducted in France to embrace the full impact of the current realities in France.

Whilst Andrew Yip (cited in Braun et al., 2013) emphasises the importance of being sensitive to the participant’s culture when interviewing minority groups, Braun et al. (2013) highlighted how crucial it is for the researcher to constantly reflect on his/her power and interpretations. Additionally, the fact that I do not share the same ethnic background as the participants most certainly affected some of the answers provided during the interviews (see reflexivity for details).

### **CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS**

This study seeks to address one broad question:

- How do women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being?

The following sub questions were developed in order to facilitate the analysis of the data:

- How do dominant Western discourses construct Islam and Maghrebi women? What are the implications for subjectivity and practices? How have these constructions changed over time?
- How does the relationship between dominant discourses and institutions impact women of Maghrebi origins' practices and constructions of well-being? How is power exercised onto their bodies and minds?
- How do women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being in relation to Maghrebi and Western discourses? How do women of Maghrebi origins negotiate their sense of identity? How else might they be allowed to live?
- What coping strategies, if any, do they use?
- What are the implications for counselling psychology?

The aim of this analysis is to produce an understanding of well-being as constructed by women of Maghrebi origins in a specific context: assimilationist and secular France. Although well-being is a construct which has been extensively researched, the exploration of well-being as produced by women of Maghrebi origins in a context is new. And it is in this context that I am seeking to identify the discursive resources available to women of Maghrebi origins when constructing well-being. Since this analysis is informed by Foucauldian principles, the ways in which subtle forms of power and knowledge are exercised onto the bodies of women of Maghrebi origins will be explored. In brief, extracts relating to the construction of the discursive object (well-being) will be identified alongside

the wider discourses within which they are located. The functions that these constructs serve, their effects on subjectivity and practices will be analysed following Willig's (2012) steps. Further emphasis will be placed on problematisation, the process of subjugation, and technologies of power and technologies of the self in line with Aylon-Arribas *et al.*'s (2008) guidelines.

Three discursive sites addressing the research question have been identified:

- Women of Maghrebi origins' constructions of well-being in relation to Western knowledges
- Women of Maghrebi origins' constructions of well-being in relation to Maghrebi/Islamic culture and as a product of their negotiations between the latter and assimilation/secularism
- The strategies developed by women of Maghrebi origins to cope with the demands of assimilation/secularism and Maghrebi discourse

### **3.1. Women of Maghrebi Origins' Understandings of Well-Being in Relation to Western psychology**

#### **Extract 1:**

*Fatima: Bah, I noticed these mistakes, the ill-being that came with it, that was engendered and why I do this, why I react this way, what in my history (mm)... and now there are also a lot of... I realise, that I need to be validated (yeah) and this need for validation, I have identified it, and in any conflictual situations or other, even in my childhood einh, this comes back actually (ok). I, so, this lack of validation euh, I try to bring this happiness to myself alone actually and I try to avoid to euh be, to want (yeah)... to be in need of validation from others, I need to validate myself by myself (yeah) so this as well now, today, I am not saying that I manage it all the time but as soon as I*

*feel that some stuffs are not right, that I am not well, I try to analyse myself*  
(155-161).

This extract illustrates how, in line with Foucault (1976), the body and mind have become objects of examination and knowledge. Here, the body and mind are subjected to an analysis (*I try to analyse myself*) involving the exploration of “history” and “childhood” encouraged by the discipline of psychology. Needs (*I need to be validated; this need for validation; to be in need of validation; I need to validate*) are simultaneously examined and created, and constructed as residing within the individual. These needs must be assessed (*I have identified it*) and exclusively managed by the self (*I need to validate myself by myself*). Being “*in need of validation from others*” is not only constructed as a hindrance to “*happiness*”, but “*these mistakes*” engender “*ill-being*”. Through technologies of the self - “techniques by which human beings seek to regulate and enhance their own conduct” (Arribas-Ayllon *et al.*, 2008, p.99), Fatima, the subject of psychological therapy, subjects herself to the analysis and problematises her practices (*I noticed these mistakes; I try to avoid to euh be, to want (yeah)... to be in need of validation from others*). By internalising psychological knowledge, Fatima has learnt to overcome difficulties and attain “*happiness*” by “*analys[ing]*” the self (*as soon as I feel that some stuffs are not right, that I am not well, I try to analyse myself*). This process can, nonetheless, entail setbacks (*I am not saying I always manage*). Psychological practices would encourage Fatima to implement such actions, as if she were working with a therapist. In other words, Fatima is producing “*happiness*” from within a psychological discourse, which is an individualistic way of understanding this concept (*I try to bring this happiness to myself alone*). Within this discourse, the person is positioned as a free agent, whose responsibility encompasses “*analys[ing]*” *the rational self with the view to overcoming one’s “need[s]”*. In neoliberal countries, the self is constructed as autonomous and entirely responsible for his/her healthy psychological development, regardless of society’s structural constraints. Similarly, the need, specific to non-Western cultures, to establish strong links with family and community (T Brigg, 2007) is relegated. Koltko-Rivera (2006) stressed the dominance of the Western discourse by highlighting the paucity of multicultural perspectives within psychology. Although systemic therapy features in the discourse of psychology, this approach would not construct the “problem” as residing within the person. Instead, the “problem” is constructed as situated in relationships between the individual and the systems in his/her life (*i.e. school, family, work etc.*) (Dallos *et al.*, 2015).

Further importance is attributed to the construct of the autonomous self in the following extract, by the same participant, Fatima.

**Extract 2:**

**Fatima:** [...] and this well-being, I auto-brought it to myself now by doing what I truly want, which means listening to myself more. This is how I brought it to myself today, and I am rather, I am even proud of myself for moving forward onto the right path and I tell myself: “yeah, now I think I can find this well-being by listening to myself truly, deeply regarding what I want from myself, truly” (32-35).

Rose (1990) argued that the constitution of the conscious, free, autonomous self emerged out of Western democracies. Within this discourse, unless the self embodies such values, “well-being” cannot be attained. Thus, technologies of the self (*I auto-brought it to myself*) are constructed as enabling Fatima to attain a state of “well-being”, which greatly impacts on her subjectivity as “*she is “even proud of [herself]”*”. Occupying the position of the self-fulfilling, autonomous subject, who strives to focus on the self by “*listening to myself truly, deeply regarding what I want from myself, truly*” is produced as “*moving forward onto the right path*”. This might also serve to perhaps justify Fatima’s objection to return to live near her parents as seen in line 341. The emphasis on the self has been described as a principle pervasive across Western democracies (Bouzenita *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, Cyan is drawing upon an individualistic psychological discourse.

**Extract 3:**

**Cyan:** It is the psychotherapeutic work that helped me move away and euh really accept my choices at the end of the day (mm) and not to remain submissive to, to my mother’s authority nearby and to leave and undertake something (mm) it was one of the reasons. Euh, me I am still in therapy but now it is my vocation to think about why, how, how we grew up, how we came to be where we are, how I bring up my children... (496-499).



Inhabiting the discourse of psychotherapy (*psychotherapeutic*) and undertaking “*psychotherapeutic work*” enabled Cyan “*to move away*” from family home and live life according to her own choices (*to leave and undertake something*). The self-realising and independent subject of psychology’s individualistic discourse, who is able to “*really accept [one’s] choices*”, is constructed as more important than the mother-daughter relationship. The Maghrebi mother is positioned as authoritarian (*to remain submissive to, to my mother’s authority*). This discourse stands in stark contrast to a traditional/Islamic discourse which constructs the mother as providing guidance and support. By placing the mother in this position, Cyan might be trying to justify her “*move away*” from home whilst diminishing her sense of loss. In this context, therapy is constructed as a “*vocation*” which allows one to accept his/her “*choices*” and “*to think about why, how, how we grew up, how we came to be where we are, how I bring up my children...*”. This exemplifies how the discipline of psychology actively moulds and alters its object by exerting its authority (Rose, 1990). Citing Rose & Miller (1992, p.200), Scharff (2011) suggested that from a Foucauldian stance, the process of governmentality, which is intertwined with neoliberalism, entails the “government of personal life”; this process coerces subjects into internalising neoliberal rationalities with the aim of creating an autonomous and responsible individual (Rose, 1990).

In the following extract, the participant explicitly explains how her subjectivity changed as a result of entering the discourse of psychology.

#### **Extract 4:**

**Fatima:** *No, it really is my personal experience (ok, ok) and my self-analysis (ok) and actually to have all the time, I never used to be like this, with this specific logic but it might be the fact that I met several psychologists (yeah) who gave me this flexibility of analysing and to, so to self-analyse ... (680-682).*

In extract 4, Fatima describes how entering the discourse of psychology (*I met several psychologists*), allowed her to see the world through the psychological lens (*I never used to be like this, with this specific logic*). This illustrates how disciplines of knowledge (*i.e.* psychology) exert power by regulating the conduct and “subjectivities of individuals throughout all layers of society” (Augoustinos, 2014, p.53). This

process was activated through technologies of the self. According to Foucault (cited in Le Point, 2017) the body is invested by knowledges and techniques which define its conducts before we even refer to it as a subject. Becoming the subject of psychology impacted on Fatima's practices (... *this flexibility of analysing and to, so to self-analyse...*). Another distinctive feature of the discipline of psychology and neoliberal societies is the construct of the self as enterprise (McNay, 2009; Gergen, 1999), which can be illustrated in the below extract.

**Extract 5:**

**Sophia:** *I decided to go back to university, to relearn a profession, step back from my job but also because I needed to, to, to go, to complete things you see, I had the impression that I had, I had not made the most euh out of my intellectual abilities... (54-57).*

[...] interestingly, this “need” to make “*the most euh out of [her] intellectual abilities*” can also be present in Maslow’s psychological discourse whereby individuals are constructed as having a “need”. Within this discourse, individuals are positioned as active agents whose goals in life is generated as striving to “actualise or realize their individual potential, that is to grow and enhance the self” ( Lea, Tarcy and Webley, 1987, p.31). It is unsurprising that Maslow’s psychological discourse emerged in Western capitalist democracies where individualism prevails. Although family ties and the practices of helping others are encouraged at some stages, these principles are not constructed as vital throughout one’s life. By contrast, within the Islamic discourse, helping one another within a family and a community is constructed as a primary necessity for the development of a healthy society (Al Hakim, 2011).

**Extract: 6**

**Adila:** *Realising that (yeah) it could be worse (yeah) and that we are, and to see that we are well, we are all sitting around the table together (mm), we talk, there is food to be eaten, you have clothes to wear, you have a roof over your head (mm) and that, it is, I mean, it is (mm) for some, it is, it is, it is not norma, they don't have that, so (yeah) so it is important to be aware of it. And*

*when we become aware of it, bah we are happy (yeah) we are happy for euh, as the other would say “for nothing”... (171-173).*

Well-being is linked to having what one needs (*we are all sitting around the table; we talk; food to be eaten; clothes to wear; a roof over your head*). Although Adila is stressing the important of fulfilling basic needs, she does not seem to draw upon Maslow's psychological discourse. Indeed, Adila shows contentment with having her basic needs met. This gratitude and humbleness features in the Islamic discourse instead. Chapter 55 of the Qur'an reads as follow: *“the Lord of Mercy”, God asks the same question thirty-one times, “which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?” God has created us and then made this world for us. We are getting benefits from all of His creations such as the sun, moon, clouds, rain, air, grasslands, animals, plants, rivers, oceans and countless other bounties of the natural world! After realizing all this abundance, how can a sensible person be anything but thankful to God? (Cited in whyislam.org).*

Having analysed extracts informed by Western knowledges, I will now explore constructs by women of Maghrebi origins situated within a Maghrebi/Islamic tradition. In this section will also figure the product of their negotiation between secularism/assimilationism and Maghrebi culture.

### **3.2. Women of Maghrebi Origins' Understandings of Well-Being in Relation to Maghrebi/Islamic Tradition and as a Product of Their Negotiations Between Secularism/Assimilation and Maghrebi Culture**

Women of North African origins have the possibility to draw upon various discourses to construct well-being. One of them is the Maghrebi/ Islamic discourse, which is frequently invoked. However, some of the constructs and practices available within this discourse have also vehemently been rejected by some participants. However, for some women, it appears that certain difficulties lie in how to negotiate well-being between secularism/assimilation and Maghrebi/Islamic tradition.

### 3. 2.1. Well-being as a Product of Their Relation to God

Bouzenita *et al.*, (2016, p.76) have argued that the practice of worshipping Allah (ibādah), “the provisions provided for by Allah” (rizq) and the act of relying on Allah (tawakkul) are constructed in the Shāri’ah (the Islamic way of life) as fundamental Islamic principles.

### 3. 2. 2. “My faith in God” or Worshipping God

#### **Extract 7:**

**Ranya:** *and then also my faith, especially, my faith in God, this, this helps me a lot (yeah) because I tell myself that as a Muslim (mm) bah euh I have, I have, within myself actually when, when I, I, I am not feeling well or whatever, bah I think about God (mm) and I feel good, that’s it, I feel at peace (40-42).*

Occupying the subject position of “Muslim” enables Ranya to have “faith in God”, which is of particular importance (*and then also my faith, especially my faith in God*). Inhabiting an Islamic discourse impacts on Ranya’s subjectivity in that it improves her well-being (*I feel good, that’s it, I feel at peace*) in times of hardship and others (*when I, I, I am not feeling well or whatever*). The practice of “think[ing] about God”, a technology of the self, is making her well (*at peace*).

### 3. 2. 3. “I always pray” or Care of the Self, a Religious Requirement

#### **Extract 8:**

**Sophia:** *When there is something that is not going well, when there is something that is not going well, I always pray so that God euh God make me feel mentally better to start with and euh so that God can help me in this situation, give me the strength to help myself in this situation. For example, when I, when I, when I split up with my ex-boyfriend, every evening I, I prayed God so that he can give me the courage to, to forget actually, and to*

*overcome euh this difficulty euh which was very hard for me actually (490-494).*

To “*feel mentally better*” is a subjectivity which can be attained by evoking the Islamic discourse. The Islamic practice of “*pray[ing]*” enables Sophia to “*give [her]strength*” and “*courage to, to forget actually, and to overcome euh this difficulty*” regardless of the intensity of the suffering (*very hard*). Sophia’s religiosity is being enacted here. Sophia uses “*pray[ers]*” as a method of self-care to achieve a sense of well-being. This could be constructed as an exemplar of self-care in that it reflects the action an individual exercises in constituting her own self.

#### 3. 2. 4. “God gave me all that I have” or the Provisions from Allah

##### **Extract 9:**

**Adila:** *It’s not luck einh, I mean when I say luck, I am a strong, I am a believer (yeah) so it’s, it’s the attribution that God gave me of all that I have around me, every day I thank him for having a very good family, loving euh kind... (212-214).*

By insisting that “*it’s not luck*”, and attributing “*having a very good family*” to God instead, Adila is enacting a discourse of Islam. Adila explicitly highlights that she occupies the subject position of “*believer*”, whose “*good family*” is not the result of her good parenting skills or self-care but an “*attribution*” from God. There is something very humble in her talk.

The place of the family in the lives of women of Maghrebi origins will be explored in the following extracts.

#### 3. 2. 5. Family Relationships as Primary

##### **Extract 10:**

**Sophia:** [...] *I would so love to go and live in the South [of France] but euh I need my family, it's a very important support to me, euh I know that psychologically if I am not well or other euh bah I am going to see my girlfriends, [name], my family, my sisters but if they are not here, the phone won't be enough (yeah), I need their presence, I need to go out with them euh (yeah), it, it is going to be hard (yeah), after, may be it will be the other way round or growing up, I don't know but I give lots of importance to my family. I am the big sister and I always feel like checking on them, euh their well-being too (ok) and on my mother too on her well-being and (ok) so this is, I won't be serene actually, if I leave, I won't be serene actually and euh for example when I travel abroad, I, I always phone at least once a day, like this (285-293).*

In this extract, Sophia is drawing upon a Maghrebi/Islamic discourse to explain that although she “*would so love to go and live in the South*”, “*it is going to be very hard*” as she “*need[s] her family*”, “*their presence*”, “*go[ing] out with them*”. Sophia “*give[s] lots of importance to [her] family*”, which is constructed as providing “*a very important support*” in case of difficulties (*euh I know that psychologically if I am not well or other euh bah I am going to see my girlfriends, [name], my family, my sisters*). It appears that “*girlfriends*” are produced as members of the extended family. Inhabiting this discourse impacts on Sophia’s practices in that she “*always phone[s] [her family] at least once a day*”, for no specific reason (*like this*), when “*travel[ing] abroad*”. The practice of maintaining daily contact with the “*family*” has become the norm (*like this*). Not implementing this discursive practice, would lead to Sophia not feeling “*serene*”. Within this discourse, being “*serene*” is not attained through the constitution of an independent agent, whose point of interest would essentially be the self. Rather, the inter-relations which exist within the family are constituted as more “*important*” than one’s own desires (*I would so love to go and live in the South*). The self is therefore constructed as a member of a network comprising “*family*”, “*sisters*” and “*girlfriends*”. In other words, family relationships are the primary reality, not the self. The hegemony of this construct within a Maghrebi/Islamic discourse is manifest here. Furthermore, explicit to this construct of the family is the hierarchical position occupied by the “*big sister*”, which entails “*always feel[ing] like checking on them, euh their well-being too (ok) and on my mother too on her well-being*”. Conversely, in the next extract, the family is generated as having a negative impact on well-being.

