

BERBAGUI, DALILA. *Trajectoires de commerçants nord-africains dans le département du Rhône: 1945–1985*. L'Harmattan, 2023. ISBN 978-2-14-032067-5. Pp. 268.

Although halal butcher shops and specialized épiceries are commonplace in France today, it took generations of migrants to create the socio-economic community that would help them succeed. This book provides a socio-historical analysis of immigration and commercial practices of North African migrants that led to this success. Berbagui mainly focuses on Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan



traders who incidentally created a social group within the French department of Rhône. The text's time frame (1945 to 1985) encompasses the start, the end, and the immediate aftermath of the Algerian War. In reference to the war, Berbagui establishes that North African traders were often targeted by the police under the suspicion of working for the National Liberation Front (FLN). Traders were harassed by both the public and the police, whether they were part of the resistance movement, or simply bystanders: "ce tiraillement entre, d'un côté les autorités policières, et de l'autre les mouvements nationalistes, montre que les commerçants sont pris entre deux feux" (45). Besides discussing public sentiment regarding North African migrants, the author concentrates on the financial history and economic impacts of the traders as well. Berbagui explores a variety of small businesses such as fruit markets, restaurants, cafés, convenience stores (*épiceries*), and butcher shops. The author has a detailed section where she explains the evolution of halal butcher shops in France: their origins, their average lifetimes throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, and their importance within the commercial sphere. Within the section on butcher shops, Berbagui analyzes how important community was for merchants. Berbagui implies that it was essential for migrants to be established in the community, or to have access to a family store, in order to succeed in the medina (a term the author uses to describe Arab neighborhoods or communities within French cities). Berbagui writes, "le réseau communautaire et familial est souvent essentiel, même s'il reste difficilement détectable dans les sources écrites" (229). The author demonstrates how families, especially those who owned butcher shops, would train their children in the practice, and how gender affected commercial inheritance. In many of the sections, Berbagui uses personal histories and narratives to demonstrate the data she is analyzing. For example, in the section that covers halal butcher shops she uses the testimonies of a father, Abdelaziz Boualem, and his sons, Nordine and Hakim, who ran a successful and multi-generational butcher shop. Although not all of the testimonies involve success stories, these personal accounts make the data analysis less impersonal. Furthermore, through the use of surveys and quantitative data, Berbagui demonstrates how periods of unemployment were relatively short or due to malady. Much of Berbagui's research rebuffs the existing stereotypes about North African migrants' unwillingness to work, or the uncleanness of their shops. Additionally, through migrants' personal histories, she demonstrates how social and interconnected their commercial lives were within the medina. This book would be good for those interested in economics or immigration to France within the latter half of the 20th century.

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