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Identity in Translation: The French Perception of Immigration, 1789-Present

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**Identity in Translation: The French Perception
of Immigration, 1789-Present**

An Honors Thesis

Presented by
Sarah Seigle '12

to

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Introduction

Mon intérêt pour l'immigration en France a commencé il y a quatre ans, quand j'ai commencé ma carrière académique à Connecticut College. Le professeur qui a enseigné mon premier cours de français avait un vif intérêt pour l'actualité, et elle nous a amené des articles des journaux français (Le Monde, Le Nouvel Observateur, etc.) fréquemment. Je savais que l'immigration était un sujet très polémique ici aux Etats-Unis, mais les articles sur l'immigration que mon professeur nous a présentés me semblaient différents. En plus d'être une question sociale et politique, j'avais l'impression que l'immigration en France avait une dimension identitaire. Je ne savais pas exactement comment le définir, et à ce point-là je n'aurais pas pu l'expliquer. Mais je voulais en savoir davantage.

Maintenant, quatre ans plus tard, je crois que je suis prête à explorer le lien entre l'immigration en France et l'identité nationale française. Ou plus précisément, je suis prête à poser les questions nécessaires pour arriver à une réponse provisoire. Parce que la vérité est qu'il n'y a pas de réponse définitive. Il ne sera jamais possible d'offrir une solution manichéenne, ni pour les nombreux défis que l'immigration présente pour la France ni pour les multiples défis que la France présente pour l'immigration. Avec le discours politique, les conflits sociaux, l'aspect identitaire, les discriminations, la question financière, et les représentations véhiculées par les médias, l'imbroglio est beaucoup trop compliqué pour des solutions nettes.

J'ai donc trouvé plus prudent de parler des perceptions au lieu de solutions. Comment est-ce que les français perçoivent leurs populations immigrées d'aujourd'hui? Comment est-ce qu'ils les ont perçues historiquement? Quels sont les événements qui ont profondément influencé cette perception, et comment est-ce qu'ils continuent de résonner

dans la France contemporaine? Ces sont les questions avec lesquelles j'ai commencé ma thèse. Elles sont très larges, bien sûr, mais je n'aurais pas pu me limiter à une perspective unique ou une seule population migratoire. Mes expériences et mon éducation à propos de l'immigration et l'identité nationale en France ont été vastes, donc je me suis permis d'aborder cette thèse de manière très vaste aussi. Je crois que la présence d'un discours honnête et critique est importante, et c'est principalement ce que j'ai essayé de faire dans cette thèse: analyser la perception et le traitement des immigrés en France d'un œil critique.

Dans mon premier chapitre, je retrouve les origines de la perception de l'identité nationale française dans la Révolution de 1789. Il y a tellement de gloire et tellement de grandes valeurs qui sont automatiquement associées avec la France aujourd'hui, mais d'où vient cette gloire; d'où viennent ces valeurs indestructibles de "Liberté, Egalité et Fraternité"? Qui a décidé de recréer et de réinventer la face de la nation après la chute de l'ancien régime? Les événements de 1789 forment la base d'une identité nationale profonde et abstraite qui persiste en France aujourd'hui. Pourtant, cette conception de l'identité nationale est problématique pour les migrants, parce qu'elle ne reconnaît pas les particularités qui sont elles-mêmes le tissu de l'identité personnelle: "[Abstract individualism] is not the idea that the common nature of individuals is given or already there, but rather the fact that it is produced inasmuch as particular identities are relativized and become mediations for the realization of a superior and more abstract goal."¹

¹ Etienne Balibar, as quoted by Wallach Scott, Joan. *Parité! Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism*. 15

Dans les années qui ont suivi, La Terreur a établi le lien entre les étrangers et les criminels pour la première fois. La figure de l'étranger était un bouc émissaire commode, et toute personne qui n'était pas française a été soupçonnée d'activité contre-révolutionnaire. Les stéréotypes à propos des étrangers ont augmenté pendant les années napoléoniennes. La succession des guerres a beaucoup élargi l'empire physique de la France, et avec ces nouveaux territoires sont nés de nouveaux stéréotypes sur les habitants. La xénophobie et la discrimination sont devenues encore plus répandues dans la deuxième moitié des années 1800, quand le processus de l'industrialisation a attiré un afflux d'immigrés sans précédent. Ces immigrés ont été reçus avec réticence par la société française, qui se croyait racialement et moralement supérieure.

Mon troisième chapitre développe cette notion de la soi-disant "supériorité française" dans le contexte de l'impérialisme en Afrique. La France a été une des protagonistes dans la Ruée vers l'Afrique dans les années 1880-1914, et ses conquêtes en Afrique ont intensifié le sentiment de la supériorité culturelle de la France: "The relationship between republican France and its colonies generated a specific language about admission into the French nation and about the meaning of republican citizenship."² Le gouvernement a justifié la politique coloniale avec la logique de la "mission civilisatrice": la France a envahi les pays africains pour venir en aide aux populations considérées comme primitives, et pour les introduire au mode de vie français. Cette logique présente l'entreprise comme un acte altruiste et humanitaire, mais ce n'était pas vraiment le cas. La France a maintenu une présence en Afrique pour son propre bénéfice, et rien de plus.

² Lehning, James R. *To Be A Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic*. 129

A la fin de ce chapitre, je me concentre sur le cas de l'Algérie, parce que les relations entre France et Algérie étaient très différentes que les relations que la France avait avec ses autres colonies. L'Algérie (un territoire français depuis 1830) n'était pas seulement une colonie d'exploitation, mais aussi une colonie de peuplement. Des milliers de français, ainsi que d'autres européens, se sont installés durablement sur le territoire algérien. Là, ils ont bénéficiés d'un bon niveau de vie et de droits équivalents à ceux des français de la métropole: comme François Mitterrand a constaté, "L'Algérie, c'était la France." Mais cette déclaration ne s'appliquait pas du tout à la population indigène: sous la domination française, les indigènes ont été totalement privés de leurs droits. Ils ont été exploités et marginalisés dans leur propre société, et leur ressentiment et leur colère envers la présence française a progressivement augmenté. En 1954, ils ne pouvaient plus le supporter: la Guerre Franco-Algérienne a commencé.