#### **Extract 11:**

**Fatima:** *I have, I have, I listened euh there are lots of things, when I was telling you about the mistakes earlier, I was telling you there are lots of things which I have done to please my mother, to please my father, to please this one, that one, this one (mm) but not me (mm) and every time, it was like this (yeah) and every time it consumed me more and more, it was all consuming, it was all consuming (yeah) it was consuming me because even if I said “Ah I am the model daughter, the perfect daughter, I please this one, I please that one”, but in the end who pays? It’s me! (365-369).*

Fatima describes how, within a Maghrebi discourse, she occupied the position of “*the model daughter, the perfect daughter*”, whose duties entailed doing “*lots of things*” “*to please my mother, to please my father, to please this one, that one, this one*”. However, taking up this subject position was described as having negative implications on Fatima’s subjectivity (*and every time it consumed me more and more, it was all consuming, it was all consuming (yeah) it was consuming me*), which resulted in Fatima “*pay[ing]*”. Such practices are produced as “*mistakes*”. In an act of resistance, Fatima rejects a traditional Maghrebi construction of the family as primacy. Instead, the practice of “*pleas[ing] the “mother”, the “father”*” is depicted as a hindrance to wellbeing (*who pays? It’s me!*). This construct might perhaps serve to justify Fatima’s act of living away from her family. In the below extract, losing one’s sense of family belonging is produced as suffering.

**Extract 12:**

**Cyan:** *... When you lose your place in your own family of origin (ah yeah, mm), you’d better have a euh nuclear family which is only yours, very solid (mm) and then euh it is and then it is my family still, it’s still where I come from, the religion with which I was brought up, the people with whom I grew up (mm) and euh and yeah, no, it hurts einh, honestly (mm), I wouldn’t say I cry euh all the time but euh every so often [...] that means that your choice results in you losing where you come from... (464-470).*

For context, Cyan explained throughout the interview that she had rejected Maghrebi values to embrace Western concepts such as freedom. Cyan described her relationships with her mother as broken following the implementation of those newly adopted principles into her life (*i.e.* drinking alcohol, marrying outside the community). The role of the mother has been

discussed extensively in literature in relation to processes of acculturation. For example, Freedman *et al.*, (2000) posited that the mother has been the ‘target’ of multiple policies as she is portrayed as the perpetuator of values. In parallel, Gergen (2009) argued that there exists pressure from individuals within the same group to adhere to traditions. In this extract, the loss of “*your place in your own family of origin*” is generated as entailing the loss of one’s place within one’s community (*it’s still where I come from, the religion with which I was brought up, the people with whom I grew up*). As such the mother is associated with a whole community and not an isolated self. The process of “*los[ing] your place in your own family*” is constructed as entailing pain (*it hurts*) and tears (*I wouldn’t say I cry euh all the time but euh every so often*). Most importantly, losing one’s “*place in your own family*” is equated with losing one’s earliest identity (*losing where you come from*). While the construct of the family as primary is situated within Maghrebi/Islamic discourse, Cyan is simultaneously occupying the position of choosing individual (*choice*), available within the individualist discourse, to perhaps justify her practices. Having lost her “*family of origin*”, Cyan has established “*a euh nuclear family which is only [hers], very solid*”. Cyan is endeavouring to replace her “*family of origin*” with a “*nuclear family*”, since relationships with family generate happiness. While the family is produced as essential, continuous engagement in power relations forms a material reality.

### 3. 2. 6. Negotiating a Hybrid Sense of Identity or Not

#### **Extract 13:**

**Yasmina:** *I wanted to live as a French person. Either I should have lived in Algeria to tell the truth or really adopt euh live with an Arabic mentality but I was lost between these two mentalities (ok, yeah, yeah). It... even when I was young I suffered a great deal, I became very depressed in my 20’s (in your 20’s einh?). I, I, I was not well, I wasted years [inaudible] depression (oh yeah), because I was lost. I felt like euh pleasing my parents, my surrounding, being a good Maghrebi daughter, there you go (yeah) and at the same time I felt like living life to the full (yeah). Is it the fact that I was in a school where there are many French or that I wanted to live like them? So, it’s a bit lost, I was lost during this period (ok). The well-being truly, I did not feel it (ok). I did not live [pause] my well-being as a woman... (155-164).*



“...a school where there are many French” is constructed as the site from which French values are promulgated (*I wanted to live like them*). Foucault (1975) argued that the school is one of a multitude of sites where disciplinary power is operated onto bodies in order to train them. The use of specific methods leads to the disciplinary individuality being internalised by these newly formed “docile bodies”. The aim of forming docile bodies is to make better use of them in the industrial age. Yet, whereas she wanted “to live as a French person” and as such “*living life to the full*”, Yasmina also wanted to be “a good Maghrebi daughter”. It seems that the two discourses (assimilationist and Maghrebi/Islamic) are not only competing for power but are also produced as incompatible. Thus, the opportunity to negotiate a hybrid identity is missing from Yasmina’s account. This undoubtedly reflects the material reality of living in France, where an assimilationist discourse prevails throughout all layers of society. Assimilation entails the minority espousing the values of the majority. Most importantly, facing the dilemma of not “*pleasing [her] parents*”, or “*living life to the full*”, creates a devastating sense of loss (*I was lost between these two mentalities; I wasted years; I was lost; So, it’s a bit lost, I was lost during this period*), suffering (*I suffered a great deal*) and “*depress[ion]*”. In a sense, it seems that Yasmina regrets trying to assimilate (*to live as a French person*) as she “*should have lived in Algeria to tell the truth or really adopt euh live with an Arabic mentality*”. Thus, we can hypothesise that the dominant discourse of assimilation fails to offer a position from which a woman of Maghrebi origins would feel emotionally well. Malouf (1998) argued that unless individuals from ethnic minorities have the opportunity to live their diverse identities with serenity, they will not feel contented and there will be no civil peace. The paucity of alternative discourses creates distress as the woman of Maghrebi origins is coerced into choosing between the assimilationist/secular discourse and the Maghrebi/Islamic discourse. In the next extract, Fatima expresses regrets as having been brought up within a Maghrebi discourse.

For context, Fatima is referring to a situation when she listened to a white French colleague of hers explaining that her 23 year-old-daughter was travelling with her boyfriend.

**Extract 14:**

**Fatima:** *Yet, we live in the same country, but I had the impression of having lived in another world (yeah), really to be completely out of step. I told myself “but it is, we*

*are in a separate world, we are in a separate world “you see, and I tell them, if I, if I had to tell them that when I was 20, never had I travelled! Are you mad! Bringing a friend, a boyfriend home, but I would get killed! [...] it’s not easy einh (yeah), because and I see it now euh with what I went through, I tell myself “bah, I I had that because of because I was brought up that way and because I received that upbringing (yeah) and why I am her now (yeah) and you see I have many regrets towards this” because I tell myself “ Heck, if I had been brought up like like my colleague’s daughter who is 23 years old, I might not have lived what I lived [...] (549-563).*

Here, not only is Fatima reporting how “*out of step*” she feels when listening to her white colleague, but she expresses “*many regrets*” in relation to her “*upbringing*” which is constructed as the cause of her current difficulties. Implicit to this is the ubiquitous dichotomy whereby the West is constructed as progressive and Maghrebi traditions as repressive. Similarly, in the following extract, Cyan is blaming her upbringing for her difficulties.

**Extract 15:**

**Cyan:** *That’s why I am telling you that well-being also depends on the foundation we’ve had, when you ask yourself no questions about your origins I would say (yeah). Me, for me it’s simple, the deepest of ill-beings bah it comes from here (125-127).*

Later in the interview, Cyan added:

*Everyone, actually, in their own way, make you feel like you are neither from one side nor from the other ... (253-254).*

Cyan is drawing upon the assimilationist discourse (amongst others) to produce “*the deepest of ill-beings*” as “*com[ing]*” from “*the foundation we’ve had*”. The “*foundation*” is associated exclusively with “*well-being*” “*when you ask yourself no questions about your origins*”. In a sense, the “*foundation*”, that is the Maghrebi tradition, is synonymous with “*ill-being*”. The effects of assimilationist discourse are far-reaching in that the practice of circulating between the culture of “*origins*” and the dominant culture is absent. Similarly, both Western and Maghrebi discourses are constructed as rejecting is that they “*make you feel like you are neither from one side nor from the other*”. Such talk could be constructed as reflecting a sense of living at the

margins, with no sense of belonging. In stark contrast, Adila describes having successfully amalgamated her two identities:

**Extract 16:**

**Adila:** *I am happy to be French and Moroccan at the same time (mm), it's, there is no problems (yeah), I, I, I, I love, I love these two countries (mm) so euh I can't say that I am going to choose, it's as if someone told me to choose between my children, I can't tell, I love one and the other... (479-482).*

For context, I would like to remark that I did not ask my participants whether they felt a stronger sense of belonging towards one identity or another. Yet, Adila explains that she would not be able to choose (*I can't say that I am going to choose, it's as if someone told me to choose between my children, I can't tell*). Adila is therefore resisting the subject position from which a person from a minority group has to choose one identity over another. Happiness is therefore constructed as not having to choose. The concept of having to choose one identity over another can be located within the assimilationist discourse. Jansen (2013) suggested that although several understandings of assimilation exist, this discourse forces members of the minority to discard their differences (especially in the public sphere). By evoking a hybrid or intercultural discourse, Adila constructs her adoption of a dual identity as providing a strong sense of well-being (*I am happy to be French and Moroccan at the same time*) and that “*there is no problems*”. However, some participants described how visible symbols of their ‘differences’ resulted in prejudices.

3. 2. 7. Othering

3.2.7.1 Constructions of the veiled woman

For context, in the next extract, Lamia had received a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis and had been instructed to use the contraceptive pill for fear that a pregnancy might interact with the prescribed treatment. Here, Lamia has informed the neurologist of the unplanned pregnancy despite taking the contraceptive pill rigorously.

## Extract: 17

**Lamia:** [...] *"I even had euh my neurologist who euh, when I was pregnant with the fourth one, asked me to have a termination (wow!). Ah yes! she told me "I, I give you one week to think about it and errr you phone me back next week and you give me your answer". Then [...] I told her that I didn't need to think because for me it's... I would not have a clear conscience, and it's a non-religious principle (mm). Because I am a veiled woman so for them actually [...] the Arabs have many children" so I think (yeah) that the neurologist perceived it this way. [...] and they care little about what the person thinks, what the person says (yeah), what the person feels [...]" (187-205).*

Lamia constructs "[her] neurologist's" subsequent reaction as one of suspicion. Lamia accounts for "[her] neurologist's" disbelief by positioning her within a discourse on prejudice whereby "a veiled woman", "the Arabs" are generated as having "many children". Lamia is the object of the gaze. Whereas this can only be detrimental, the "neurologist" thinks it is reasonable to talk to Lamia in that way. In an act of resistance, Lamia occupies the position of "a veiled woman" with "many children" to enable her not to comply with the "request" (*I told her I didn't need to think*). Lamia can justify her practice by drawing upon the religious discourse "it's a non-religious principle", whose application would lead to "not hav[ing] a clear conscience". This extract illustrates the power relations in play between Lamia and her neurologist during a medical examination. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault constructs the examination (of 'patients' in hospitals, pupils in schools etc.) as a procedure which involves the use of two primary techniques of control specific to disciplinary societies: hierarchical observation (the gaze) and normalising sanction. An apparatus exists whereby techniques of observation induce power, which, in return, through means of coercion, makes the subject more visible (Foucault, 1975). Power and knowledge are therefore intertwined. The expert (*my neurologist*) uses techniques of observation engendering effects of power (*I give you one week...*). This mechanism of control allows disciplinary institutions to scrutinise conduct and punish the 'bad/deviant' subject, whose visibility is made evident against the 'good' subject (Foucault, 1975). Nonconforming - by apparently refusing to take the pill, leads to micro sanctions, whereby the "neurologist" attempts to correct the deviant behaviour (*[she] asked me to have a termination*). It seems that a hierarchical structure prevails between the 'expert' and the 'patient'/"a veiled woman". However, Lamia refused to occupy the position of the 'docile patient' (*I told her that I didn't need to think*), by drawing upon the

religious discourse. Through a process of governmentality, control is exerted without taking into consideration the subjectivity of the person (...*they care little about what the person thinks, about what the person says, about how the person feels...*). Implicit to this construct is the assumption that not having one's "*think[ing]*", "*say[ing]*" and "*feelin[ings]*" considered is not conducive of well-being. Similarly, in the following extract, Lamia constructs her subjectivity as not being acknowledged by society.

**Extract 18:**

**Lamia:** *Since I was veiled, I have been feeling better, so it is really contrary to, to the image that I reflect to others... (739-740).*

In extract 18, Lamia is drawing upon an Islamic discourse and engaging in religious practices such as wearing the Islamic veil. This signifying practice produces specific forms of subjectivity which Lamia generates as an enhanced sense of well-being (*since I was veiled, I have been feeling better*). This process is referred to as subjectification. Subjectification alludes to a process of self-regulation, whereby subjects strive to reach "a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Arribas-Aylon *et al.* (2008), citing Foucault (1988)). Importantly, this extract exemplifies how Lamia's construction of "*feeling [of] 'better[ment]*" is not only not acknowledged but "*really contrary to, to the image that I reflect to others...*". Lamia constructs "*others*" as not seeing her as being well. Instead, according to Lamia and the discourse she is drawing upon, others do not assume "*a veiled woman*" to be happy. In France, to be "*a veiled woman*" is constructed as being subjugated and not happy. The process by which Lamia is positioned as Other entails the impossibility of constituting her as happy. In other word, not only is "*a veiled woman*" constructed as problematic, but happiness is associated with not wearing the veil. Importantly, it seems that the conditions of possibility out of which the veiled woman could be constructed as happy are not present. This might be the effects of the hegemony of a discourse of secularism, which does not allow for the construct of the veiled Muslim woman as contented. Scott (2018, p.3) argues that secularism is underpinned by binary oppositions whereby Islam is associated with "oppression" and secularism with "reason, freedom and women's rights". The construction of the Muslim woman as a veiled and powerless victim of patriarchal and religious oppression prevails in Western Europe (Scharff, 2011). Because of their dominance, such constructs are taken as truth claims. Foucault conceptualised power as operating locally and in accordance with a specific historical context (Arribas-Aylon *et al.*, 2008). This extract might exemplify the point of application of power in a process whereby

“complex differential power relations extend to every aspect of our social, cultural and political lives” (Sarup, 1993, p.8). Here, the subject of the secular discourse and the Islamic subject are fighting for recognition.

According to Fadela Amara, president of the organisation “*Ni Putes, Ni Soumises*” and a practicing Muslim, young women are not only forced to wear the veil but are also under constant surveillance by their male relatives (cited in Wing *et al.*, 2005). This construction, although widely criticised by the poststructuralist Scott, is exemplified in the following extract.

