Transnational links between immigrants of different origin are established by maintaining their own traditions and identities, as evidenced by the cultural diversity of many European cities, creating a kind of globalization from below. The globalized city allows immigrants to participate in public life and city management (Rouse 1995). As a case in point, many Moroccans have become members of parliament or of government cabinets in Europe; for example, Rachida Dati, former minister of justice in France, and Ahmed Aboutaleb, member of the Dutch parliament and mayor of Rotterdam (see chapter 10).

This new development changes the traditional models of migration and poses new questions on identity and citizenship. What does citizenship entail in terms of rights and obligations? How do national identity and loyalty interact when people live in more than one country and have more than one nationality? These issues, which pose significant challenges to the states’ administrative systems, will be addressed in this chapter focusing on Muslim Moroccan migrants and their descendents (Vertovec 1998, 1999, 2004; Pries 2001; Lazár 2011).

**Negotiating Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity may be defined as the need of individuals to belong to a group within which they feel recognized and accepted. It is a modality of the distinction between us and them, based on cultural difference (Cuche 2004). According to social identity theory, identifying oneself with a community allows one to develop an identity that has an attachment or commitment to the group (Turner 1989). For Waters (1990), “ethnic identity” is a fluid process that changes over time for most people, including migrants.
Moroccans in Europe have four distinct identities: they are North African, Muslim, immigrant, and have home or host country citizenship or both. These identities are rendered complex by age, gender, class, language, education, and religion. Evidently, the identity questions encountered by a Moroccan Muslim male immigrant in Europe would be more complicated than those faced by a Polish Christian male immigrant, for example. Because of their brown complexion, religious dress, and hair form, they are visibly non-European and are likely to be categorized as “immigrant” or “African,” which can lead to discrimination. Learning how Moroccans cope with and negotiate cultural identity in Europe in different contexts is important in the fight against discrimination and marginalization. Most Moroccans feel good about their migratory experience by adopting a positive attitude, which helps to understand how individuals manage integration and identity issues.

As mentioned in chapters 6 and 7, because young Moroccan-Europeans who descend from immigration are exposed from their earliest years to two different cultural systems—the culture of the host country and that of Morocco—it is difficult for them to achieve cultural coherence or build a cultural identity or multiple identities. How do these young people reconcile between the two cultures? How can they build a national identity at a time when the social environment in which they live denies them an identity? Do they identify themselves as Moroccan or European? These are the questions that we will address in this chapter.

Born in Europe or arrived in Europe after their birth, having kept or not their nationality of origin, young people facing the problem of identity construction fall into three categories. First, those who have adopted syncretic cultural identity have an active identity strategy, which draws from the two systems of cultural reference (Chourra 2006); while integrating into the community of young people in the host country, they do not reject their traditional values. Most of them plan to integrate the host society by continuing their studies, and then entering into a profession. They wish to fit into the society by adopting the European way of life without denying their roots.

The second category claims a religious identity, yet they do not have the same relationship with their origins. Their religious Islamic identity is for them a source of strength and balance between the home and host country cultures. These young people do not feel affected by the confrontation between Islam and Western modernity; in effect, they reconcile religion and citizenship in a smooth way. The only problem for them is how to be accepted as they are, namely, European Muslims, insofar as European countries are secular, with the prevalent religion being Christianity. This category of youth adheres to spiritual Islam, which is more modern than that of their parents, and their religious practices are more elaborate, researched, analyzed, and less traditional.