Le chapitre quatre est consacré à la guerre en Algérie, qui a duré huit ans jusqu'à 1962. Les français combattaient les rebelles algériens, qui s'étaient désignés comme le "Front National de Libération" (FLN). La guerre, caractérisée par la brutalité et le terrorisme, a été extrêmement dure, et elle a laissé une grande tache dans la mémoire nationale française. Du point de vue psychologique, cette guerre est une des plus traumatisantes que la France a jamais connue: l'armée française a systématiquement torturé ses prisonniers politiques en Algérie. Les soldats ont poursuivi agressivement les membres du FLN, et quand ils les ont trouvés, ils les ont torturés et exécutés. Il y avait des milliers de morts, et il n'est toujours pas clair combien sont morts de la torture. Le FLN a également torturé, mais c'est le souvenir de la torture française qui reste toujours

dans l'inconscient national: "The loss of this territory, considered as a 'national' territory, is still felt like an amputation in the collective unconscious."³

Après la guerre, il est devenu encore plus difficile pour le gouvernement et la société d'intégrer les immigrés et les réfugiés qui sont venus en France. La plupart des immigrés qui sont arrivés après 1962 étaient membres des anciennes colonies françaises en Afrique du Nord. Ces immigrés se sont trouvés face à des discriminations intenses et profondes de la part des français, et ils nourrissaient un même ressentiment profond en ce qui concerne leurs expériences coloniales. Il y avait donc des tensions sous-jacentes qui sont entrées en jeu dans la France post-coloniale, et le résultat a été une série de lois codifiant l'immigration dans les années 1990: le Traité de Maastricht en 1992, les Lois Pasqua en 1993, et les Accords Schengen en 1995.

Ces lois sont représentatives d'un changement dans la perception de l'immigration, pas seulement en France mais dans toute l'Union Européenne. La redéfinition des frontières et de l'espace commun selon les termes des lois suggère que les immigrés (et les étrangers en général) ont commencé à être perçus comme une menace pour la sécurité nationale. Les Accords Schengen, par exemple, permettent aux ressortissants de l'Union Européenne de traverser les frontières sans papiers de l'identité. Dans ce sens-là, les frontières européennes sont devenues plus fluides. Mais pour les immigrés, c'est le contraire: avec les Accords Schengen, les frontières extérieures ont été renforcées idéologiquement. Une barrière évidente s'est établie entre "nous" (les français) et "eux" (les immigrés), et ce binarisme allait se révéler très difficile à surmonter.

³ Stora, Benjamin. "Histoire et Société: La guerre d'Algérie à la télévision française." Interview by Eugénie Barbezat.

Prisonniers de ces perceptions qui les avaient définis a priori, les immigrés de l'Afrique du Nord et leurs enfants devaient faire face à un grand nombre de défis. La même France qui se disait prête à défendre "la Fraternité" et "l'Égalité" avec son dernier souffle ne cessait de les marginaliser et les rejeter. La notion française de la citoyenneté a laissé très peu d'espace pour ceux qui n'étaient pas "français de souche," et les immigrés continuaient à avoir du mal à trouver leur place dans la société. Mais cela n'est pas de leur faute: le problème n'est pas seulement un problème d'intégration ou un "problème d'immigration," mais une véritable crise identitaire pour la France: "Some who write on the subject have suggested that hospitality as a French virtue has disappeared, crossed off the list of Republican principles by the government itself. This becomes, then, a question of French national identity, and not just an isolated political issue about immigration."⁴

Dans le nouveau millénaire, cette crise a été catapultée en première ligne de la scène politique. Avant toute chose, l'immigration est considérée comme un enjeu politique, une perspective qui ne tient pas compte de l'expérience nuancée de l'immigré. Et malgré la nature complexe de l'immigration en France, la société française continue de chercher une "solution" blanche et noire. "L'affaire du foulard" en 2004 et les émeutes des banlieues en 2005 et 2008 ont incarné l'affrontement idéologique que l'identité nationale est en train de connaître, soulignant les tensions qui existent toujours entre la théorie et l'application. L'idée que l'uniformité (l'universalisme) assure l'égalité fonctionne théoriquement, mais pas dans la vie réelle.

Afin que l'immigration cesse d'être perçue automatiquement comme un "problème," il faut que la France trouve une façon d'accepter les particularités culturelles

⁴ Rosello, Mireille. *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*. 28-29

(religieuses, sexuelles, etc.) dans sa définition de l'identité nationale. Pour cela, je suggère qu'il faudrait également un nouveau vocabulaire pour parler de l'identité nationale, l'immigration, et l'intégration; un vocabulaire dépolitisé et sans connotations ou associations préalables. Enfin, je crois que la France doit continuer à faire face aux événements traumatiques de son passé. La honte et la culpabilité sont un fardeau lourd dont le pays doit se défaire avant de pouvoir progresser.

I. *L'Origine de l'Universalisme Française*: National Unity and the French Revolution

The one defining event in French history that can be identified as the origin of contemporary French universalist thought is the Revolution of 1789. This monumental event in French history changed the very fabric of the country, from the socio-political structure down to the very ways in which the French people defined themselves.

Before the advent of the Revolution, France was governed under a monarchy. As with most monarchies, this form of government did not afford the French people much of a voice. The only input in government matters that the people had was through the Estates General, an assembly comprised of representatives from three different groups: the clergy, the nobility, and the peasant class.⁵ By the late 1780s, however, the people found their representation in government to be sorely lacking: the Estates General had not been called since 1614. Discontentment with the monarchy as a form of government (as well as discontentment with Louis XIV as a ruler more generally) began to grow. The monarchy came across as being too disconnected from the rest of French society, and, worse, indifferent to the hardships that a large percentage of the population faced. Recent involvement in the Seven Years' War left France's treasuries emptier than usual, sparking an increase in tariffs on widely consumed everyday products. The French people resented this general increase in prices extremely, because a series of unsuccessful harvests had already created a food shortage within the lower classes. The State was getting richer while the people were starving, and they didn't have any say whatsoever in how the matter was being handled. It was this combination of factors that gave rise to the French

⁵ All background information on the French Revolution was obtained from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* online version. Entries: "France" and "The French Revolution."

Revolution.⁶ The people reached their breaking point on the morning of July 14th, 1789, when they flooded the streets of central Paris. They targeted the *Bastille*, a building that had come to represent the old regime and the values associated with it. This event marked the beginning of the Revolution: the advent of a new age for France.

This new age was first and foremost characterized by large-scale ideological shifts: the out-and-out rejection of the values associated with the *ancien régime* made a complete redefinition of national identity and self-perception necessary. This task of redefinition fell to the politicians, philosophers, and others in positions of political power. Not wanting to fall back into the social and political structures of the *ancien régime*, it was of the utmost importance to these men to completely reconstruct the idea of the nation in the imaginations of the French people. Fabre d'Eglantine, an actor and politician during the Revolution, acknowledged this project, proclaiming, "One must take hold of a man's imagination and govern it."⁷ The French people were very wary of anything that represented social privilege or distinction after the Revolution, so a large part of the task that men like d'Eglantine were undertaking was to reconstruct the nation as a place where universal equality was prioritized and respected.

It was here that what Pierre Rosanvallon refers to as the "reign of abstraction"⁸ made its debut. To combat the values and ideals of the old regime, the politicians had to represent very abstract entities like the nation and the individual in powerful ways. The way they saw it, if the French people were united in a universal way of thinking about

⁶ Historians today are not entirely in agreement about what caused the French Revolution, but these are some of the commonly agreed-upon factors.