**Extract 19:**

*Yasmina: They [my parents] still gave me some freedom but it was always like...my father, when he came back from the mosque, it was always like “you should wear the veil, you are going to go to hell!” (197-198).*

Although the construction of the object of focus (well-being) is not rendered explicit in this extract, we can hypothesise that Yasmina did not enjoy as much freedom as she would have liked (*they [my parents] still gave me some freedom but it was like...*). In this extract, Yasmina might be drawing upon a range of discourses including reformist Islamic feminisms. Badran (2018) insisted that Muslim women born in France to North African parents are often torn between the traditions and Western ideals, and that Islamic Feminist discourses provide a way of differentiating between patriarchal Islamic discourse and authentic Islam. Within dominant discourses of Islamic feminism, Islam is not constructed as hindering women’s freedom. Rather, some of the practices situated within traditional Islam are questioned. Such practices can be constructed as patriarchal and unjustly imposed upon women. In this extract, Yasmina is positioned as a daughter, who “*should wear the veil*”. Here, Yasmina is describing how her “*father*” attempted to persuade her to “*wear the headscarf*” for fear of “*going to hell!*” The father’s practices are constructed as a result of his attending the mosque (*when he came back from the mosque*). This illustrates how talks are frequently embedded in larger organisations while determining the “constructions by which we live” (Gergen, 1999, p.47). In a process of subjugation to institutional power (*the mosque*), *the “father”* is extending “*the mosque*”’s disciplinary power into his daughter’s life. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault suggested that in every society, the body is subjugated to very tight forms of power, which force upon it constraints and obligations. It seems that within both the discourse of poststructuralism and some discourses of Islamic feminisms, the body is constructed as being controlled and subjected to disciplinary power. While power can be applied at a micro

level (i.e. within religious minority groups), it can also be located at a national level. For example, the Republic's subjects are discouraged from exhibiting differences. Hussey (2015) argued that within dominant French discourses, differences are constructed as a hindrance to the Republic's illusionary pursuit of egalitarian ideals and alleged cohesion. However, some participants described how they were positioned as "different".

### 3.2.7.2 "We always drag this difference around"

#### **Extract 20:**

**Miriam:** *We always drag this difference around and we are never without, we never feel euh, we never feel at ease... (126-127)*

This extract demonstrates Miriam constructing her well-being in relation to differences by drawing on secularism and assimilation discourses. Within such discourses, differences are produced as threats to the unity of the nation and as a way to sectarianism, and should therefore be discouraged (Hussey, 2015). The effects of the assimilationist discourse include the practice of "always drag[ging] this difference around". This greatly impacts on the population of Maghrebi origins' well-being in that "we never feel at ease..." The ways in which difference impacts on this population is further explored by Miriam. In the next extract, Miriam refers to completing higher education in a school of architecture and comments on her visible "difference[s]" (by my profile of by my origin), whereby she was positioned as the Other.

#### **Extract 21:**

**Miriam:** *... a specific type of people is placed there (yeah) and what's more is that in quotation marks maybe not as elitist as other domains but is it accessible to a specific category of people and I by my profile or by my origin (yeah), I did not necessarily fit into these boxes (yeah) so that means euh we must work twice as hard to prove that we deserve to be here while we shouldn't because for one we are*

*supposed to be all equal euh and euh yeah so in France it's a bit difficult (40-44).*

Miriam occupies the subject position of the Other, who does “*not necessarily fit into the boxes*”, “*by my profile or by my origins*”. This positioning impacts on Miriam’s practices in that “*we must work twice as hard to prove that we deserve to be here*”. This practice is portrayed as contrary to the values of the République (*we shouldn’t because for one we are all supposed to be equal*). Thus, “*in France it’s a bit difficult*”. DeGroat (2001) asserted that the discourse of French republicanism is underpinned by the ideals of natural rights and freedom to all at birth, promulgated by 18<sup>th</sup> century revolutionaries. However, it seems that the effects of these principles have impacted the material reality of French citizens in various ways. Indeed, the discourse of republicanism has been depicted as failing to accord universal rights to all its citizens, whilst privileging the European, middle-class male instead (DeGroat, 2001). Research suggests that ethnic origins and names with a Maghrebi/Muslim connotation may render the process of securing employment more difficult (Touati, 2012). Miriam is describing the Othering which, the literature suggests, has been found to have an impact. Othering involves constructing the Other and therefore producing alleged knowledge in relation to the Other. The very act of creating the Other results in the development of a hierarchy whereby the “I” attains a more powerful position (Delphy, 2008). This practice, in turn, reinforces Western authority (Scharff, 2011). By contrast, listening to another person with the view to gaining an understanding into her ways of making sense of the world is constructed as a positive experience.

### 3. 2. 8. Assimilation/Secularism Constructed as a Hindrance to Freedom

#### **Extract 22:**

**Ranya:** ... *I would like to euh wear long dresses again (yeah) and headscarves and all of this (djelabas?) that’s it, this is how I feel good but I, I, I mean I am scared of bah of the others” gaze, simply, I think, that’s it because... (343-345).*



Although Ranya constructs her well-being (*this is how I feel good*) as depending on her wearing traditional Maghrebi/Islamic clothing (*long dresses [...] and headscarves*), she refrains from doing so for fear of the gaze (*I am scared of bah of the other's gaze, simply*). Ranya draws upon the Islamic and/or traditional Maghrebi discourse, which can be constructed as encouraging subjects to adhere to a specific dress code. These practices are generated as providing a sense of well-being. However, such practices are produced as no longer viable (*I would like to euh wear long dresses again*) since they engender feeling “scared”. Interestingly, Ranya identifies “*the other's gaze*” as a way of forcing her to adopt a normalised and hegemonic dress code. It could be argued that from a Foucauldian perspective disciplinary power is being forced upon Ranya's body. Referring to the circulation of disciplinary power in military schools, Foucault (1975) argued that pupils were continuously pressurised to conform to all forms of discipline so they would all look alike. To achieve conformity and homogenisation, the “art of punishing” was applied to all pupils (Foucault, 1975, p.214). In other words, non-conforming was a punishable practice. So that pupils reached “the norm”, systems of hierarchy by which individuals were compared and differentiated were established (Foucault, 1975). According to Foucault, subjects were simultaneously categorised as “bad” or “good”, which was a process enabled by knowing the subject (knowledge produces power). Said (1978) highlighted how the idea of knowing the Orient allowed for its construction as inferior and subsequent domination. Some researchers have outlined how certain Westerners, by allegedly knowing the Muslim woman, have positioned her as either a terrorist or a victim of patriarchal Islam (Scharff, 2018; Scott, 2018). The hegemony of these unitary and fixed constructions in Western capitalist societies undoubtedly impact on Ranya's practices and force her, through normalisation and “*the other's gaze*” (i.e. surveillance) to adopt a dress code considered normal and emancipatory. Foucault argued that normalisation alongside surveillance emerged as instruments of power in modern societies. By problematizing the Muslim woman, certain practices become “abnormal”, such as wearing (*long dresses [...] and headscarves*). This extract illustrates how power is immanent in all social relations whilst being exercised through all layers of society. Lastly, it could be hypothesised that the Islamic/ Maghrebi discourse and the assimilationist discourse are competing for power and that the latter is victorious. The assimilationist discourse is nonetheless produced as oppressive and as impending on her “*feel[ing] good*”.

**Extract 23:**

**Ranya:** *Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's true that it, it yeah I don't know why, it's true, yeah, I am, I am scared, I am, I am scared of the judgement I think maybe or of the aggression, all that. It's true that we hear lots of things, and after you, that's it, but I don't want, I don't want my children euh for example or whatever, now it is, it is maybe a bit paranoid einh but it's true that euh euh yeah, it scares me, I am scared for them, of the future but we will see [...]* (315-319).

In this extract, Ranya continues describing being “scared” (*I am scared; it scares me; I am scared for them*) but specifies that not only is she “scared of the judgement”, that is the gaze, but she is also “scared” of “*the aggression*”, “*of the future*” and “*for her children*”. Simultaneously, Ranya is constructing her practice as “*a bit paranoid*”. Neoliberalism discourse, with its emphasis on individualism, is being enacted here in that the subject is rendered problematic (through the use of technologies of the self) rather than structural inequalities. Unlike Ranya, Lamia, in an act of resistance, expresses her religiosity by wearing the headscarf and describes feelings of wellness.

#### **Extract 24:**

**Lamia:** *“I don't see what is disturbing really, I wear a veil but this is the only difference [...] my children are brought up in the same way as as a person who is Maghrebi or not Maghrebi [...] there is nothing that says “bah they live in their bubble, they are Islamist” [...] it's a life choice, we are well and that's it [...]”* (639-644).

The multicultural discourse constitutes a subject position from which Lamia can unproblematically construct herself as a person who can simultaneously wear the Muslim veil (a signifier of a religious practice) and act according to the norms and values of French society. Lamia is therefore resisting the subject position of the veiled woman, whose cultural and religious practices are incompatible with the values of the République. Such positioning, available within the nationalist, assimilationist, and secular discourses, renders the veiled Muslim woman problematic for she is constructed as

different and unable to assimilate. However, in an act of resistance, Lamia narrates the way she raises her children as similar to others (*my children are brought up in the same way as as a person who is Maghrebi or not Maghrebi*) and outlines that she does not live in her “bubble” at the margin of society. In stark opposition to the hegemonic construct of the “veiled Muslim woman” whose subjectivity is inextricably linked with unhappiness, Lamia produces feelings of contentment: “we are well”. However, feelings of contentment are harder to attain for others. In the following extract, Sophia, talking about others’ experiences shows the effects of Othering in terms of creating hatred.

#### **Extract 25:**

**Sophia:** ...and if you are prevented from being who you are, this is when it leads to drifting (yeah) and to hatreds towards society and towards the persons who prevented you from being yourself (yeah) and when you wear the headscarf or when you are very attached to your religion euh it’s a part of you, it’s even you, it’s your identity actually, they prevent (yeah) you from expressing your identity (yeah) and this is when it creates a problem and it is at this time that was created euh, it created euh this hatred “Yeah, anyway France is of no use, apart from the welfare system” they find their feet einh amidst the welfare system, but this hatred towards France, euh “We don’t have our place” (yeah), that’s it, that’s it, that’s it (940-944).

Whilst Sophia is showing that she can understand the reasons that led to the “drifting”, she is also careful to detach herself from this group by referring to it as “you” and “they”. Such practices might have emerged in opposition to one hegemonic construct whereby “... a whole community - of origin, culture or belief, [has been confused] with the acts of a few individuals who appeal to that community or make use of it” (Plenel, 2016, p.14). Contrary to the dominant political and media representations, which focus on the individual, Sophia places greater emphasis on the effects of a specific way of constituting Islam within French society. Thus, the “drifting” is constructed as a result of a Muslim being “prevented from being who [they] are” and therefore “prevent[ed] [...] from expressing [their] identity”. This “identity” specifically refers to one’s religiosity (*when you wear the headscarf or when you are very attached to your religion euh it’s a part of you, it’s even you*). Thus, within the construction of Islamophobic France, the Muslim subject is unable to

express his/her religiosity. Occupying the subject position of the 'silenced Muslim' is produced as engendering "drifting", denying him/her a sense of belonging (*We don't have our place*) whilst creating feelings of "hatred" towards a France, which is "of no use". Implicit to this, is that later, this hatred can lead to attacks. Sophia explains that not being able to do what they want has a profound effect. Sophia constructs this situation as having an impact on radicalisation. In parallel, drawing upon the neo-liberal discourse and placing the "drift[ers]" in a position of "welfare dependents" who "find their feet einh amidst the welfare system" does not account for the effects of unemployment and poverty on one's subjectivity and/or practices. The construct of "welfare dependents" as living a good life forms part of the agenda of neoliberal Western democracies to stigmatise this group in order to encourage people to work. Such practices resonate with the dominant discourse of individualisation whereby structural inequalities are assigned to the responsibility of the individual (Scharff, 2011). These regulations/policies are being circulated through multiple layers of society through relations of power. Technologies of power operate onto the population at a macro level as in the above example. Nonetheless, other discourses are available whereby the "drifter" is constructed as disparate from Islam.

### **3.3. Women of Maghrebi Origins' Strategies to Cope with the Status Quo**

Women of Maghrebi origins have constructed a variety of strategies in order to cope with distressing situations. Some shall be highlighted below.

#### 3.3.1. 'Exclusive' Strategies to Cope with the Demands of Assimilation/Secularism

#### **Extract 26:**

**Lamia:** *I sometimes receive emails with euh with information, I read them but I, because the media (mm, mm) do not contribute to the world's well-being I would like to say (yeah), so I first try to discard this to be euh, to be in a bubble, that's it, I am in a bubble, I am happy, everything is ok (ok). My children are here, euh my family, my friends, close people around and that's it (130-133).*

**Extract 27:**

**Fatima:** *When one part of the population does this and the other does that, bah you need to find a balance (yeah) and usually it's us einh, we try to go under... to do things discretely so that we don't show ourselves einh in order to, I told you in order to...earlier on, in order to live well (yes, ok so you, you, yeah) I glide under water [...] I remain quiet (701-704).*

**Extract 28:**

**Ranya:** *... Someone who is, who is not into religion, who (mm) who does not feel what you feel, bah, you (mm) you can't, he, he can't help you (mm) he can't co comfort you whatsoever, help you sooth yourself or whatsoever, it really is euh, it is necessary to go euh towards euh a member of your community, that's it (yeah) without telling you, that's it (729-732).*

Three 'exclusive' and separate strategies have been constructed by Lamia, Fatima and Ranya when dealing with distress associated with discourses of assimilation and/or secularism.

For Lamia, as *"the media (mm, mm) do not contribute to the world's well-being"*, she disengages with the *"information"* (*I first try to discard this*) to be *"in a bubble"*. This creates a satisfying sense of well-being (*I am happy*) which is reinforced by being surrounded by *"[her] children", "[her] family and "[her] friends"*. Alternatively, for Fatima her way of dealing with the situation consists of remaining silent. Fatima is constructing the *"population"* of France as living disparate lives (*one part of the population does this and the other does that*). Thus, a *"balance"* between different cultural practices is not constructed as intrinsic and must therefore be established. The assimilationist imperative imposes a requirement that ethnic minorities demonstrate a willingness to adapt (*it's us*) by *"do[ing] things discretely"* and *"glid[ing] under water"*, *"in order to live well"*. In a society where assimilationist discourse prevails, ethnic minorities are expected to adapt to the dominant norms, rules and practices whereas little is required of the majority group (Jansen, 2013). Whereas Fatima constructs assimilationist policies as silencing her practices (*I remain quiet*), Ranya exclusively seeks help from her own religious *"community"*. Ranya is taking

up a subject position from which “*it is necessary to go euh towards a member of your community*”. The white French majority or “*someone who is not into religion*” is positioned as unable to provide support (*he can't co comfort you whatsoever*). Help can only be achieved through “*one's community*”. According to Berry's model of acculturation, perceived discrimination from the majority can encourage minorities to remain within their own ‘group’. In stark contrast, Yasmina constructs the Maghrebi population as a hindrance to her well-being:

### 3.3.2. ‘Exclusive’ Strategies to Cope with the Demands of Maghrebi Discourse

#### **Extract 29:**

**Yasmina:** *The worry is that there are many Maghrebis and I haven't been able to live my life to the full, to feel good (OK), this is it [...] I used to live like a French person (OK) and I feel like finding this well-being again, and now I have the impression that... how can I put it? I live my life, but I have the impression of always being watched, criticised (20-28).*

For context, it must be noted that at the time of the interview, Yasmina had recently moved into a deprived area.

In this extract, Yasmina constructs the “*Maghrebis*” and the “*French*” in a dichotomised way. The Maghrebi population is problematised (*the worry is that*), “*there are many Maghrebis*” and their presence hinders Yasmina's ability to “*live [her] life to the full*” and to “*feel good*”. Conversely, “*liv[ing] like a French person*” is generated as providing a sense of “*well-being*”, which Yasmina “*would like*” to “*find*” “*again*”. Whilst these constructs are pervasive across French society and are available within literature (*i.e.* Houellebecq) they are mainly located within the assimilationist, nationalist and colonialist discourses. Drawing upon such discourses allows for the formation of French culture as superior as it is associated with a sense of “*well-being*”. Within these discourses, the “*Maghrebis*” are positioned as a threat to the subject of assimilation, whose ability to “*live [...] life to the full*” and “*feel good*” is

diminished as a result of the former's considerable size (*many*). There is a sense that French values are about to be subsumed by those of the "*many Maghrebis*", and that inevitable unhappiness will ensue. This is an exemplar of the assimilationist discourse-in-action, whereby its subject must adopt the values of the majority and renounce her cultural heritage through disciplinary power. Thus, the possibility of constructing the world in a multifaceted way is lost, together with its richness. Not only does this reflect the hegemony of the assimilationist discourse but it simultaneously highlights the subjugation of the intercultural and/or hybrid discourses.

