

The subject of this thesis is the question of immigration in contemporary (Western) European societies which is treated by detailed exposition of the concrete historical case of immigration from the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) to France during the 20th century. The first part of the work consists of the brief history of immigration to France and of the wider theoretical context for the sociological inquiry of the phenomena linked with immigration, especially the paradoxical situation which results from the fact of immigration in the nation states and the logic of the formation of the interethnic relations. As a theoretical support for following analysis, several theories are presented: Goffman's theory of stigmatization, Becker's labelling theory, theory of the social representations of Moscovici and Merton's concept of self-fulfilling prophecy. In the second part, the particular case of immigration from Maghreb countries to France is examined with the special attention to the social representations made in French society in the context of this historical process. The main subject of this work is the situation of the descendants of immigrants from Maghreb countries in the French society, especially their position in its social structure – the third part therefore consists of the analysis of their intergenerational educational and professional mobility in comparison with the majority population and with the descendants of immigrants from other parts of the world.