⁷ Rosanvallon, Pierre. *The Demands of Liberty: Civil Society in France Since the Revolution*. 21

⁸ Rosanvallon, 65

their nation, and about the relationship of the individual *to* the nation, social and political equality would follow. Social scientist Joan Wallach Scott discusses this presumed correlation of abstraction to equality in her novel, *Parité!*: "The abstractions [of the nation and the individual] allowed the revolutionaries to substitute the idea of formal political equality for the corporate hierarchies of the Old Regime and republican unity for the rule of kings."⁹ This quote speaks to the importance that such abstractions were given in counteracting the weight and ingrainedness of the past. Author and historian Pierre Rosanvallon, whose work focuses largely on the French Revolution, acknowledges this point as well: "To combat the 'Gothic colossus' of the old world, it was necessary to find a new and 'invincible colossus' to replace it, namely, the nation."¹⁰

As such, the idea of the nation attained a new importance in French life. The politicians and Revolutionary thinkers reconstructed the Republic as a highly abstract, all-important, singular entity to which the French citizens owed their unwavering allegiance. Jean-Paul Rabaut Saint-Etienne, a Calvinist pastor who was very active in the political sphere, stated that "In the nature of things, there is but one body, which is the nation."¹¹ Poet André Chénier subscribed to a similarly glorified vision of the French nation: "Imprudent and unfortunate is the state in which a variety of associations are formed. Happy is the country in which there is no association but the state, no *corps* but the fatherland, and no interest but the common good."¹² Chénier's quote in particular highlights the connection between the state and what he calls "the common good." This type of thinking is exactly what the politicians and philosophers of the time wanted to

⁹ Wallach Scott, 15

¹⁰ Rosanvallon, 73

¹¹ Rosanvallon

¹² Rosanvallon

instill in the general public. Revolutionary thinkers believed that creating a glorified image of the nation in which they all lived would help unite the people, thereby ensuring universal equality and tranquility among them.

Another thing that the Revolutionary thinkers like Jean-Paul Marat hoped to achieve in promoting a glorified, abstract vision of the nation was a collective public opinion. If the people all thought about the French nation in the same way, and if they all felt the same way about their relationship *to* the state, the principles of *Liberté* and *Egalité* could not be compromised: "Nothing is more important for a victory of Liberty, for the happiness of the Nation, than to enlighten the citizens as to their rights, and to create a public opinion."¹³ This desire on the part of the politicians to construct a public opinion, and in doing so to create a united, indivisible nation, was a powerful one. And, luckily for them, it was not very difficult to realize. In light of the way the feudal system had been structured, there was a great deal of anxiety about exclusivity after the Revolution among the French people in general. So forming a collective public opinion was right in line with what they needed to do to eradicate these anxieties.

The readiness with which the people embraced the voicing of a public opinion is evidenced by the rapid proliferation of publications (newspapers, newsletters, and pamphlets) after the Revolution. In the 1780s, there were scarcely three-dozen daily newspapers circulating throughout Paris. But between 1789 and 1792, the number of newspapers distributed in Paris shot up to over 500.¹⁴ This figure is astonishing given the short four-year time period in which the increase occurred. The printing press had already

¹³ Najedk, Carl: "Revolutionizing Rousseau: An Analysis of the Political Thought of Jean-Paul Marat, Georges Jacques Danton, and Maximilien Robespierre." 18

¹⁴ Hunt, Lynn. "The Rhetoric of Revolution in France." 78-94

been around for nearly four hundred years, so it was not the recent introduction of a new technique that was behind the surge: only an event like the French Revolution that really, profoundly affected French attitudes toward unity and collective thought could account for it. A similar phenomenon occurred with the production of plays: more than ever, actors were cast, scripts were generated, and crowds flocked to playhouses. It was, as Hunt aptly states, "a deluge of words,"¹⁵ produced specifically for the public (and, in the case of plays, enjoyed *in public*). Inspired by the power of the mass movement that made the Revolution a success, the French people were sharing their ideas and opinions on a larger scale than ever before. Word by word, phrase by phrase, and slogan by slogan, the development of the press and the theater began to define a new national identity in which universal thought and collective opinion were of the utmost importance.

Gatherings known as "Revolutionary festivals" provided social, interactive spaces in which the French people could develop their fledgling national identity. The festivals took place out of doors, and, in keeping with the times, were political in nature. Different political groups (for example, Jacobins) or different social tiers (for example, Aristocrats) would organize their own festivals, bringing people together to engage in dialogue and social interaction. Because of the way that the festivals were organized, they *are* reflective of ongoing social and political enclaves during the Revolution. But their larger significance as a means of developing the greater French "whole" (the unified society that the Revolution gave rise to) has been discussed rather recently by a variety of researchers and historians. Mona Ozouf, author of *Festivals and the French Revolution*, provides a clear explanation of the festivals' larger significance: "The purpose of the festival was to

¹⁵ Hunt, 78

stage a harmonious society in which all differences were temporarily suspended. It instituted a sort of sacrament of social unity, melding bodies and hearts into a unanimous ensemble."¹⁶ Ozouf sees revolutionary festivals not as highlighting individual differences, but as a mirror image of the group mentality that the Revolution gave rise to among the French people; a "self-representation"¹⁷ of the unity and social cohesion they were trying to achieve. In this way, the festival was a means of exploring, and above all, of *affirming* the value of the changing French national identity.

These phenomena illustrated the development of a new national self-definition that was predicated on social unity and consensus within the national body. This development was accompanied by shifts in the way that the French people perceived their own citizenship. Much in the same way that the idea of the nation had been glorified, the notion of the individual as a citizen was glorified and abstracted. The politicians and Revolutionary thinkers wanted the French people not only to revere the nation and to respect the sanctity of liberty and equality, but also to reflect on their own individual relationships *to* the state. Citizenship was no longer just a mere title conferred upon a person at birth; instead, it took on a moral dimension, bringing with it duties and obligations that the French people were expected to live up to. Historian and Professor Jennifer Ngaire Heuer puts the development of this idea of moral citizenship into its historical context: "The...radicalization of the Revolution and the violence of the Terror in 1793 and 1794 expanded both the rights and obligations associated with membership in

¹⁶ Rosanvallon, 22

¹⁷ Hesse, Carla. "Review: Festivals and the French Revolution." 232

the nation. Citizenship was...an individual act of will, an expression of personal patriotism and allegiance to the nation." ¹⁸

Wallach Scott links this idea of moral citizenship interestingly with the political proceedings at the time. After the Revolution, the abstract body of the *Assemblée Nationale* took the place of the actual, concrete body of the king.¹⁹ For practicality's sake, the *Assemblée* was to be comprised of a number of representatives. But instead of representing specific social factions (as in the past with the Estates General), these representatives would be there to represent the metaphorical body of the people as a united whole. According to this vision of universal representation in government, then, it does not matter who fills the role of representative. The representatives are not there as individuals with specific economic, religious, or sexual qualities, but as faceless "filters" for the voice of the rest of the French nation. This dissociation from particularity that the individual undergoes in the political sphere is at the heart of the way that the concept of the individual changed after the French Revolution. The importance of the individual in the political sphere no longer lay in specific traits that associated the individual with a particular group, but in the function he or she could play as a French citizen. In Wallach Scott's words, "The ability of any citizen to stand for, or represent, the nation derived from the understanding of political individuals as abstracted from their social attributes--wealth, family, occupation, religion, and profession."²⁰ The politicians and thinkers of the Revolutionary period were no longer interested in the political importance of the individual as a shareholder, as a father, as a woman, as a mason, as a Catholic, or as a

¹⁸ Heuer, Jennifer. *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France*. 4

¹⁹ Wallach Scott, 13

²⁰ Wallach Scott, 13

Jew. They were solely interested in the individual as an abstract, dutiful *citoyen de la République*.