According to Menuisier (2019), the emergence of certain constructs invoked within the nationalist and assimilationist discourses such as "the retreat behind national boundaries" emerged out of globalisation. The implications for practise of these dominant discourses could entail social isolation, especially since Yasmina lives in an area where ethnic minorities co-exist. This, in turn, could create a diminished sense of belonging.

Importantly, this extract also outlines Yasmina's "*impression of always being watched and criticised*". This illustrates Foucault's concept that fragments of discourses are simultaneously made use of. In that sense, it could be argued that Yasmina is also drawing upon the anti-religious discourse or certain approaches within the feminist discourse. Although some feminist movements such as "*Ni Putes, Ni Soumises*" refer specifically to the "male Muslim gaze", (Wing *et al.*, 2005), Yasmina narrates a story of being "*watched, criticised*" by the whole "*highly visible*" "*Maghrebis*". The process of problematising an object makes it visible (Arribas-Ayllon *et al.*, 2008). While the Maghrebi population is implicitly blamed for its visibility, the accountability of the State is eschewed. Interestingly, the continuous amalgamation of 'immigrants' in specific locations (*i.e. banlieues*) by the government is silenced. Implicit to this is the construction that living with the majority engenders well-being.

**Extract 30:**

**Cyan:** ...so, to make up for me, there are people like you who marry Maghrebis, because I can't.

**Sophie:** mm, yeah, bah yeah,

**Cyan:** [inaudible]

**Sophie:** Couldn't you?

**Cyan:** *Honestly, throughout my whole life, I was never able to go out with an Arabic bloke [...] I always chose a husband who would let me do what I want... (394-400)*

Here, the “*Arabic bloke*” is positioned as a person with whom Cyan “*was never able to go out*”. Instead, Cyan “*always chose a husband who would let [her] do what [she] want[s]*”. This practice could be described as an act of resistance to the Maghrebi tradition or an act of subjugation to discourse of assimilation. Nonetheless, Cyan is positioning “*Maghrebi*” men, as individuals who would hinder her freedom; hence she “*was never able to go out with an Arabic bloke*”. Such constructions would be available within a wide range of discourses such as a Western feminist discourse, a Maghrebi feminist discourse, a colonialist discourse or a nationalist discourse. Cyan is constructing the “*Arabic bloke*” as stable and unchangeable. This way of understanding human beings as fixed is, according to Burr (2018), promulgated by mainstream psychology and social psychology through an essentialist and individualistic account of the person. Conversely, a Foucauldian account would view the person as changeable and fluid depending on the discourse he/she inhabits and the relations of power he/she is engaged in.

Yet, most importantly, Cyan constructs the practice of not marrying inside her community as a choice (*I always chose*). However, it could be argued that it is a choice that only women of Maghrebi origins have to make and that white French women are not coerced into making such decisions. Whereas Cyan “*chooses*” to marry outside her “*community*”, Fatima “*chooses*” to live away from her parents.

For context, I asked Fatima the reasons as to why she had decided to stay in the same town (away from her parents) after her divorce.

**Extract 31:**

**Fatima:** *So, I like, I like my life here and after the things that I say less euuh (mm) my freedom (mm) here I have much more freedom, I know that if ...I would have, I would have been to [name of place of birth], I would have much less (ah yeah ok), yeah*

**Sophie:** in what, in what sense?



**Fatima:** *regarding euh my parents (ah yeah ok), because euh at ours, euhh, actually reaching majority does not exist actually euhh (yeah) (335-342).*

In this extract, parental authority is constructed as never ending (*actually reaching majority does not exist*), and hinders a daughter's "freedom". Fatima associates living away from her parents as "*hav[ing] much more freedom*". By drawing upon neoliberal discourse and its construction of "freedom" as a primary necessity, Fatima positions herself as a free-choosing and independent individual, whose practices entail living away from her parents. It could be hypothesised that Fatima was brought up by parents who inhabit the Maghrebi/traditional Islamic discourse, which privileges parental and family ties. It seems that in this extract Fatima resisted being positioned as an obedient daughter within traditional discourse. This impacted on her subjectivity in that she explains she "*like[s] [her] life here*". Additionally, it could equally be argued that Fatima is drawing upon an Islamic feminist discourse, whereby gender roles based on biological differences are negated (Ali, 2012). Within a more radical feminist Islamic discourse, Muslim women are not positioned as forced to adhere to certain traditions which engender a lack of freedom such as guardianship (Ali, 2012).

### 3.3.3 Less Excluding Strategies

#### 3.3.3.1. Redefining Islam

For context, Fatima explained that she is now more open to having relationships with others. It must be noted that Fatima requested that I abstain from providing details. I will therefore refrain from providing more contextual information.

#### **Extract 32:**

**Fatima:** *Trying to assume more and to tell me bah you don't cause any harm Fatima, but to really convince me of that. And I try to tell myself that if God gave us this capacity to feel that because it is human, sex, touching, all this, living as a couple, if he hadn't given us this capacity to feel this ... it means that it is good quite the opposite and if he gives us this capacity it is to (mm) I can say, how to call it?*

*Take it, utilise it. It's magical, it's beautiful to feel this, so why is it bad?  
I tell myself that if God really told us it was bad, he would not give us  
that much pleasure (mm, mm) so no I try to convince myself like this  
(mm) to try and find a balance between my religion and my life as a  
woman (yeah) that's it (671-678).*

In this extract, Fatima constructs “sex, touching, all this, living as a couple” as engendering a strong sense of well-being (*it's magical, it's beautiful to feel this*). Fatima is drawing upon a romantic discourse which produces the object “love” as a necessary component for the establishment of a good life. “Love” is constructed in a normative way since it implicates “*living as a couple*”. However, “sex, touching, all this, living as a couple” is simultaneously generated as having negative implications on subjectivity which entails adhering to certain practices to diminish a sense of guilt (*Trying to assume more and to tell me bah you don't cause any harm Fatima, but to really convince me of that*)(*so why is it bad?*). Fatima might be drawing upon Western psychological discourse or an Islamic feminist discourse. Although Islamic feminism is not a unitary block, most Islamic feminist discourses advocate for new constructions of the sources of the Qur'an and the Sunna (the prophetic way of life)(Ali, 2012). Implicit is the notion that Fatima no longer draws on a traditional Islamic discourse in which relationships outside marriage are discouraged. Instead, Fatima is involved in redefining Islam and therefore allowing for varied and new constructions of Islam to emerge, as advocated by Islamic feminists (*I tell myself that if God really told us it was bad, he would not give us that much pleasure...*). Drawing upon Islamic feminisms allows Fatima to “*try and find a balance between my religion and my life as a woman*”). Although the primary language used by Islamic feminists is English, these discourses are nonetheless spreading across all Western nations where Muslim minorities reside (Badran, 2012).

### 3.3.3.2. “Setting up organisations”

#### **Extract 33:**

**Adila:** *We are responsible (mm), we are responsible (yeah) so it's not just the others' fault (yeah), nothing prevents you from setting up an organisation, an association of, you are not happy with the school, you set up an association,*

*you create a school (yeah) there is one million things to do (yeah). We are not under dictatorship (yeah), we are not, there are plenty of things to do (yeah) (633-636).*

For Adila, well-being is synonymous with being “responsible”, by “setting up an organisation”. Adila provides the example of “creat[ing] a school” “if not happy with the school”. It is implied that Adila positions subjects of the Maghrebi/Islamic discourse as not “happy with the school”, which is a key institution in the transmission of secular and Western tenets. It could be hypothesised that Adila positions the Maghrebi population within a decolonial discourse whose aim is to redress past and present imbalances between the majority and minorities. However, although “not happy”, the Maghrebi population is constructed as not fighting for their principles. Indeed, they are positioned as not taking “responsibility” and blaming others “it’s not just the others’s fault[...] nothing prevents you from setting up an organisation”. Instead, Adila is blaming the Maghrebi population for their unhappiness and lack of involvement. They are positioned as unwilling to change the status quo (*there is one million things to do [...] we are not under dictatorship...*). Here, Adila could be invoking the neoliberal discourse which encourages the individual to be responsible and fully active in a society where state involvement is constructed as a hindrance to the smooth running of modern capitalist democracies (McNay, 2009). Adila might also be drawing upon feminist Islamic discourse which encourages women and men to be active participants in the promotions of social justice within an authentic Islamic paradigm. In the following extract, Sophia invokes a new discourse whereby all individuals are encouraged to “live better lives together”.

#### 3.3.3.3 “to live better lives together” or “le mieux vivre ensemble”

The purpose of this discourse is to encourage individuals from all ethnic backgrounds to establish peaceful relationships with one another in their environment.

#### **Extract 34:**

**Sophia:** [...] and there are now, since the attacks there are, they ask themselves many questions around the “it’s better to live together” and religion’s place. Because they realised that it is impossible to live in a society where you euh you you can’t express yourself freely (923-925).

Partly situated within the social work discourse, the cultural imperative “*to live better lives together*” (“*le mieux vivre ensemble*”) imposes a requirement that individuals demonstrate the will to approach the socially constructed Others. Sophia constructs this practice as emerging out of a context in which “*attacks*” were carried out, which led to the realisation that “*it is impossible to live in a society where you [...] can’t express yourself freely*” as regards to “*religion*”. This construct might serve to redress past imbalances whereby politicians blamed a whole community for the attacks carried out by a few (Plenel, 2016). Instead, the responsibility is constructed as lying with “*society*”. This might perhaps lessen the intensity of ill-at-ease feelings. Conversely, Adila is partly placing responsibility onto ethnic minorities.

### **Extract 35:**

**Adila:** *We must all mix together (mm), I think, it is not, it is, it is to know each other better, it’s important to know the others, aaah, eating couscous every day, it’s good if I eat euh pot au feu [I laughs] ... (567-569).*

The importance of “*mix[ing] together*” is highlighted here by possibly evoking intercultural discourse and the “*living better lives together*” discourse. Minorities are placed in a subject position from which they are required to adapt their practices by adopting some of the majority’s practices (*eating couscous every day, it’s good if I eat euh pot au feu*). However, the aim is to “*know each other*” so that more harmonious relationships develop. This process is enabled by the sharing of a variety of hearty food dishes representing different cultures and traditions. This is reminiscent of Malouf’s (1998) construction of how to establish peaceful intercultural relationships. Indeed, according to the scholar, for this process to unfold, each person must be able to recognise symbols of his/her culture of origin within the common culture.

In summary, this section has presented and discussed the analysis through attending to women of Maghrebi origins’ constructions of well-being in relation to French context. Women of Maghrebi origins constructed well-being in much nuanced ways. They drew upon a variety of discourses when constructing well-being, namely liberal individualism, western psychology, assimilation, secularism, Maghrebi and Muslim feminism (to name but a few). The various constructions of the Maghrebi/Muslim woman and processes of governmentality also impacted on constructions of well-being. In brief, well-being is complex and a homogenous definition of the concept cannot be produced. However, women of Maghrebi

origins have implemented a variety of coping strategies when dealing with distressing situations. This is of particular importance to counselling psychology as the discipline aims at empowering clients to alleviate distress whilst co-exploring multiple cultural perspectives within a social justice framework. The final chapter shall provide an overall discussion of the analysis and evaluation of this research whilst outlining recommendations going forward for counselling psychology, clinical research and practice.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION**

This chapter discusses the main findings from the analysis in relation to the research questions. A critical evaluation of the study is provided with particular consideration to issues which are relevant to qualitative research, namely sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, and impact and improvement (Yardley, 2008, Yardley, 2017). The last section explores implications for future research, clinical practice and counselling psychology.

### **4.1. Research Question and Analysis Summary**

The notion of well-being has been researched for thousands of years. However, the aim of this research is not to provide a genealogy of well-being but to explore how this construction is produced by women of Maghrebi origins in the context of France. As such, this study was guided by women of Maghrebi origins' understanding of well-being as opposed to a particular definition. It must be noted that although the interview questions related specifically to well-being, the participants talked about distress extensively. This, combined with the fact that I position myself as a trainee within the discourse of counselling psychology, led to emphasis being placed on well-being/distress and subjectivity.

To address the broad question of 'how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being', the following sub-questions were developed:

- How do women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being in relation to Western and Maghrebi discourses? How do women of Maghrebi origins negotiate their sense of identity?
- How do dominant Western discourses construct Islam and Maghrebi women? What are the implications for subjectivity and practices?
- How does the relationship between dominant discourses and institutions impact women of Maghrebi origins' practices and constructions of well-being? And how is power exercised onto bodies and minds?
- What coping strategies, if any, do women of Maghrebi origins use?

For clarity, these questions will be addressed by referring to the two main discursive sites previously identified. Coping strategies will be incorporated throughout the two sites.

#### 4.1.1. Women of Maghrebi Origins' Understandings of Well-Being in Relation to Western Knowledges

Women of Maghrebi origins drew upon a variety of Western discourses when constructing well-being and distress: modern-day psychology, individualism, assimilation and secularism. Whilst these discourses are interrelated to various degrees, all are pervasive across neoliberal France. Inherent to neoliberalism is the process of governmentality, which refers to the ways with which modern capitalist societies exercise an indirect style of social control on the population. This modern form of political rule advocates for a society in which individuals are autonomous, responsible and able to self-manage, without the need for state interventions (McNay, 2009). Human/social sciences (including psychological discourses) have been hailed as having facilitated the production of the self as self-reliant. Importantly, there has been a surge of discourses on well-being (Wright, 2013). Contemporary discourses on well-being have now permeated all spheres of Western societies. Discourses on well-being have been critiqued for producing subjects who increasingly invoke Western and liberal conceptions of individualism whilst minimising one's desire for state interventions. In this sense, Western discourses on well-being continue to construct the subject as needing to become self-reliant (Sointu, 2005). Current Western discourses on well-being have also been hailed as discourses of affluence, which solely address the lived experiences of individuals with wealth, implying that people from poorer countries are not as concerned with well-being since they have more basic material needs to fulfil (White, 2008). For White this could justify the withdrawal of aid programmes. This aside, this study demonstrates that neoliberal ways of being-in-the world have been internalised by some women of Maghrebi origins when constructing well-being. Specifically, it seems that women who were or had been in therapy constructed neoliberal values of autonomy, choice and rationality as vital to their well-being. For example, the needs to rely on others were produced as leading to ill-being. By contrast, free-choice, independence and alleged freedom were generated as restoring well-being. Technologies of the self (learnt in therapy) were used to make this process successful through constant "self-analysis". This resonates with Rose (1990), who argued that the "psy" disciplines have contributed to the maintenance of a neoliberal style of governance partly through the promulgation of self-examination. Here, the individual is held accountable for the promotion of his/her own well-being. This is reminiscent of traditional and contemporary Western psychotherapy/psychology discourse, within which features individualism. Indeed, the subject of Western psychotherapy/psychology is encouraged to explore his/her inner self in order to address unhelpful feelings, thoughts, behaviour and/or unconscious desires (Matsumoto & Juang, 2017). Throughout this process, societal factors such as structural inequalities are relegated to the background (Gill, 2017). Occupying the

subject position of 'patient in therapy' had implications for practices and subjectivity. For example, several women decided to live away from their parents and siblings (this was constructed as a coping strategy). And, whilst some women of Maghrebi origins produced an enhanced sense of well-being, others described inevitable anguish. Notwithstanding these different emotions, inhabiting the discourse of psychotherapy/psychology was equated with learning a new "language", whose command created a sense of pride. These examples illustrate Foucault's understanding of power as productive rather than intrinsically repressive. Through the workings of power/knowledge, the subject of psychology is created.

Other women of Maghrebi origins constructed well-being in different ways. For example, the practice of returning to university was constructed as fulfilling a need for self-realisation. This could be constructed as an enactment of 'the self as enterprise' inherent to neoliberal democracies (McNay, 2009). Again, this decision was generated as a free choice. Additionally, well-being could also be constructed as a result of having one's basic needs met. Here, well-being was equated with a sense of gratitude and contentment for having shelter, a loving family and food.

In summary, women of Maghrebi origins constructed well-being by drawing upon several hegemonic Western discourses, which required of them to fulfil certain obligations. Addressing these requirements was described as emanating from their own free will and created an array of subjectivities and practices. Whilst some described an enhanced sense of well-being, and an increased sense of achievement and pride, others highlighted pain. Another participant expressed gratitude for being able to enjoy simple commodities. It is therefore impossible to offer a unitary understanding of how women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being in relation to Western discourses. In brief, well-being is produced in complex ways in relation to Western discourses. Whilst drawing upon Western knowledges, women of Maghrebi origins simultaneously drew upon Maghrebi discourses to construct well-being. The next session will address this question.

#### 4.1.2. Women of Maghrebi Origins' Understandings of Well-Being in Relation to Maghrebi/Islamic Tradition and as a Product of their Negotiations between Secularism/Assimilation and Maghrebi Culture

Traditional Maghrebi discourse was constructed as both synonymous with well-being and distress. In contrast, Islamic discourses and Islamic feminist discourses were frequently produced as having positive effects on well-being by most women of Maghrebi origins. It is nonetheless difficult to systematically identify which discourse is being invoked (especially as women of Maghrebi origins do not share uniform understandings of these discourses).



Therefore, unless explicitly stated by participants, the term Maghrebi/Islamic discourse will be used.

References were often made to the family when drawing upon Maghrebi/Islamic discourse in relation to well-being. Establishing close relationships based on mutual help within one's family unit is a key concept in Islamic discourses (Al-Hakim, 2005). However, women of Maghrebi origins constructed the Maghrebi family in multifaceted ways. Family relationships could therefore be constituted as enhancing a sense of well-being or creating distress. Thus, the family could be generated as providing vital support whilst being synonymous with restrictions. Nonetheless, most women of Maghrebi origins stressed the importance of establishing good family relationships (with children, siblings and parents) in order to experience well-being. Thus, certain practices, depicted as fundamental, were implemented into everyday life (such as being in contact with mother on a daily basis for example). Having little contact or lacking family recognition (for not adhering to Islamic norms for example) was constructed as creating a strong sense of "hurt". The pain was exacerbated by generating this practice as synonymous with losing one's identity. In parallel, parental authorities could at times be produced as a hindrance to freedom, self-actualisation and sexuality. The impact of parental authority and the wider community on girls within Maghrebi families has been researched by Freedman *et al.*, (2000), who highlighted feelings of injustice amongst women for being treated differently from their brothers for example. Some women of Maghrebi origins positioned their parents as required by traditions, the community and/or the Mosque to exert power onto their children, especially their daughters. Several women explained attempting to conform to the representation of the "model Maghrebi daughter", which impacted on both their practices and subjectivity. Thus, one participant expressed feeling "consumed" and not wanting to live near her parents and the community again. In this sense, occupying the subject position of dutiful daughter within Maghrebi/Islamic discourse could be understood as creating feelings of oppression. Yet again, some women of Maghrebi origins did not experience parental authorities or the Muslim community/population as a hindrance to well-being. Having highlighted the different ways of constructing the family, the next section will specifically discuss the effects of Islamic discourse on subjectivity and practices. Similarly to all previous constructions, multiple understandings of Islam co-exist.

According to Bouzenita *et al.*, (2016), obeying Allah's commandments is the Muslim person's ultimate goal in life. Islam was indeed frequently constructed as having substantial implications on well-being. Practicing Islam was predominantly understood by women of Maghrebi origins as having positive effects on subjectivity. Most (but not all) women enacted their religiosity in several ways through the use of technologies of the self which involved praying, thinking about God, thanking God for what they have, and asking God for help in

difficult situations. These practices were understood as creating a sense of peace, a sense of relief and a sense of gratefulness. By contrast, Islamic practices which were understood as a hindrance to sexual enjoyment (such as only performing sex when married) were re-defined by partly drawing upon Islamic feminist discourses. A diminished sense of guilt was said to be resulting from this way of re-constructing more traditional Islamic practices. Such unconventional discursive constructions of Islam might have been enabled by the growing circulation of Islamic feminist discourses amongst the Muslim diaspora in Europe (Ali, 2012). This aside, some women explained that practicing their religiosity in France was difficult. Within decoloniality discourses, Western capitalist societies are described as having privileged white constructions whilst disqualifying other non-white traditions and principles ever since the onset of colonisation (Bouteldja, 2012; Mignolo, 2013). Whereas this process was completed through means of violence such as guns (in the context of French ruling) (Fanon, 1961), contemporary forms of colonialism (i.e. neo-colonialism) force migrants to assimilate (Bouteldja, 2012). In brief, decoloniality argues that Western democracies continue to dominate the “Third World” and migrants living in Europe/US by coercing them into adopting Western liberal normative principles.

Sites of institutional power such as the school and the hospital were frequently discussed by some women of Maghrebi origins as they were constructed as greatly impacted on subjectivity and practices. Dominant discourses such as assimilation, secularism and Republicanism are deployed on such public sites where power is exercised onto the bodies and minds of all individuals. Thus, staff, pupils and ‘patients’ are coerced into adhering to certain norms through technologies of power and technologies of the self. Some women praised the Republican school for having contributed to their sense of belonging and therefore well-being. By contrast, another woman of Maghrebi origins described how, in her opinion, secularism prevents individuals from expressing their religiosity, who, in turn commit terrorist attacks. Several policies have been passed in order to consolidate the hegemony of secularism/ assimilation, such as the 2004 law, which is an example of a technology of power. The validity of such policies is reinforced by the circulation of dominant constructions of the Muslim woman as a victim of patriarchal Islam or a terrorist (Scott, 2018). In turn, the establishment of such laws contribute to the growing problematisation of Islam. Within this context, one woman of Maghrebi origins explained that she felt obliged to adapt her outfit to normative ways of dressing by not wearing long skirts. She simultaneously expressed a sense of fear at being “stared at” or “attacked”, should she wear Islamic clothing. Adhering to normative ways of dressing within Islamic/Maghrebi discourse was constructed as increasing well-being by another woman. This exemplifies the workings of power through and not against the individual. Resisting the subject position of oppressed Muslim woman, she

disclosed adopting Maghrebi/ Islamic ways of being when deemed important. Thus, medical staffs were unable to exercise disciplinary power onto her body and mind despite using techniques such as normalisation and the 'gaze'. By not displaying her body, the 'covered' woman is not adhering to Western postfeminist normative looks, whereby the 'sexy' body is constructed as a source of identity and power (Gill, 2007). The 'sexual liberation' that unfolded in Western Europe was not constructed by Foucault as liberating but as a means to govern human conduct instead (Le Point, 2017). Referring to the twentieth century as "the turn to sexuality", Scott (2018, p.176) demonstrated how sexuality has subsumed reason and spirituality, while locating agency not "in the reasoning mind but in the desiring body". In this context, the construction of the Muslim woman as emancipated through her piety is negated (Göle, 2015). Unsurprisingly, some women developed strategies such as living in a "bubble" or seeking help exclusively from the Muslim population. Other women, who strongly resisted the subject position of victims, urged member of 'their group' to mix with the majority. These women positioned themselves as having two identities (for instance French/Moroccan). This created an enhanced sense of well-being as they described enjoying the ability to oscillate between Western and Maghrebi/Islamic discourses. Others, similarly to Amara (2006), the founder of the organisation *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* described experiencing, on the one hand, gender inequalities within Maghrebi discourse, and on the other hand, Othering within Western discourse.

Thus, women of Maghrebi origins positioned themselves in complex ways in relation to Maghrebi/Islamic discourse. Although some features of Maghrebi/Islamic discourse were produced as having positive effects on well-being by some women of Maghrebi origins, other women constructed divergent accounts. Thus, the production of a unitary account of well-being in relation to Maghrebi/Islamic discourse would be unethical and unbeneficial.

In summary, women of Maghrebi origins construct well-being and distress in multifaceted ways. They occupy a variety of subject positions and position themselves in complex ways in relation to Western discourse and Maghrebi/Islamic discourses. As such, there is not one way of being a woman of Maghrebi origins. The following section will briefly consider whether similar multifaceted ways of understanding well-being and distress can be located within mainstream psychology.

Although the discipline of psychology does not form a homogeneous body of knowledge, the modalities located within this discourse share characteristics (except, it seems, for systemic therapy). It appears that most mainstream approaches strive to understand the cause of the problem and situate distress within the individual. Indeed, it seems that, similarly to the bio-medical model, most mainstream

approaches attempt to resolve the problem described by the client/patient by understanding its causes. While certain modality such as psychodynamic places greater emphasis on past events than Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, both conceptualise problems as stemming from past experiences. In contrast, a social constructionist systemic approach would not entail an exploration of childhood experiences to understand the root of the problem. Instead, the focus would be on the present and how the client understands his/her current relationships with other systems in his/her life. Yet, most importantly, within mainstream psychological discourse, distress is constituted as residing within the individual. As such, external factors and relationships with others might not be given as much consideration (Gergen, 2009). This way of positioning the self as responsible for his/her own well-being resonates with Bauman's (2011) understanding of individualism. Indeed, the scholar argued that the subject of individualism is positioned as unable to blame social, political and economic factors for the unfolding of his/her life. This resonates with the constructions of the neoliberal subject as autonomous and responsible who must be successful despite adversity (Gill, 2017). In this sense, it could be argued that within western neoliberal societies, mainstream psychological discourse offers a somehow unitary view of distress and well-being, whereby the problem is situated within the person.

By contrast, it could be argued that multifaceted ways of understanding well-being and distress can be found in systemic and intercultural therapies since these modalities advocate for a social constructionist view of these notions. Within these frameworks, distress and well-being are generated in a variety of ways depending on the historical and cultural contexts (Hedges, 2005; Matsumoto *et al.*, 2017). For example, whereas distress can be generated as caused by spirits (djins) within Muslim discourse (Matsumoto *et al.*, 2017), such constructions would not feature within the discourse of mainstream psychology. Rather, the intensity of distress can be diminished by addressing relationships and other external factors. Within a systemic framework, distress is constructed as interpersonal and not intrapersonal, similarly to the self. In other words, moderate social constructionist psychologists would consider the western concept of an intrinsic self that resides inside as unhelpful and would instead emphasise how one's identity or self was created within particular cultural and historical discourse communities (Hedges, 2005).

In summary, although the discourse of mainstream psychology does not form a unitary body of expertise, most modalities construct distress in a uniform way

wherein distress resides inside the individual. In stark contrast, systemic therapy advocates for an interpersonal understanding of distress and well-being.

## **4.2. Limitations of FDA**

Foucauldian tenets have been vehemently critiqued during Foucault's lifetime and post-mortem by academics, alleged intellectuals, journalists and others. This section will solely focus on academic critiques which relate to either the question addressed here or the epistemological and ontological positions underpinning this thesis. Critiques emanating from researchers, whose ontological positions differ, namely relativist social constructionists will be presented. Certain Western feminists have also constructed FDA as flawed. Their perspectives will be highlighted in this section together with Islamic feminist views. A Marxist perspective will also be offered alongside more general comments to shed light on FDA's limitations.

### 4.2.1. Limitations of FDA within a Relativist Social Constructionist Discourse

Relativist social constructionists' disapproval of FDA relates to the latter's epistemological and ontological assumptions. To be precise, relativist social constructionists have made some trenchant criticisms of FDA for its adherence to distinct epistemological and ontological positions: relativist and realist respectively. Researchers espousing relativist social constructionism argue that such a process creates inconsistencies (Harper, 2011). Other comments relate to how FDA stresses certain phenomena, which they construct as problematic, whilst ignoring other phenomena which could nonetheless also be produced as problematic (Harper, 2011). It could perhaps be said that Foucauldian discourse analysts are positioned as biased in relation to which aspects they decide to highlight; perhaps as a result of their political opinions. For some Western feminists, Foucault failed to study gender differences.

### 4.2.2. Limitations of FDA within a Western Feminist Discourse and an Islamic Feminist Discourse

Drawing upon a Western Feminist Discourse, Braidotti (cited in Sarup, 1993) stressed that contrary to the Western feminist scholar Irigaray, Foucault failed to consider gender differences. According to Braidotti, Irigaray intentionally placed great emphasis on gender differences and otherness as a way of asserting feminine subjectivity. For Braidotti, Foucault's negation of gender differences is unsurprising since Western philosophy is inextricably patriarchal. Interestingly, the strategy of putting forward differences can also be located within an Islamic feminism. Seedat's (2013) criticism of Western feminist discourses

(including third wave feminism) was triggered by the refusal of this discourse to embrace the different needs and values of non-Western women. For Seedat, dominant Western discourses (including Western feminisms) must acknowledge differences if they are to recognise other ways of making sense of the world. Only then, will Others' differences will be valued (Seedat, 2013). Although third wave feminism attempted to redress past imbalances by allegedly accepting differences, for Seedat, their main model of emancipation remained based on Western ideologies (for details see section xxx). Whilst some feminists reject Foucauldian principles for not emphasising differences, Marxists elaborate a critique of Foucault based on his conception of power and lack of emphasis on class struggles.

#### 4.2.3. Limitations of FDA within a Marxist Discourse

Foucault strongly argued against the Marxist discourse and its construction of power as emanating from the bourgeoisie. Unlike Marxists, Foucault disregarded the concept that the bourgeoisie intentionally created a class system whereby the proletariat would be exploited by the bourgeoisie (Hebdige, 1993). By contrast, for Marxists, Foucault failed to take into account the fact (in their opinion) that domination emanates from capitalist relations of production and in the organisation of the state (Sarup, 1993). Foucault was also critiqued by other commentators (Marxists and others) for negating state violence in modern societies (Sarup, 1993). This seems unfounded since Foucault commented on the concept of power as repressive in *Discipline and Punish*. Undoubtedly, for Foucault (1975) power was essentially productive in modern societies. As regards the metaphor of the Panopticon, Foucault was critiqued for not addressing who power operates against (Sarup, 1993). This criticism reoccurs frequently. For example, if domination is not based on class division but all social relations are relations of power, who are the subjects who confront each other? (Sarup, 1993). According to Sarup, Foucault struggled to answer this question but eventually suggested that "it's all against all" which led to his theory being labelled "a strategy without a subject" (Sarup, 1993, p.81). From a decolonial perspective, this answer might be deemed unhelpful. Indeed, it fails to address the structural inequalities faced by the Maghrebi population in France and highlighted by Hussey.

#### 4.2.2. General Limitations of FDA

Critiques have remarked that in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault solely conceptualised social relations as imbued with power and domination and failed to consider the human warmth which might exist in family and society (Sarup, 1993). Sociability was indeed constructed as

paramount by women of Maghrebi origins and features heavily in the discourse of Islamic feminisms (Al Hakim, 2011).

### **4.3. Evaluative Criteria and Critical Review**

According to Yardley (2017), it is inappropriate to evaluate the quality of knowledge produced within qualitative research using scientific criteria. The main reason is that most qualitative studies do not adhere to a realist epistemological position. Different evaluative criteria have been developed which include the following four dimensions: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and improvement (Yardley, 2008, 2017). Unlike other parts of this study, first-person singular pronouns are used throughout this section to emphasise my personal influence on data analysis.

#### **4.3.1 Sensitivity to Context**

Sensitivity has been demonstrated throughout the research by showing awareness of the participants' social and cultural context.

Since I did not know how the participants would describe their ethnic identity, I had chosen not to mention the participants' cultural heritage in the interview questions. However, I decided against the idea following a lecture, when we were strongly advised to emphasise the participant's ethnic background when conducting interviews with minorities. I felt both puzzled and uncomfortable when I asked the first participant how she would, as a French woman of Maghrebi origins, describe her well-being. Towards the end of the interview, the participant stressed that she did not understand why people always refer to her as 'of Maghrebi origins' and that she would prefer to be addressed as 'French woman whose parents/grand-parents as of Maghrebi origins'. I acknowledged the participant's concerns and thanked her for her honesty. Following this interview, I phoned my research supervisor (the next interview was on the same day) who confirmed that one of the aims of the research was to understand how the participants construct their sense of identity and that I should not impose any pre-conceived ideas. References to their ethnic background during interviews were subsequently removed. This example demonstrates sensitivity to the participants and the social and cultural context they live in. Additionally, the linguistic context was also taken into consideration when choosing which language to use during interviews. A decision was easily reached as I do not speak Arabic but all the participants and I speak perfect French. The interviews were therefore conducted in French. Having last lived in France two decades ago, I was mindful that I had not experienced the same events as the participants. I therefore

decided to familiarise myself with the broader social and cultural context by listening to the news, reading newspapers with divergent opinions and talking about past and present-day events. I requested of friends who share the same ethnic background as the participants to consider whether the questions were relevant to this group.