This divorcing of particularity and of particular traits from the abstract citizen and *individu* was the beginning of a fundamental rift between the political and the social worlds. As Rosanvallon asserts, particularity was not important in the political world: "In democracy, 'the people' has no form. The body politic has no density; it is simply *number*, that is, a force composed of equals, of individuals equivalent before the law."²¹ And indeed, particularity was not only not important in the political world, but it threatened the very nature of the national unity that the politicians sought to create. For them, national unity and equality depended absolutely on the abstractions of the individual and the nation, so to see individuals in any way other than abstractly was to sacrifice the national unity that the Revolution had helped build. In contrast to the political world, the social world was much more concrete. The "disparate and divisive realities"²² that the political world denied were still important in the social world, as particularities and distinguishing traits are the tools by which humans gauge their social interactions. One could not enter the family sphere, for example, and claim that he or she was not a mother, or a brother, or a grandfather, but a French citizen. Social realities did not allow for the kind of abstraction that the political world allowed for, and an opposition between the two was thus established.

It is this conflict between the concrete social world and the abstract political world that makes French universalism wholly unique: "The abstractions of individual and nation were the foundations on which theories of representation were built; they also

²¹ Rosanvallon, 72

²² Wallach Scott, 13

were the key to a distinctively French concept of universalism--one that rested on an opposition between the political and the social, the abstract and the concrete."²³ As one might imagine, the tension between the social and political world that the use of abstraction created was problematic in a variety of ways. For one, it left the French people feeling (to employ Rosanvallon's word) disoriented: "[There was] a certain sociological stupefaction in the face of universal suffrage, as the inception of such a radically desubstantialized world left even its most ardent champions anxiously disoriented."²⁴ Though they were probably not aware of it at the time, the French people were being essentially pulled in two directions: they belonged at once to the political world, in which each individual was highly abstracted, and to the social world, in which distinguishing social traits and characteristics continued to be relevant. It was not clear which "world" they were supposed to use as a referent for defining themselves.

Rosanvallon observes that, as the Revolution grew more and more chaotic and "disorienting," social bonds (family and friendship) attained an elevated importance: "The family was indeed celebrated as never before in novels and plays as well as in music and painting. The virtues of intimacy and closeness, the pleasures of the home, and the warmth of friendship took on unprecedented importance in this period." He then quotes directly from Robespierre to strengthen his argument: "It is telling that Robespierre called for the erection of altars to 'divine friendship.'"²⁵ He posits that this elevated importance of family and friendship was the way that the French people "compensate[d]

²³ Wallach Scott, 15

²⁴ Rosanvallon, 73

²⁵ Rosanvallon, 25

for the abstract nature of the bond of citizenship,"²⁶ which they could not directly relate to on an emotional level in their personal lives. Rosanvallon's argument for a correlation between the unrelatability of abstraction and the importance of family is highly plausible, but he does acknowledge that not many historians have established this link.

It does seem, however, that the people used the family model to make sense of the abstractions associated with the new national political structure. As was the case with most other representations of identity during the Revolutionary period, the politicians were the ones who provided them with this framework. In the new French Constitution of 1795 (in a document entitled "The Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and of a Citizen"), the politicians drew from the lexicon of the family to help define the abstract notion of the citizen. Article 4 under the heading "Duties" reads as follows: "No man is a good citizen if he is not a good son, good father, good brother, good friend, and good husband."²⁷ References to the nation as a "great family"²⁸ also popped up frequently in political rhetoric. It is interesting here to observe the intersection of political and social terminology. Though the politicians abstracted the notions of the nation and the citizen, they still sought concrete social terms to describe them. And ultimately, this was an effective technique: using the language of the family to "explain" these abstractions made them more accessible to the French people.

Where comprehension continued to escape them was in the way that women figured into the abstracted vision of the individual. According to Wallach Scott, "abstract individuals were commensurable and interchangeable units, possessing in common only

²⁶ Rosanvallon, 5

²⁷ Burke, Edmund. *The annual register, or, A view of the history, politics, and literature for the year 1795*. 77

²⁸ Heuer, 9

that independent rationality upon which political life was thought to depend."²⁹ Social particularities did not factor into the equation at all: they were irrelevant in the political sphere. Every individual, then, regardless of sex or gender, should have been given an equal chance to participate in all aspects of political life. But this was curiously not the case. The Revolutionaries aspired to an idealistic vision of a national body governed equally by all French people, but in the end it was men, not women, who were afforded the rights and privileges of citizenship. The question, most simply put, is how did this happen? *Egalité* was a highly valorized concept during the Revolution, so it is baffling that the rights and privileges it entailed did not ultimately extend to women. It is even more baffling when Hunt's argument about patriarchy and patriarchs (as presented by Heuer) is taken into account. Before the Revolution, the monarch was widely referred to as the "*père de la patrie*," the father of the country. So when Louis XVI was executed, it was tantamount to executing a father figure: a strange kind of parricide. Summarizing Hunt's argument, Heuer describes a parallel between American and French republican imagery: "She [Hunt] contends that whereas American republican imagery celebrated the father, French revolutionaries distrusted patriarchs of all kinds."³⁰ Such a fundamental distrust of patriarchal figures on the part of the Revolutionaries should logically have led to a subsequent glorification--or at the very least, incorporation--of women into the political sphere. Why did this not happen?