#### 4.2.2. Commitment and Rigour

Yardley (2000) argued that commitment can be demonstrated by the researcher immersing himself/herself in the subject studied. This project, which I undertook four years ago, has never been interrupted. I travelled to different parts of France in order to interview participants (this included a pilot interview). I thoroughly engaged with the topic by reading about it extensively and listening to pertaining programmes up to this present day.

Yardley (2008) suggested that rigour can be achieved in qualitative research by attending to the data thoughtfully, with a sound understanding of theories and sufficient methodological abilities. This was accomplished by reading extensively on FDA both in French and English and, approaching and requesting a supervisor who had in-depth knowledge of this methodology (I had previously attended lectures on FDA facilitated by my supervisor and had read some of her published studies informed by Foucauldian principles). I also shared my understandings (and lack of understandings) of FDA with another fellow student who had espoused the same methodology. If doubts persisted I sought clarifications from my supervisor.

#### 4.2.3. Impact and improvement

This study demonstrates impact and improvement for both research and clinical practice (see sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 respectively for a detailed analysis).

#### 4.2.4. Limitation of the study

I position myself as an outsider researcher since I do not share the same ethnic background as my participants. Occupying this position can, at times facilitate dialogue. For example, one participant shared an account that she claimed she had not been able to disclose to friends, whom she positioned as religious. Although in this case, being an outsider researcher facilitated the process, occupying this position has disadvantages. This is not to suggest that researchers should solely study 'members of their group'. Rather, seeking



participants' views throughout all stages of the research could produce more diverse and context-sensitive forms of knowledge. This particularly resonates with me since one of my participants requested I phoned her back after an interview. The participant sought to clarify the extracts I had included. I identified the extracts pertaining to her account, which she claimed she was happy with. I understood that she was urging me to include her constructions of sexual well-being but in an implicit way. When further immersing myself in the data, I considered whether she would approve of my analysis and the details provided. Feeling uncertain, I sought guidance from my supervisor. Within this context, it would have been all the more reassuring and beneficial to ascertain her views on the study. This process (known as action research) can, however, be complex, time consuming and expensive.

### **4.3. Epistemological and Personal Reflexivity**

This section refers to reflexivity, a process inherent to qualitative research, whereby the researcher is encouraged to reflect on how his/her role has shaped the knowledge produced (Braun *et al.*, 2013). Implicit to this process is the exploration of the researcher's relation to knowledge (his /her epistemological assumptions). Here, epistemological reflectivity and personal reflexivity have been amalgamated into one section as both have influenced each other. In the below question, I will address a dilemma which has left me feeling uncomfortable, alongside learning curves.

Whilst exploring historically and culturally specific discursive relations, I became aware that I was producing biased knowledges. Occupying the position of white Western European, I resisted constructing traditional Maghrebi discourses as having the potential to oppress for fear of drawing upon neo-colonial discourses. Reading literature which simultaneously encompassed Foucauldian, anti-colonial and feminist principles cautioned me against producing ethnocentric and neo-colonial forms of knowledge. For example, Foucault asserted that knowledge production, a biased process, is simultaneously the conditions and consequences of power relations (Hollway, 1989). Consequently, dominant forms of knowledge maintain existing structural inequalities. Scharff (2011) insisted that contemporary Western discourses on patriarchal Islam resemble colonial discourses in that they reproduces similar ways of constructing and therefore knowing the Other. By producing the object it speaks about (for example the Muslim woman as a victim of patriarchal Islam), a regime of truth is established (Scharff, 2011). As such, I strove not to reinforce the hegemonic construction of the Muslim/ Maghrebi woman as subjugated to Islamic discourse. Not reproducing dominant constructions seemed all the more important as I was studying a group whose ethnic background I did not share. Not only was I an outsider researcher, I

shared the same ethnic background as the dominants (and 'the colonisers'). It must be noted that my participants knew that I was in a long-term relationship with a person who positions himself as Maghrebi. I did not deliberately inform the participants of my marital status but the friends and relatives who recruited did. In this sense, it is possible that I was positioned by the participants as half way between an outsider and an insider. This aside, I became increasingly fearful of producing knowledge which would reinforce power imbalances by unintentionally positioning the Other as inferior. At first, this did not prove a problem. Indeed, when I began to examine the data, I systematically constructed my participants' critiques of Maghrebi discourse as an enactment of assimilation and secularism discourses. However, by further immersing myself in the data and expanding my literary search, I identified discourses that had gone unnoticed, namely intersexuality and Islamic feminist discourses.

Studying intersectionality and Islamic feminisms enabled me to realise that some of my participants were drawing upon these discourses to make sense of their lived experiences. Inevitably, inhabiting those discourses impacted on their constructions of well-being. It emerged that some participants depicted discriminatory practices within both Western and Maghrebi discourses. Other participants generated some features of traditional Maghrebi discourse as highly oppressive. In parallel, through research, I learnt that Islamic feminisms advocate for new non-patriarchal/traditional constructions of Islam. This way of re-defining Islam was equally present in the data. As such, I found myself in a dilemma whereby I would either have to be critical of Maghrebi discourse at the risk of reinstating neo-colonial forms of knowledge or ignore the voices of some of my participants. Compelled to take a stance, I decided to be critical of traditional Maghrebi discourses for two main reasons. Firstly, the aim of my research was to give women of Maghrebi origins a voice (regardless of my own opinion) and secondly, deliberately omitting certain constructions would have been unethical. To this present day, I have not resolved this dilemma which leaves me feeling uncomfortable.

Yet, I am comforted by the idea that my account constitutes one possible understanding out of a multitude (in line with a moderate social constructionist epistemological position). Foucault constructed truth as a historical product and therefore knowledge as not ultimate (Hollway, 1989). Although acknowledging multiple realities can create a sense of insecurity, not striving to 'discover the truth' provides reassurance. Yet, most importantly, I am grateful for having espoused a critical realist social constructionist approach because it does not create a hierarchy of knowledges. In this sense, it is my opinion that a critical realist social constructionist epistemological approach contributes to redressing power imbalances by not placing Western knowledges on a pedestal. This, in turn, could create a richer society

embedded in principles of tolerance and acceptance. In hindsight, fully incorporating tenets inherent to critical realist social constructionism would have involved seeking my participants' perspectives during all stages of knowledge production (referred to as action research). This recommendation will be further developed in section 4.4. Lastly, conducting this research has also increased awareness of my own biases within my practice and in my day-to-day life.

Matsumoto *et al.* (2017) placed great emphasis on the concept that all human beings, regardless of how they identify themselves, hold prejudices. Prior to conducting this research, I positioned myself as a subject of non-discriminatory discourses. For example, I would lead my life by drawing upon Marxist discourses, humanist discourses and counselling psychology discourses, which advocate for equality between all and social justice. Having read on subtle forms of disciplinary power, I began to question whether I had intentionally internalised certain neoliberal normative practices and whether I was privileging certain Western knowledges over more local and traditional constructions. Inhabiting the discourses of decoloniality and Islamic feminisms has allowed me to appreciate that modern democracy, for example, is not a concept sought by all individuals. Some proponents of Islamic feminisms such as Barlas do not construct democracy and modernity as ideals to aspire to. Rather, authentic and non-patriarchal interpretations of Islam are favoured. As for decoloniality it seeks non-European ways of being in the world. In conclusion, through this research, I have become acquainted with other ways of making sense of the world. Simultaneously, this process has encouraged me to always check for and challenge my own biases.

## **4.4 Impact and Recommendations**

### **4.4.1. Implications for Future Research**

Centring the research on well-being provided valuable insights in that it did not impose any pre-conceived constructions of Western understandings of distress onto the participants. However, focusing on more specific areas such as women of Maghrebi origins' lived experiences of Western therapy might allow for the production of more in-depth data. Further research could perhaps assess how individualistic modern-day psychology is experienced by women whose cultural heritage might construct distress as not emanating from the person. Indeed, culturally diverse clients can attribute distress to natural factors (such as being ill-attuned to the environment) or supernatural reasons (being possessed by spirits)

(Matsumoto *et al.*, 2017). Adopting a methodology that emphasises the lived experiences of women when taking up certain subject positions whilst in therapy would therefore seem useful. As such, studies informed by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) might provide new insights. Counselling psychology, a discipline underpinned by intercultural values and a strong sense of social justice, would appear particularly apt to address such dilemmas.

#### 4.4.2 Implications for Clinical Practice and Counselling Psychology

Research on ethnic minorities' well-being recommends that White Western therapists acquaint themselves with their clients' culture (Vasquez, 2007). Although this would seem crucial, the therapist must nonetheless be cautious not to generalise cultural specificities to all members of a specific ethnic group. This study might enable counselling psychologists to better understand the reality of the existence of a manifold way of understanding distress within a same ethnic minority group. Thus, being curious about the client's own understanding of distress is paramount. Encouraging clients who discuss their religiosity to share religious ways of overcoming distress such as praying or reading the Quran for example (Matsumoto *et al.*, 2017) would seem beneficial. Such innovative ways of offering therapy resonates with counselling psychology's core principles of social justice and interculturalism (Tribe *et al.*, 2017). Thus, it could be argued that counselling psychology would be of benefits to women of Maghrebi origins within the French context. Since counselling psychology is still not recognised in France, exporting the discipline should be considered. This would facilitate the development of a therapeutic environment in which multiple non-hierarchical cultural constructions of distress co-exist.

#### **4.5. Final Thoughts**

Western and Maghreb/Islamic discourses can be constructed in a variety of ways. While some women of Maghrebi origins problematise certain fragments of discourses, others depict them as enhancing well-being. Well-being and distress are therefore constructed in multifaceted and complex ways by women of Maghrebi origins. Thus, women of Maghrebi origins should not be regarded as a homogenous group. In this context, counselling psychologists must ensure that a curious stance is maintained throughout the therapeutic process by inviting clients to share their specific understandings of well-being. This practice involves the establishment of a sound therapeutic alliance whereby the client is actively listened to. Although I was careful not to act as a therapist during interviews, one of the

participants expressed a deep sense of satisfaction at having been heard. The following extract illustrates the importance of being listened to and understood.

**Fatima:** *No, talking about it made me feel good because you see, we must, must, mustn't, it's, it's great that someone is interested in this topic (Oh nice!) because really it's so hard to be a Muslim woman in Fr I mean in a euh Western country, I mean any so it, it is nice to be listened to actually (oh nice!), to feel slightly considered yes... one more time. And that's it, so it makes me feel good. Thank you (716-719).*

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: University of East London Ethical form**

**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**School of Psychology**

## **APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL**

**FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

**FOR BSc RESEARCH**

**FOR MSc/MA RESEARCH**

**FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL, COUNSELLING & EDUCATIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGY**

**If you need to apply to have ethical clearance from another Research Ethics Committee (e.g. NRES, HRA through IRIS) you DO NOT need to apply to the School of Psychology for ethical clearance also. Please see details on**

**<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/NHS-Research-Ethics-Committees.aspx>**

**Among other things this site will tell you about UEL sponsorship**

Note that you do not need NHS ethics approval if collecting data from NHS staff except where the confidentiality of NHS patients could be compromised.

*Before completing this application please familiarise yourself with:*

The *Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009)* published by the British Psychological Society (BPS). This can be found in the Ethics folder in the Psychology Noticeboard (Moodle) and also on the BPS website

[http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/aa%20Standard%20Docs/inf94\\_code\\_web\\_ethics\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/aa%20Standard%20Docs/inf94_code_web_ethics_conduct.pdf)

And please also see the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics (2015-16)

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Documents/Ethics%20forms/UEL-Code-of-Practice-for-Research-Ethics-2015-16.pdf>

### **HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION**

1. Complete this application form electronically, fully and accurately.
2. Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (5.1).
3. Include copies of all necessary attachments in the **ONE DOCUMENT SAVED AS .doc**
4. Email your supervisor the completed application and all attachments as **ONE DOCUMENT**. Your supervisor will then look over your application.
5. When your application demonstrates sound ethical protocol your supervisor will type in his/her name in the 'supervisor's signature' (section 5) and submit your application for review (psychology.ethics@uel.ac.uk). You should be copied into this email so that you know your application has been submitted. It is the responsibility of students to check this.
6. Your supervisor should let you know the outcome of your application. Recruitment and data collection are **NOT** to commence until your ethics application has been approved, along with other research ethics approvals that may be necessary (See section 4)

### **ATTACHMENTS YOU MUST ATTACH TO THIS APPLICATION**

1. A copy of the participant invitation letter that you intend giving to potential participants.

2. A copy of the consent form that you intend giving to participants.
3. A copy of the debrief letter you intend to give participants.

### **OTHER ATTACHMENTS (AS APPROPRIATE)**

- A copy of original and/or pre-existing questionnaire(s) and test(s) you intend to use.
- Example of the interview questions you intend to ask participants.
- Copies of the visual material(s) you intend showing participants.
- A copy of ethical clearance or permission from an external institution/organisation if you need it (e.g. a charity, school, local authority, workplace etc.). *See Section 4 for more detail about when you need such permission.* Permission/s must be attached to this application but your ethics application can be submitted to the School of Psychology before ethical approval is obtained from another organisation if separate ethical clearance from another organisation is required

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates:**

- **FOR BSc/MSc/MA STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS:** A scanned copy of a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate **MUST** be attached to this application. A current certificate is one that is not older than six months. This is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone 16 years of age or under) or vulnerable adults. *See Section 4 for a broad definition of vulnerability.* A DBS certificate that you have obtained through an organisation you work for is acceptable as long as it is current. If you do not have a current DBS certificate, but need one for your research, you can apply for one through the HUB and the School will pay the cost.

If you need to attach a copy of a DBS certificate to your ethics application but would like to keep it confidential please email a scanned copy of the certificate directly to Dr Mary Spiller (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) at [m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk)

- **FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS:** DBS clearance is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone under 16 years of age) or vulnerable adults. *See Section 4 for a broad definition of vulnerability.* The DBS clearance that was gained, or verified,



when you registered for your programme is sufficient and you will not have to apply for another in order to conduct research with vulnerable populations.

## **SECTION 1. Your details**

1. **Your name:** Sophie Berteau
  
2. **Your supervisor's name:** Dr Pippa Dell
  
3. **Title of your programme:** (e.g. BSc Psychology)  
**Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology**
  
4. **Submission date for your BSc/MSc/MA research:** **January 2020**
  
5. **Please tick if your application includes a copy of a DBS certificate**
  
6. **Please tick if you need to submit a DBS certificate with this application but have emailed a copy to Dr Mary Spiller for confidentiality reasons (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) ([m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk))**
  
7. **Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) and the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics (See links on page 1)**

## **SECTION 2. ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH**

**7- Your research question / the aim(s) of your research:**

(Please be clear in outlining what your research is about/what you want to explore.)

This study aims to explore which discourses second, third and fourth-generation North African women in France draw upon at a time when a rise in islamophobic actions co-exist beside long-standing assimilationist policies. I am interested in exploring how inhabiting certain discourses and taking up the subject positions of women, Black and immigrants affects the subjectivity of this triply stigmatised group. This research will attempt to construct an understanding of how French Maghrebi women manage their psychological well-being, including an exploration of the toolkit they might use, with the view to informing best practices in the UK when working with minority groups and/or refugees.

#### **8. Design of the research:**

(Type of experimental design, variables, questionnaire, survey etc., as relevant to your research. If the research is qualitative what approach will be used and what will the data be?)

A semantic and inductive thematic analysis informed by Foucauldian discourse will be used.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted.

#### **12. Recruitment and participants (Your sample):**

(Proposed number of participants, specific characteristics of the sample such as age range, gender and ethnicity - whatever is relevant to your research - and where and how you will recruit participants). If recruiting through online forums is permission necessary from the forum administrator/gatekeeper and will you seek such permission?)

The aim is to recruit ten French Maghrebi women born, raised and living in France. Their age, religion or socio-economic status will not form exclusion criteria.

Participants will be recruited through friends, who have offered to contact friends and relatives. I have decided against the idea of recruiting my own friends for several reasons including the fear that I might not remain professional.

Should this approach fail, I would distribute leaflets describing the research outside the French Lycée in South Kensington with the view of gathering contacts.

A third alternative would be to directly contact organisations in France.

### **13. Measures, materials or equipment:**

*(Give details about what will be used during the course of your research. For example: equipment; a questionnaire; a particular psychological test or tests; an interview schedule or stimuli. See note on page 2 about attaching copies of questionnaires, tests and example interview questions to this application.)*

Whilst open questions will be asked in semi-structured interviews, I embrace the idea of allowing participants to express themselves freely to understand what is important to them.

The interviews will be conducted in French and in France.

**14. If you are using questionnaires, tests or stimuli, are these suitable for the age group or capacity of your participants?**

NA

### **15. Outline the data collection procedure involved in your research:**

*(Describe what will be involved in data collection. For example, what will participants be asked to do, where, and for how long? If using an online survey what survey software will be used, e.g. Qualtrics?)*

Interviews should last approximately 90 minutes and will be conducted in an environment where the participant feels comfortable (public or private) with no risk of breaching confidentiality. All interviews will be recorded using a Dictaphone.

## **SECTION 3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**16. Fully informing participants about the research (and parents/guardians if necessary):**

*(How will you fully inform your participants when inviting them to participate? Is the participant invitation letter written in a style appropriate for children and young people, if necessary?)*

An initial phone call will be made to introduce myself and answer any questions the participant might have about the research or the process. Shortly after, a letter of invitation describing my role, the research, the participant's rights whilst providing my supervisor's details will be issued.

### **17. Obtaining fully informed consent from participants (and from parents/guardians if necessary):**

(Is the consent form written in a style appropriate for children and young people, if necessary? Do you need consent from parents/guardians? How will you gain participant consent if your research involves online data collection?)

All potential participants will be requested to sign a form of consent prior to the interview.

### **18. Engaging in deception, if relevant:**

(What will participants be told about the nature of your research? The amount of any information withheld and the delay in disclosing the withheld information should be kept to an absolute minimum. Will participants be debriefed about the true nature of your research in a debrief letter?)

All participants will be informed of the values underpinning the discipline of Counselling Psychology prior to the interview. As a result, the idea that I do not consider myself an expert and that I am seeking to explore their subjectivities to inform better practices will be explained. The notion of participatory research will be conveyed.

### **19. Right of withdrawal:**

(Right of withdrawal means the right of participants to not continue with participation in your research and the right to have any data they have supplied destroyed on request. It is advised that you as the researcher reserve the right to keep and use all data after the point at which you begin your analysis of the data. Make this clear here and in your participant invitation letter also. Speak to your supervisor about this if necessary.)

All participants will be informed of their right to withdraw during the recruiting process. However, they will also be informed that they only have the right to have any data that they have supplied destroyed on request before June 2017.

### **20. Will the data be gathered anonymously?**

(Will you know or not know the names and contact details of your participants? In qualitative research that involves interviews, data is usually not collected anonymously)

because you will know the names and contact details of your participants.)

Although data will not be collected anonymously, pseudonyms will be used during the transcript of the data. All transcripts will be secured with a password and all recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study. No names will be disclosed.

**21. If NO to the above, what steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of participants?**

(How will the names and contact details of participants be stored and who will have access? Will participants' personal details be kept separate from their data? Will real names and identifying references be omitted from transcripts and the reporting of data?)

See above.

**22. What will happen to the data you have collected after your research is over and your project/thesis has passed examination?**

Usually participant names and contact details (if you have them) and all other data will be destroyed after your research has passed examination. However, if there is a possibility of you developing your research (in further study or for publication, for example) you may want to keep your data for a certain time period. If not destroying your data after your research has passed examination, what will be kept, how, and for how long? For example, you might destroy names and contact details but keep test results and anonymous surveys, questionnaires, audio-recordings and transcripts etc. for two, three, four or five years. *Participants must be told what will happen to their data in your participant invitation letter.*

See above.

**23. Protection of participants:**

(Are there any potential hazards to participants by way of risk of accident, injury or psychological harm? Is your research of a sensitive nature and potentially distressing for participants? How will you ensure the safety and wellbeing of your participants in these cases? What support organisation or agency will you refer participants to if participation in your research could cause distress or psychological harm? The contact details of appropriate support organisations/agencies must be made available to participants in your debrief sheet.)

**ADD THESE CONTACT DETAILS HERE**

*The support organisation/s that you refer participants to in your debrief letter should be appropriate. That is, is there a more appropriate organisation than the Samaritans, for example (i.e. anxiety, mental health, young people telephone support help-lines?)*

**N.B: If you have serious concerns about the safety of a participant, or others, during the course of your research see your supervisor as soon as possible.**

I will inform all participants at the beginning of the interview of their right to withdraw at any time and for any reasons during the interview whilst emphasising that this could be as a result of distress. As a second - year trainee counselling psychologist I am confident I will be able to display empathy whilst using my own judgement as to whether we should end the interview or not. This will nevertheless be a dual process. The interview will be ended if causing high levels of distress.

Additionally, I will enquire as to whether the participant might have the possibility to talk to a third party once the interview is completed. I could allow for time should the participant wish to talk without being recorded at the end of the interview.

#### **24. Protection of the researcher:**

*(Will you be knowingly exposed to any health and safety risks when conducting your research? Is there any risk of accident, injury or psychological distress to you and how will you manage this? If interviewing participants in their homes will a third party be told of place and time and when you have left a participant's house? Speak to your supervisor about interviewing in people's homes if necessary.)*

If interviewing participants in their home, I will phone a third party before the interview (reminding them of the precise location) and once I have left the participant's house.

This participant group is not categorised as "high risk".

#### **25. Will participants be paid or reimbursed?**

*(This is not necessary but payment/reimbursement must be in the form of redeemable vouchers and NOT cash. Please note that the School cannot fund participant payment.)*

NO

If YES, why is payment/reimbursement necessary and how much will the vouchers be worth? Why this amount?

#### **26. Other:**

*(Is there anything else the reviewer of this application needs to know to make a properly informed assessment?)*

### **SECTION 4. OTHER PERMISSIONS AND ETHICAL CLEARANCES**

**27. Is permission required from an external institution/organisation (e.g. a school, charity, workplace, local authority, care home etc.)?**

You need to have written permission from external institutions/organisations/workplaces etc. if they are helping you with recruitment and/or data collection, if you are collecting data on their premises, or if you are using any material produced and/or owned by the institution/organisation/workplace etc.

NO

**28. Is ethical clearance required from any other ethics committee?**

NO

Has such ethical clearance been obtained yet?

If NO why not?

If YES, please attach a scanned copy of the ethical approval letter. A copy of an email from the organisation is acceptable.

**PLEASE NOTE: Ethical approval from the School of Psychology can be gained before approval from another research ethics committee is obtained. However, recruitment and data collection are NOT to commence until your research has been approved by the School and other ethics committees as may be necessary.**

**29. Will your research involve working with children or vulnerable adults?**

NO

If NO, please give reasons. (Note that parental consent is always required for participants who are 16 years of age and younger)

**30. Will you be collecting data overseas?**

YES

This includes collecting data while you are away from the UK on holiday or visiting your home country.

If YES, in what country or countries will you be collecting data?

France.

**Please note that ALL students wanting to collect data while overseas (even when going home or away on holiday) MUST have their travel approved by the Pro-Vice Chancellor International (not the School of Psychology) BEFORE travelling overseas.**

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/Research-Ethics---Overseas-Fieldwork.aspx>

**IN MANY CASES WHERE STUDENTS ARE WANTING TO COLLECT DATA OTHER THAN IN THE UK (EVEN IF LIVING ABROAD), USING ONLINE SURVEYS AND DOING INTERVIEWS VIA SKYPE, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD COUNTER THE NEED TO HAVE UEL PERMISSION TO TRAVEL**

## **SECTION 5. SIGNATURES**

TYPED NAMES ARE ACCEPTED AS SIGNATURES

### **Declaration by student:**

*I confirm that I have discussed the ethics and feasibility of this research proposal with my supervisor.*

Student's name: Sophie Berteau

Student's number: U1320478

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020

### **Declaration by supervisor:**

*I confirm that, in my opinion, the proposed study constitutes a suitable test of the research question and is both feasible and ethical.*

Supervisor's name:

Date:

**PLEASE NOW ATTACH ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

### **1. PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER/S**

See pro forma in the ethics folder in the Psychology Noticeboard on Moodle. This can be



adapted for your own use and must be adapted for use with parents/guardians and children if they are to be involved in your study.

Care should be taken when drafting a participant invitation letter. It is important that your participant invitation letter fully informs potential participants about what you are asking them to do and what participation in your study will involve – what data will be collected, how, where? What will happen to the data after the study is over? Will anonymised data be used in your report of the study, or at conferences etc.? Tell participants about how you will protect their anonymity and confidentiality and about their withdrawal rights.

Please ensure that what you tell potential participants in your invitation letter matches up with what you have said in this application



## **PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER**

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

### **Who am I?**

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Counselling

Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

### **What is the research?**

I am conducting research into how women of North African origin manage their psychological well-being in France.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

### **Why have you been asked to participate?**

You have been invited to participate in my research as someone who fits the kind of people I am looking for to help me explore my research topic. I am looking to involve women of Maghrebi origin born and living in France.

I emphasise that I am not looking for 'experts' on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect.

You are quite free to decide whether or not to participate and should not feel coerced.

### **What will your participation involve?**

If you agree to participate you will be asked to answer several open-ended questions in an interview, which will be very informal. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will be recorded. The interview can take place in a public or private place of your choice.

I will not be able to pay you for participating in my research but your participation would be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of my research topic.

### **Your taking part will be safe and confidential**

Your privacy and safety will be respected at all times.

- Participants will not be identified by the data collected, on any written material resulting from the data collected, or in any write-up of the research.

- Participants do not have to answer all questions asked of them and can stop their participation at any time.

### **What will happen to the information that you provide?**

All the recordings will be transcribed onto my own computer, which I can only have access to as I am the only person aware of the secured password. The Dictaphone is my own personal equipment and will remain in my possession at all times and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Pseudonyms will be used at all times instead of your real name. All personal information including the transcripts and recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study.

### **What if you want to withdraw?**

You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. However, if you withdraw I would reserve the right to use material that you provide up until the point of my analysis of the data.

### **Contact Details**

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My email address is [u1320478@uel.ac.uk](mailto:u1320478@uel.ac.uk)

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact the research supervisor Dr Pippa Dell, who speaks fluent French, at School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: [P.A.Dell@uel.ac.uk](mailto:P.A.Dell@uel.ac.uk)

**or**

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Mary Spiller, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk)

**CONSENT FORM/S**

Use the pro forma in the ethics folder in the Psychology Noticeboard on Moodle. This should be adapted for use with parents/guardians and children.



**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**Consent to participate in a research study**

A thematic analysis informed by Foucauldian discourse into how French Maghrebi women manage their psychological well-being.

I have read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher(s) involved in

the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data after analysis of the data has begun.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

SOPHIE BERTEAU .....

Researcher's Signature

.....

Date: .....

## **PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF SHEET**

This can be one or two paragraphs thanking participants, clarifying the true nature of your research (if relevant), reminding them what will happen to their data. If your research involved risk of injury, distress or psychological harm, include the contact details of an appropriate organisation that participants can contact for support if necessary



### **DE-BRIEF LETTER**

Date:

Dear participant,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

Your answers will be used to compile a report as part of my research project. However, you will never be identified as an individual. All people who take part in this study will be represented by a pseudonym. The consent form with your name on will be separated from the rest of the information. I will erase all audio recordings once the study is completed but will have to keep anonymised transcripts until my study is marked as I need to evidence my findings. The transcript will not have your name written on but a pseudonym. All data will then be destroyed.

I hope the questions have not caused you high levels of distress but if you require any further information or if you have any comments or suggestions you can contact me by email : [u1320478@uel.ac.uk](mailto:u1320478@uel.ac.uk) or my supervisor Dr Pippa Dell (who speaks fluent French): [P.A.Dell@uel.ac.uk](mailto:P.A.Dell@uel.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Sophie

**Appendix 2: University of East London Ethical Approval**

**School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee**

**NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION**

**For research involving human participants**  
BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates

**REVIEWER:** Dr Mark Finn

**SUPERVISOR:** Dr Pippa Dell

**COURSE:** Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology

**STUDENT:** Sophie Berteau

**TITLE OF PROPOSED STUDY:** How do French North African women manage their well-being in France? And what tools, if any, do they use?

**DECISION OPTIONS:**

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.
3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

**DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY**

*(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)*

**APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES**

**Minor amendments required** (*for reviewer*):

As the sample will include women who have not necessarily experienced particular issues in relation to their well-being, please be mindful of the very real possibility that participants may not present with/experience specific well-being issues and adjust the interviews

accordingly. It will be important to not impose problematic well-being onto participants who may not identify themselves in this way.

### **ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEARCHER** *(for reviewer)*

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

**HIGH**

**MEDIUM**

**LOW**

#### **Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any):**

The research is to check the travel risk to the area of France where data collection is intended and provide her supervisor with a risk management plan if deemed to involve potential risk.

**Reviewer** *(Typed name to act as signature):* Mark Finn

**Date:** 24/07/17

*This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee*

#### **Confirmation of making the above minor amendments** *(for students):*

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

**Student's name** *(Typed name to act as signature):* Sophie Berteau  
**Student number:** U1320478

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017

*(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)*

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

\*For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's insurance and indemnity policy, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.



### Appendix 3: interview questions

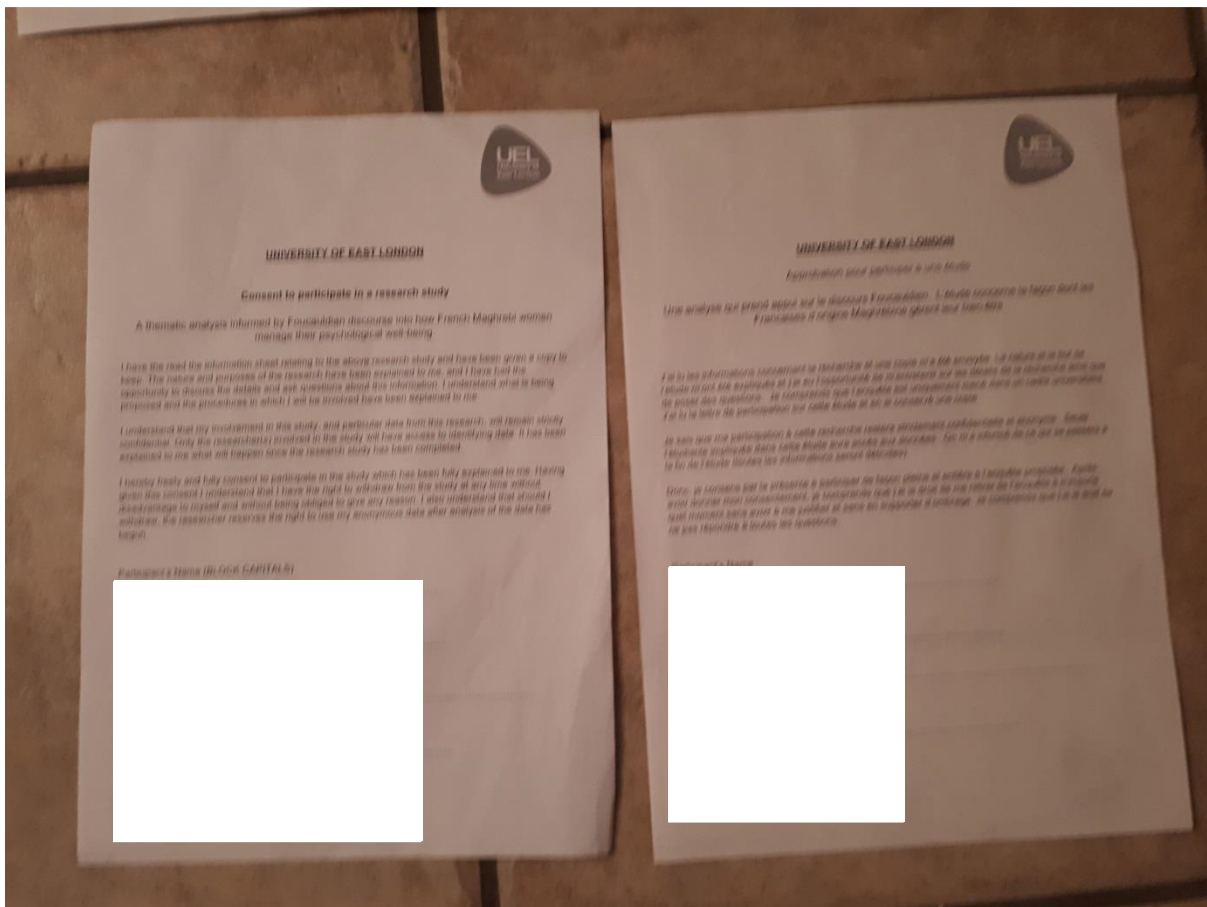
How do French North African women manage their well-being in France? And what tools, if any, do they use?