The lack of sex and gender equality during the Revolutionary period is something that is still widely discussed among today's historians. Touching on the topic, Rosanvallon quotes Abbé Sièyes, a clergyman and extremely active politician during the

²⁹ Wallach Scott, 13

³⁰ Heuer, 45

Revolutionary period: "Husband and wife are but a single political person and can never be anything else, although they may be two civil persons.' If women did not vote, he went on to explain, it was for 'the simple reason that no one wants to count the same vote twice.'"³¹ Sièyes seems to be inferring that the reason that women were not extended the same political rights as men (or indeed, any political rights) is because they were too closely tied to the family. A woman's domain was purely domestic, and any crossover into the world of politics was simply unfathomable. A diatribe directed towards a group of women who entered a political assembly in the late 1700s makes this division between women and the domestic and men and the political painfully clear: "Since when is it permitted to give up one's sex?" thundered Pierre Gaspard-Chaumette to a group of women who dared to enter the Convention. 'Is it to men that nature confided domestic cares? Has she given us breasts to feed our children?'"³²

Based on Gaspard-Chaumette's fiery reaction, women's presence in the political sphere was not only unfathomable, but anger inspiring as well. And according to the writings of Rousseau, this was exactly the problem: "There is no parity between the two sexes as a consequence of sex...in a commerce that is too intimate...we [men] lose both our morals and our constitution."³³ Rousseau held that the political space was necessarily a rational and objective space that was incompatible with the emotionality of women. Introducing women into the political space would be detrimental to the male politicians because women's "volatility" would inhibit men's capacity to make moral, objective political decisions. Wallach Scott links this type of revolutionary thinking back to the

³¹ Rosanvallon, 33

³² As quoted by Wallach Scott, 17

³³ As quoted by Wallach Scott, 16

immense abstraction that French thinkers and politicians used in defining the concepts of the individual and the nation: "The reasons for excluding women from citizenship were offered in sets of binary oppositions that posited women in terms of the concrete, the emotional, and the natural (hence not susceptible to abstraction) and men in terms of reason and politics (hence operating entirely in the realm of abstraction)."³⁴ Women were thus not excluded from political life just because they would be a distraction to the men. The terms by which women were defined and perceived--"the concrete, the emotional, and the natural"--were in direct opposition with the abstractions of the political world.

This inconsistency in the abstract model was of crucial importance. Abstracting the notion of the individual and divorcing the individual from social particularities in the political sphere was supposed to *guarantee* universal equality among the French citizens. But women, because of their association with the natural, physical, and emotional world, were fundamentally incompatible with this abstract universal model, or *universalisme*. Though the politicians and philosophers did not realize it at the time, this problem had ominous implications for France: "Women's exclusion was not just about eliminating women's influence. It also served a major symbolic function as a reminder of the existence of irreducible difference--unresolvable antagonism within the national body."³⁵ It was the first sign that the universalist model upon which post-Revolutionary France had been reinvented was flawed: it did not guarantee the universal equality that the revolutionaries intended that it should.

³⁴ Wallach Scott, 16

³⁵ Wallach Scott, 16

II. *La Naissance de l'Etranger*: The Terror, the Conquests of Napoleon, and 19th Century Industrialization

Though women were the first and most prominent group to suffer political and social injustices because of the flawed universalist model, they were not the only group. Foreigners and (as they were referred to at the time) *émigrés* living in France also faced extreme xenophobia and limitations on their rights.

As William Rogers Brubaker points out, this was a new phenomenon for France: before the Revolution, citizenship, and the particularity of being foreign-born or having foreign-born parents, did not hold much importance. "This formal legislative delimitation of the citizenry was unknown in the territorial states of medieval and early modern Europe. Citizenship remained inchoate."³⁶ In other words, the boundaries between nation-states, that render things like foreignness and citizenship important and relevant in the first place, were not developed to the extent that these qualities really mattered in political life. Under the monarchy, people were more likely to care about social class and religious affiliation than geographical foreignness.

Foreigners were even given certain advantages under the Old Regime that the native-born were not. Skilled immigrant workers were welcomed into the country eagerly, where they enjoyed advantages and privileges that often surpassed any advantages or privileges that were extended to the native-born French. The King also had no qualms about placing foreigners in important positions in his cabinet: "The personal guard of the King was composed of foreigners; [and] some high officials....were

³⁶ Rogers Brubaker, William. *The French Revolution and the Invention of Citizenship*. 33

foreigners."³⁷ Even in the period directly following the initial 1789 uprising, foreignness was not polemic or widely discussed. In fact, it was quite the opposite: foreigners continued to be openly invited into the country. An excerpt from a political address by Bertrand Barère in August of 1790 evokes the optimism that most politicians shared regarding the presence of foreigners in France: "So let foreigners come to find in France a homeland; let them live here, let them enjoy liberty while they are alive...in paying our taxes, [the immigrants] will increase the mass of public riches, will augment our industry...and finish by adopting free France *as their patrie*."³⁸ In 1789 and 1790, then, immigration was regarded as an economic and political advantage. Foreign labor and the creation of new industries would generate revenue within the new Republic, and the migrants' eventual naturalization would add to the pool of French citizens and increase the country's overall power and status.

All of this changed, however, in the years that followed. Foreignness was no longer approached with the same political and social indifference that it had been under the monarchy and in the first two years of the Revolution. It became instead grounds for divisiveness, and was fringed with negative connotations. The political crisis and the involvement in wars leading up to the Second Republic and the Terror of 1793 created concerns about national security. The revolutionaries' fear of an invasion (or, more generally, of counter-revolutionary activity that would upset the freedom they had so desperately been working for) made for a political climate that was turbulent at best. Paranoia ran high, and foreigners, marked by physical difference, were easy targets.

³⁷ Rogers Brubaker, 42

³⁸ As quoted by Rapport, Michael. *Nationality and citizenship in revolutionary France: The treatment of foreigners*. 4

Suspicious of counter-revolutionary activity abroad, people began spinning conspiracy theories, denouncing one another on the basis of supposed involvement in a foreign-based plot against the French nation. Foreignness thus became associated with national enmity and dissent with the revolutionary project: "'Foreigner' (*étranger*) was a potent term. It had a multitude of connotations, encompassing both those who were non-French and...those defined as political and social enemies of the revolutionary nation."³⁹

As a result of these newfound associations, foreigners became subject to a whole slew of political restrictions and invasive measures. A large portion of these measures revolved around government surveillance and monitoring, designed to alert the French revolutionaries to any unusual or suspect behavior on the foreigners' part. They could be ordered by government officials of police to produce their identification documents at the drop of a hat, and they were no longer allowed to participate in political gatherings or public affairs. A striking example of this type of exclusion came when famous pamphleteer Thomas Paine, who had been officially elected to the National Convention years before, was then expelled from it on Christmas day of 1793.⁴⁰ Even Paine's profound involvement in and support for the revolutionary project did not exempt him from being targeted because he was English.

But as bad as surveillance and exclusion from political bodies was, there was one measure that was unarguably worse. On April 15th of 1794, the government ordered the expulsion of all *étrangers* from "Paris, maritime towns, and military strongholds."⁴¹ Given that the term *étranger* had taken on multiple meanings, expulsions were also

³⁹ Ngaire Heuer, 11

⁴⁰ Rapport, 10

⁴¹ Heuer, 44

targeted at those who were suspected of being enemies of the State in general. The fact that those of foreign origin or foreign birth fell automatically into this category is telling: it was racist, xenophobic nationalism at its worst.