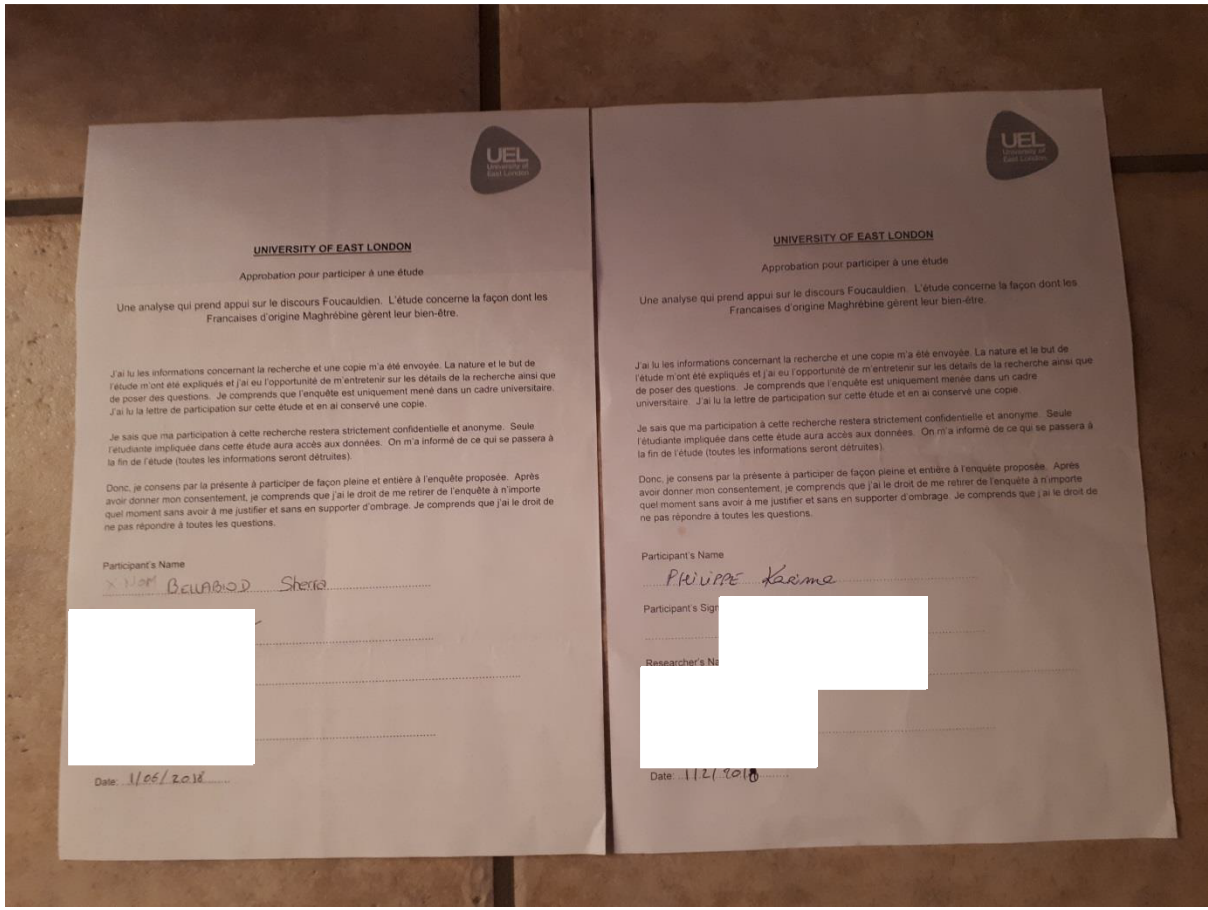
Questions for participants:

- What pseudonym would you like to use?
- How would you define the word “well-being”?
- How would you describe your psychological well-being?
- What contributes to your well-being? What impacts on your well-being?
- Which positive and negative situations have influenced your well-being?
  - How do you feel in these specific situations?
  - anything else?
- What encourages you to go on?
- Have you ever felt you needed support?
- When do you seek emotional support?
  - Why?
  - Who helps?
  - What is the outcome?
- Have you ever had therapy?
- How was it like?
  - negatives/positives
  - relationship with the therapist
  - How understood did you feel in relation to your cultural heritage?
  - What could have improved your experience?
- How has your well-being evolved over the past few years?
- Which strategies, if any, have you adopted?
- What would improve your well-being?
- Have any external/societal situations particularly affected you?
  - How has the application of the concept of ‘Laïcité’ affected you?
  - Sense of belonging
  - cultural identity-ies.

- Is there something more relevant to you?
- Is there something you would like to tell me?

## Appendix 4: Participant Consent Forms





**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

Approbation pour participer à une étude

Une analyse qui prend appui sur le discours Foucauldien. L'étude concerne la façon dont les Françaises d'origine Maghrébine gèrent leur bien-être.

J'ai lu les informations concernant la recherche et une copie m'a été envoyée. La nature et le but de l'étude m'ont été expliqués et j'ai eu l'opportunité de m'entretenir sur les détails de la recherche ainsi que de poser des questions. Je comprends que l'enquête est uniquement menée dans un cadre universitaire. J'ai lu la lettre de participation sur cette étude et en ai conservé une copie.

Je sais que ma participation à cette recherche restera strictement confidentielle et anonyme. Seule l'étudiante impliquée dans cette étude aura accès aux données. On m'a informé de ce qui se passera à la fin de l'étude (toutes les informations seront détruites).

Donc, je consens par la présente à participer de façon pleine et entière à l'enquête proposée. Après avoir donné mon consentement, je comprends que j'ai le droit de me retirer de l'enquête à n'importe quel moment sans avoir à me justifier et sans en supporter d'ombrage. Je comprends que j'ai le droit de ne pas répondre à toutes les questions.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

.....S.K.....

Researcher's Name

.....SOPHIE  
BERTEAU.....

Researcher's Signature

.....

Date: .....14/04/2019.....



**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**Approbation pour participer à une étude**

Une analyse qui prend appui sur le discours Foucauldien. L'étude concerne la façon dont les Françaises d'origine Maghrébine gèrent leur bien-être.

J'ai lu les informations concernant la recherche et une copie m'a été envoyée. La nature et le but de l'étude m'ont été expliqués et j'ai eu l'opportunité de m'entretenir sur les détails de la recherche ainsi que de poser des questions. Je comprends que l'enquête est uniquement menée dans un cadre universitaire. J'ai lu la lettre de participation sur cette étude et en ai conservé une copie.

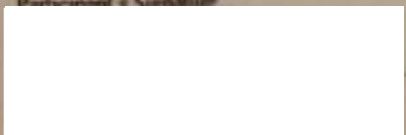
Je sais que ma participation à cette recherche restera strictement confidentielle et anonyme. Seule l'étudiante impliquée dans cette étude aura accès aux données. On m'a informé de ce qui se passera à la fin de l'étude (toutes les informations seront détruites).

Donc, je consens par la présente à participer de façon pleine et entière à l'enquête proposée. Après avoir donné mon consentement, je comprends que j'ai le droit de me retirer de l'enquête à n'importe quel moment sans avoir à me justifier et sans en supporter d'ombrage. Je comprends que j'ai le droit de ne pas répondre à toutes les questions.

Participant's Name

BENAYAD MALIKA

Participant's Signature



SOPHIE BERTEAU

Researcher's Signature

.....

Date: 08/04/2019





**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**Approbation pour participer à une étude**

**Une analyse qui prend appui sur le discours Foucauldien. L'étude concerne la façon dont les Françaises d'origine Maghrébine gèrent leur bien-être.**

J'ai lu les informations concernant la recherche et une copie m'a été envoyée. La nature et le but de l'étude m'ont été expliqués et j'ai eu l'opportunité de m'entretenir sur les détails de la recherche ainsi que de poser des questions. Je comprends que l'enquête est uniquement menée dans un cadre universitaire. J'ai lu la lettre de participation sur cette étude et en ai conservé une copie.

Je sais que ma participation à cette recherche restera strictement confidentielle et anonyme. Seule l'étudiante impliquée dans cette étude aura accès aux données. On m'a informé de ce qui se passera à la fin de l'étude (toutes les informations seront détruites).

Donc, je consens par la présente à participer de façon pleine et entière à l'enquête proposée. Après avoir donné mon consentement, je comprends que j'ai le droit de me retirer de l'enquête à n'importe quel moment sans avoir à me justifier et sans en supporter d'ombrage. Je comprends que j'ai le droit de ne pas répondre à toutes les questions.

Participant's Name

SOUFIANI Nadia

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Name

SOPHIE BERTEAU

Researcher's Signature

Date 19/06/2019





**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**Approbation pour participer à une étude**

**Une analyse qui prend appui sur le discours Foucauldien. L'étude concerne la façon dont les Françaises d'origine Maghrébine gèrent leur bien-être.**

J'ai lu les informations concernant la recherche et une copie m'a été envoyée. La nature et le but de l'étude m'ont été expliqués et j'ai eu l'opportunité de m'entretenir sur les détails de la recherche ainsi que de poser des questions. Je comprends que l'enquête est uniquement menée dans un cadre universitaire. J'ai lu la lettre de participation sur cette étude et en ai conservé une copie.

Je sais que ma participation à cette recherche restera strictement confidentielle et anonyme. Seule l'étudiante impliquée dans cette étude aura accès aux données. On m'a informé de ce qui se passera à la fin de l'étude (toutes les informations seront détruites).

Donc, je consens par la présente à participer de façon pleine et entière à l'enquête proposée. Après avoir donné mon consentement, je comprends que j'ai le droit de me retirer de l'enquête à n'importe quel moment sans avoir à me justifier et sans en supporter d'ombrage. Je comprends que j'ai le droit de ne pas répondre à toutes les questions.

Participant's Name  
Houret Sabrina

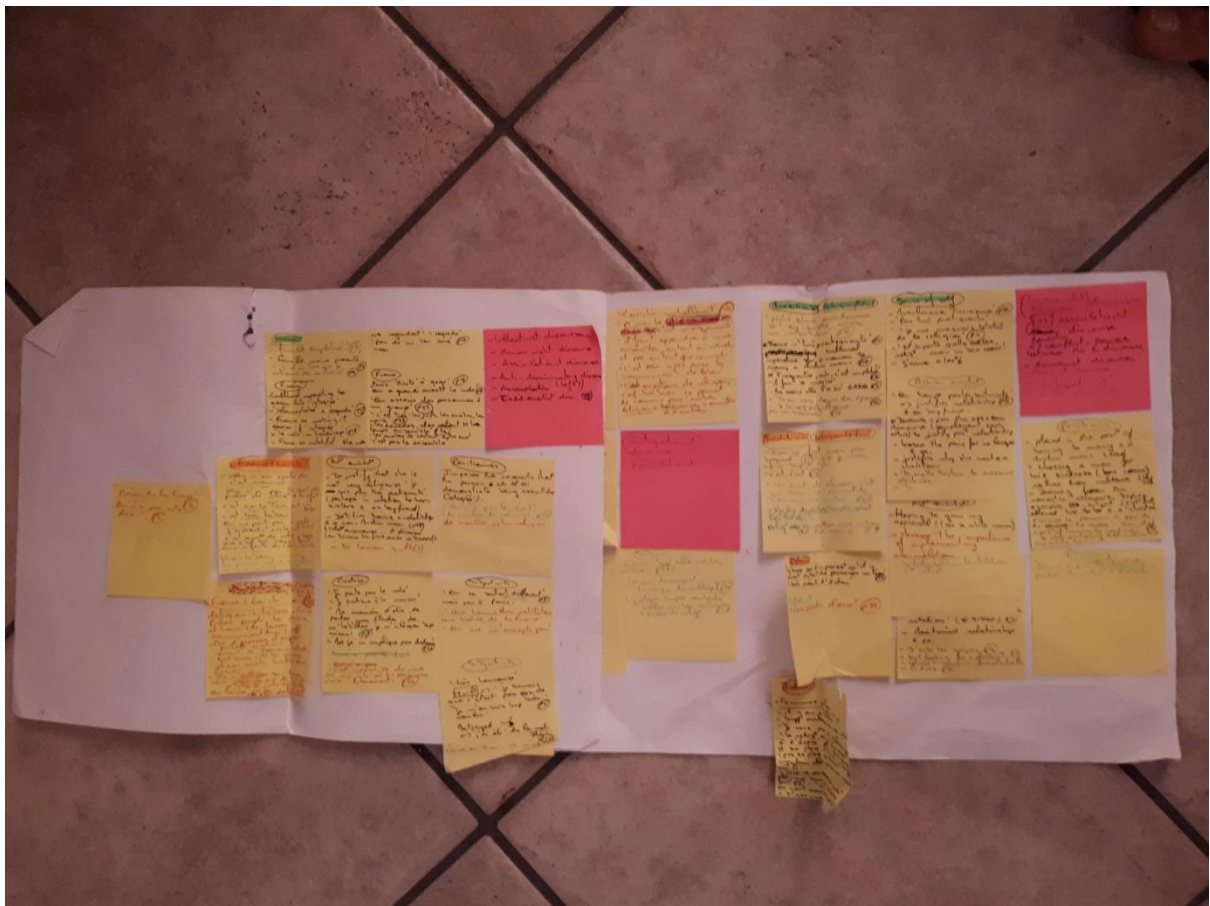
Participant ID  
[Redacted]

Researcher's Name  
SOPHIE BERTEAU

Researcher's Signature  
Sophie Berteau 2019







## Appendix 6: Change of Title Form



### REQUEST FOR TITLE CHANGE TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

#### FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

**Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for proposed title change to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology.**

By applying for a change of title request you confirm that in doing so the process by which you have collected your data/conducted your research has not changed or deviated from your original ethics approval. If either of these have changed then you are required to complete an Ethics Amendments Form.

#### HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THE REQUEST

1. Complete the request form electronically and accurately.
2. Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).
3. Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to: [Psychology.Ethics@uel.ac.uk](mailto:Psychology.Ethics@uel.ac.uk)
4. Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with reviewer's response box completed. This will normally be within five days. Keep a copy of the approval to submit

with your project/dissertation/thesis.

### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.

Name of applicant: Sophie Berteau
Programme of study: Doctorate in counselling psychology
Name of supervisor: Prof Pippa Dell

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed title change in the boxes below

<b>Proposed amendment</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Old Title:</b>  How do French North African women manage their well-being in France? And what tools, if any, do they use?	One woman did not identify as French and would probably disapprove of being categorised as French.  Participants mostly used the term Maghrebi instead of North African.
<b>New Title:</b>  <b>Women of Maghrebi origins' constructions of well-being in France: a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis</b>	The methodology was not included in the title.

Please tick	YES	NO
Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	x	
Does your change of title impact the process of how you collected your data/conducted your research?		x

Student's signature (please type your name): Sophie Berteau

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
<b>Title changes approved</b>	APPROVED	
<b>Comments</b>		

Reviewer: Glen Rooney

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## **Appendix 7: Reflective Journal**

Since working with children and adolescents, I have become particularly aware of how language constructs reality. Whereas working with adult clients involves co-constructing situations and problems, offering therapy to adolescents feels more daunting. Indeed, it appears that more responsibility is placed on the 'expert' since most adolescents seem to struggle to make sense of certain dilemmas. As such, I feel that I can greatly impact on how they construct their selves and the world they live in. I can at times feel very uncomfortable within such situations. Having been influenced by Foucauldian principles, I am particularly aware that forms of knowledge including psychology should not be taken at face value. I am also uncomfortable with the idea that psychological discourse tends to reinforce dominant and neoliberal ideals. For example, a young client was explaining how frustrated she was at having had her pocket money withdrawn. I found myself providing reassurance and stating that one day she would be in employment and would become financially independent and autonomous. In this instance, I might have unintentionally reinforced the importance of being in paid employment in order to achieve autonomy and an enhanced sense of well-being, in line with neoliberal principles.