Given the severity of the situation, it is not surprising that these expulsions did not go uncontested. The Committee of Public Safety (the political body that ordered the expulsion) was immediately inundated with floods of appeals. The so-called "*étrangers*" wanted to remain where they were: many had been living on French soil for long periods of time, and had learned to call the country their home. Many also did not have any kind of substantial life to go back to. Some of them had even come close to fulfilling or had already fulfilled the requirements for legal French citizenship (mostly through marriage). Even if they were not technically French citizens, many had been active participants in the Revolution, and on this basis felt they should be afforded all of the rights and privileges of citizenship: "They also contended that regardless of their origins or juridical status, they had acted as patriotic French citizens and should be treated as such."⁴² Very rarely did these appeals result in actual exemptions from the order for expulsion. As German Law professor Friedrich Meyer wrote, "Sixty-two thousand foreigners went...in order to secure exemptions and be permitted to stay in Paris. But, after a severe examination, barely a tenth of these petitioners obtained a favourable response."⁴³

The contrast between this hostile attitude toward foreigners and the tolerant, welcoming attitude that existed up until 1790 is clearly very striking: an "abrupt shift from xenophilia to xenophobia, from ostentatious hospitality to harsh repression."⁴⁴ And

⁴² Heuer, 44

⁴³ Meyer, as quoted by Michael Rapport, 256

⁴⁴ Rogers Brubaker, 43

there does not seem to be one particular, isolated event that occasioned such a swift and drastic change in attitude. What, then, was the reason that the regard for foreigners changed so strongly and so rapidly? Rogers Brubaker's compelling answer centers around the development of the modern definition of citizenship. Before the Revolution, the idea of the nation-state as a sovereign political entity simply did not exist. This means that, by default, formal political rights and the idea of national citizenship did not exist before the Revolution either. Political theory and practice had simply not progressed to the point that these concepts were fully developed in peoples' minds. But the Revolution, according to Rogers Brubaker, "brought these development together on a national level for the first time."⁴⁵

As a consequence of this kind of conceptual solidification of the nation-state, the definition of the foreigner took a definite, concrete shape. The counter-point to the concept of the citizen became, by default, the foreigner: "By inventing the national citizen...the Revolution simultaneously invented the modern figure of the foreigner. Henceforth citizen and foreigner would be correlative, mutually exclusive, exhaustive categories."⁴⁶ No longer could foreigners be considered to be on the same tier as actual, bona fide French citizens. As Michael Rapport writes, "People born outside France had other loyalties and obligations, so only French people could enjoy full rights in France. Thus French citizens were differentiated from foreigners."⁴⁷ It was yet another lapse in the equality that French *universalisme* was supposed to guarantee.

⁴⁵ Rogers Brubaker, 30

⁴⁶ Rogers Brubaker, 44

⁴⁷ Rapport, 7

The distinction between citizens and foreigners continued to play an important role in French politics in the 19th century. It was not, however--at least initially--as severe and as condemning a distinction as it had been during the Terror. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, who had steadily gained power and recognition through years of military service, carried out a successful *coup d'état*. Overthrowing the *Le Directoire*, Napoleon and his collaborators established the French *Consulat*. The *Consulat* was for all intents and purposes a provisional government that concentrated the executive power in the hands of just a few men, the most powerful of which was Napoleon himself. As the *Premier consul*, he had virtually unlimited power to change the Constitution and govern as he pleased. In 1802 he was declared "consul for life,"⁴⁸ and in 1804 he was made more powerful still: he was crowned the Emperor of France.⁴⁹

In terms of foreign policy, Napoleon's reign was a political and moral *mélange*. On the one hand, historians almost universally acknowledge the lasting impact that the Napoleonic Code had on French international law. He established a number of laws surrounding immigration and the naturalization process that are still (at least, in essence) in effect today. Some of these laws are important purely from a procedural and pragmatic standpoint, such as the one pertaining to *admission à domicile*: "A foreigner who wanted to become French was obliged to obtain permission from the government to establish himself in France."⁵⁰ These kinds of controls on who can enter a country on a permanent or long-term basis are now standard in modern immigration policy. Other Napoleonic laws are important because they constitute groundbreaking advances in immigrant rights.

⁴⁸ "Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)." BBC History

⁴⁹ All background information on Napoleon was obtained from *l'Encyclopédie Larousse* online version. Entries "*le Consulat*" and "*Bonaparte: seul maître.*"

⁵⁰ Heuer, 129

One law helped children of immigrant or emigrant parents secure their right to French citizenship: "All born of a French father, inside or outside French territory, were declared to be French; children born in France of a foreign father could claim French citizenship status when they reached the age of majority."⁵¹ Another law ensured that foreigners residing on French territory, regardless of whether or not they had legally obtained citizenship yet, were to be extended the same civil rights as the French.

This kind of legal awareness of human rights where immigrants were concerned seems highly contradictory in the context of Napoleon's foreign policy. First and foremost (at least, in popular modern American memory), Napoleon is remembered for his territorial conquests and warmongering. And indeed, these associations are not inaccurate. But the fair and equal treatment of foreign populations residing in France was actually in full accordance with the Napoleonic Legal Code: "[Napoleon's system] remained true, from first to last, to conceptions of civil equality and human rights with which the oppression or extermination of a group...would have been utterly incompatible."⁵² This was written into the Code, and so from a legal standpoint was not at all anomalous. But immigration policy and immigrant rights were far from being the sole focus of Napoleon's foreign policy, and it would be misguided to qualify his legacy solely based on these laws. As Pieter Geyl very eloquently states, "Methods of compulsion and atrocities are inseparable from the character of the dictator and conqueror, and we shall see that Napoleon incurred bitter reproaches, at home and abroad, for some of his acts."⁵³

⁵¹ Heuer, 128

⁵² Geyl, Pieter. *Napoleon: For and Against*. 9

⁵³ Geyl, 9

Geyl's words speak to the manner in which Napoleon regarded other cultures. Driven by an insatiable desire for French hegemony, Napoleon's armies invaded European country after country after country. Owing to his vast military experience, Napoleon was a tactical genius, and France acquired territory extremely rapidly: "As Napoleon waged war with most of Europe, the French territorial empire expanded; at its height in 1812 it included France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, the Italian peninsula, and many central and eastern European lands."⁵⁴ Napoleon truly believed that the French culture and the French way of life were superior to any other, and that his efforts would eventually result in a harmonious, untouchable Europe united around France and French values. Summarizing what Napoleon himself wrote about his political project in *Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* (1823)⁵⁵, Geyl writes: "Had [Napoleon] been allowed to go his own way, or had he remained victorious, Europe would have become a federation of free peoples, grouped round enlightenment and fortunate France in an eternal peace."⁵⁶

These words paint a highly glorified and idealized picture of what Napoleon was doing. In actuality, he viewed other countries--and, by extension, peoples--as nothing more than political tools. He measured their worth in terms of strategy and power: how much power he would gain through a specific country's acquisition and what kind of a strategic military advantage the country's location could give him. It is this approach to foreign policy that had a lasting negative impact on French/immigrant relations. By assuming French cultural superiority, Napoleon effectively paved the way for his citizens (or, more accurately, his subjects) to feel the same way. Because the French had been told

⁵⁴ Heuer, 123

⁵⁵ An 1823 compilation of Napoleon's various writings by Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné, *Le Compte de Las Cases*

⁵⁶ Geyl, 24

time and time again by Napoleon that they were the superior European nation, they internalized this sentiment: "French vanity, too, enjoyed the superiority which Bonaparte gave [them] over the rest of Europe."⁵⁷ This perspective remained with the French people even after Napoleon's reign had passed, working itself into the fabric of French national identity in subtle and complex ways.

This sort of awareness of what the French perceived to be their own cultural superiority is one of the reasons why immigration was met with so much hostility at the end of the 1800s. By contrast, immigrants and foreigners were not a political or social concern at the beginning of the century. As was the case in many Western cities, the 19th century was a time of immense industrial and economic development for France. The agricultural economy grew and thrived, creating a population that was distributed mostly in rural areas. But for the first time, it was a mobile population. The construction and expansion of France's railway system helped facilitate communication and connectivity among the people. According to historian Robert Tombs, the decade spanning 1840-1850 was a particularly significant one for this kind of growth and development: "The 1840s were 'decisive years,' a time of record industrial expansion...with the growth of some large mechanized units (for example, in engineering, metallurgy, and cotton) and improvements in banking, transport, and education."⁵⁸

Factories and industrial production continued to expand in the latter part of the 19th century. This had the effect of drawing more and more people to France's major cities: Paris, Lyon, Marseilles, and Lille. Much of the movement was internal: French people and families who decided to make the transition from a rural life to an urban one.

⁵⁷ Geyl, 29

⁵⁸ Tombs, Robert. *France 1814-1914*. 152

There were also some instances of what James Lehning refers to as "urban workers,"⁵⁹ individuals who retained their homes in rural areas and pursued only seasonal or temporary work in the city. But some of the increase in urban population was due to immigration. The combination of the growing industrial economy and the unusually low birth rate in France created a real need for foreign labor, to which the international community eagerly responded. Immigrating to France was an appealing prospect for a number of reasons: readily available jobs, a developing economy, and a chance to live in a country that was both beautiful and *sophistiquée*. Through a combination of political power and the production of luxury items (Lyons silks, furniture, clocks, jewellery, books, and clothing⁶⁰), France had developed "a valuable reputation for fashion and quality"⁶¹ that was alluring to immigrants. Moving to France, getting a job, and being a part of the exciting and upscale French lifestyle would be a dream come true.

The reality of what immigrants were met with, however, was far less rosy than what they had imagined. The major French cities (Paris in particular) were rapidly becoming overcrowded and dirty. The cities' infrastructures--housing, transportation, sanitation maintenance--had not developed to a level which could support the ever-growing urban population.⁶² As a result, living spaces were often small, cramped, and unclean. Rodent infestations, crime, and disease were common. In the 1850s and 60s Paris also had a real problem with prostitution. It is this squalid urban setting that serves as the backdrop for novelist Emilie Zola's *Nana*. Besides having to contend with what

⁵⁹ Lehning, James R. *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic*. 109

⁶⁰ Tombs, 152

⁶¹ Tombs, 152

⁶² Tombs, 308

really were miserable living conditions, immigrants and immigration in general was becoming somewhat of a (mostly socially) contentious issue. Lehning identifies the 1870s as the approximate time that immigration began to gain negative attention in the social sphere: "Foreigners were certainly not a focus of attention before the last third of the century, nor were foreigners rigidly excluded from participation in activities that later became associated with being a citizen."⁶³ A large part of this newfound focus on immigration was due to the extent to which the French economy relied on immigrant labor: "By the 1880s a new danger appeared: the French economy seemed increasingly dependent on foreign labor."⁶⁴ The French people were concerned that, should there be a decrease in the availability and accessibility of foreign labor, their economy would suffer.

The potential volatility of the international labor market rendered this concern understandable. But along with it was a healthy dose of plain and simple xenophobia. For the first time, the French people felt encroached upon and threatened by the large number of immigrants living among them. In 1886, lawyer and politician Alexandre Bérard published a report in which he harshly condemned the "*flot étranger*" that was "invading" the country. The majority of the French public shared this anti-immigrant sentiment, especially when it came to employment. Because the French economy was not doing well in middle and late 1880s, employment and job security were particular concerns. The French people resented the fact that they had to compete with foreign workers for the limited number of available positions: "[The economic crisis] did not mean that foreign workers already in the country returned home. They instead became a part of the floating

⁶³ Lehning, 109

⁶⁴ Lehning, 110

mass of workers tramping around the country...looking for work."⁶⁵ To unemployed French workers, it was both unfair and nonsensical to fill job openings with foreign labor rather than "native" labor. And from a performance standpoint, they felt themselves superior to foreign workers in every way: "French workers saw themselves replaced by foreigners whose apparent merit came from their obsequiousness. Immigrants drove down not only the price of labour but also the character of the worker."⁶⁶

The integrity of foreign workers was thus called into question, establishing a clear hierarchy in which the native Frenchman was at the top and the immigrant workers at the bottom. Slurs and stereotypes that targeted foreigners (particularly Italians and Germans) became common. A prominent French legislator named A. Pradon chose to refer to Italians and Germans collectively as the "mob," and maintained that Germans were "vagrants" and "vagabonds" who selfishly came to France for personal gain.⁶⁷ The number of instances of violence against foreign workers also began to mount, making an astonishing leap from just five incidents over a span of nine years to seventy-seven incidents over a span of twelve.⁶⁸ Most of these incidents took place in densely populated urban areas like Marseille, Paris, and the Nord region of France. When they unfolded, they tended to begin in the workplace. Depending on the nature of the altercation, they had the potential to escalate into massive public protests: "In these apparently spontaneous events, the workers who were the initiators of the disturbance were quickly joined by a wide cross-section of the population, rapidly mobilizing thousands,

⁶⁵ Lehning, 113

⁶⁶ Lehning, 114

⁶⁷ Lehning, 114

⁶⁸ 1872-1880 and 1881-1893, respectively (Lehning, 115)

sometimes as many as ten thousand."⁶⁹ The fact that what began as mere workplace disturbances often spiraled so far out of control is a testament to the level of anxiety the French people felt in the presence of foreigners. The convergence of the public on the occasion of such an event resulted in what was effectively a demonstration, complete with flag-waving and the chanting of slogans. Amidst cries of "*Vive la France!*", the French people called for the expulsion of foreign workers and the return of their *patrie*.

Concerns about foreigners were multiplying on the political level as well. Attitudes that were prevalent a hundred years earlier during the Revolution began to resurface: foreigners were once again suspected of espionage and perceived as a threat to national security. The French government chose to assuage these fears by implementing a series of surveillance measures, all of which were designed to "keep track" of the comings and goings of immigrants and foreign workers. The most significant of these measures was an 1888 law that mandated two things: one, that all immigrants possess "*pièces justificatives*" by which they could prove their identity; and two, that all foreigners register with the *mairie* in their town or city of residence.⁷⁰ This law constituted an unprecedented manifestation of xenophobic paranoia which was all the more disturbing because it came from the state level. Immigration had been problematic in the social sphere in the past, but never before had it been so blatantly challenged by the French government. Lehning explains that the decision to pass what were really very stringent measures for the time was probably related to the 1871 loss of the Franco-Prussian War: "The foreigners who seemed to be 'invading' France were a threatening presence in a country that had only fifteen years earlier suffered military invasion and

⁶⁹ Lehning, 115

⁷⁰ Lehning, 123

defeat."⁷¹ Immigration was thus an unwelcome and unwanted reminder of the events of the recent war, the first of many international conflicts to remain in France's historic memory and influence its attitude toward foreigners.

This violent political and social reaction immigrants and foreigners in the late 1880s had very interesting implications for France's own national identity. At the same time as immigrants and foreigners were criticized and degraded in the public sphere, French national identity was subtly elevated in the minds of the people. In Lehning's words, "[The] descriptions of the dangers and threats posed by foreigners also articulated the positive qualities and contributions of French workers as citizens of the French nation and the Republic."⁷² To degrade foreigners was also, by default, to praise Frenchness. Tombs chooses a sparser yet equally impactful way of describing this phenomenon: "The influx of foreign workers...increased a sense of Frenchness as a by-product of xenophobia."⁷³ Anti-immigrant sentiment was thus, in a strange sort of way, an opportunity for the still-new Republic to valorize its own national identity. This is not to say, of course, that this experimentation with self-identification was innocent. As Lehning points out, the way in which national symbols and slogans were incorporated into displays of anti-immigrant sentiment constituted a "French nationalism *conflated* with republicanism."⁷⁴ But it was nonetheless an exploration of French national identity such that the Republic had had few occasions for in years prior.

The surveillance law of 1888 also affected the notions of the individual and the citizen that had been established during the Revolution. Because of the law's insistence

⁷¹ Lehning, 110

⁷² Lehning, 115

⁷³ Tombs, 308

⁷⁴ Lehning, 115-116. Italics my own

on foreigners' registration in France, nationality became distinctly important when considering individual identity: "It was this penetration of state authority which thrust nationality forward as the most important facet of an individual's identity."⁷⁵ During the Revolution, individual identity was defined by Frenchness. The importance of the individual in the context of the national whole was that he or she was first and foremost a French citizen. After the law of 1888, the premise of individual identity remained fundamentally the same, but with a subtle and extremely important difference: the relationship of the individual to the national whole could now also be defined by *foreignness*. The surveillance law rendered it impossible to think about being a French citizen without also considering the possibility that one was *not* a French citizen, precisely because nationality was constantly being called into question. If one was French, one belonged to the national whole. If one was foreign, one simply did not.

The kinds of duties involved in being a "true" French citizen also changed. The surveillance law ultimately had the effect of trickling down: not only was the government surveilling on a national level, but individual French citizens were also surveilling on an individual and local level. Lehning provides an excellent explanation of how this local surveillance operated: "The [law]...established a relationship between the citizens of the Republic, who would watch the foreigners in their midst, and those foreigners themselves, who remained marked as separate from the community in which they lived."⁷⁶ This kind of social policing was civically acceptable in that it was approved of and encouraged by the French government, but it also became a compulsion that allowed paranoia to run rampant and the stigmatization and stereotyping of foreigners to develop

⁷⁵ Rapport, 25

⁷⁶ Lehning, 120

freely. By the end of the 19th century, immigration and foreign presence in France was a full-fledged polemic issue on both social and political fronts.

III. *Le Début du Vingtième Siècle*: French Colonial Expansion and Pre-War Algeria

One of the major factors that shaped the French perception of immigration in the early 1900s was the country's steady pursuit and acquisition of colonial possessions in Africa. French imperialism was by no means new to the 20th century: Herbert Luethy states that France "unquestionably possesses the oldest and greatest colonial tradition of all European nations."⁷⁷ Its culminating point in the early 1900s, however, had huge implications for both French foreign policy and the French perception of foreignness in general. It is therefore necessary to understand the ways in which France played into and internalized the European imperialist project.

Throughout the 1800s, Germany, France, and Britain (and for a time, Belgium) were actively competing for economic and military supremacy in Western Europe. This desire for supremacy was closely linked to the acquisition and control of foreign territory, and in that respect it was nothing new: state power and the expansion of territory had gone hand-in-hand for ages. The particular brand of European colonialism that developed as the 1800s drew on, however, was not something that had been seen before on the world stage. Instead of simply entering foreign countries and claiming them as their own, the European powers were gleaning distinct economic advantages from their colonial conquests: "It was colonisation on a mercantilist, almost feudal pattern...large-scale ownership of land was introduced and trading stations were established."⁷⁸ The colonizers established long-term industrial and trading mechanisms abroad in the interest of extracting the country's raw materials and shipping them back home for domestic use. It

⁷⁷ Luethy, Herbert. *France Against Herself*. 209

⁷⁸ Luethy, 214

was exploitation in its purest form, and in terms of power dynamics, it was enormously effective: bereft of resources and any sort of legal or social power, the colonized peoples could do little to combat the European presence.

The effectiveness of the exploitative system in meeting European expectations is evidenced by what is now known as the "Scramble for Africa." The resource rich, minimally explored, and (*soi-disant*) uncivilized continent of Africa was the perfect tableau for colorful European colonial dreams--especially when diamonds were discovered in Africa's interior. In 1884 and 1885, the European powers held the Berlin Conference on Africa, where delegates heatedly discussed the "fairest" way to proceed with claiming territory in Africa. In reality, the conference was little more than an excuse for the European powers to hash out "who gets what": by the time the conference was over, the map of Africa they had been using as a guide was completely marked up. All unclaimed territory had been divvied up among nine very eager European countries, all of which wasted no time claiming the countries allotted to them. In 1880, European powers controlled ten percent of the continent, but by the year 1900 only two African countries remained free of colonial rule.⁷⁹

France's share of African territory was significant: by 1898, France had conquered nearly all of Western Africa and part of Central Africa as well.⁸⁰ The acquisition of such a vast expanse of territory in such a short time was met with a variety of reactions from the French people. Many did not view the colonial endeavor favorably because it did not correspond with the core values upon which the Republic had been founded: it went entirely against the principles of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* that the French people

⁷⁹ Kane, Eileen: Classroom Lecture

⁸⁰ Taylor, Jeff. Web.

held so dear. The majority of the dissenters' doubts were, however, quick to fade. As time passed, it became clear that colonialism could be incredibly useful, both for the economic advantage it secured France over the rest of Europe and the prestige it entailed. They thus gradually became reconciled to the idea: "Republicans...convinced themselves that associating the colonies closely with France would ensure that colonial peoples would share the advantages of modern French political life to their mutual benefit."⁸¹

As far as justifications for colonialism went, this was a common one. Just as Napoleon had done some two hundred years ago, the European colonial powers justified their conquests in Africa and elsewhere in the name of the "civilizing mission": the colonizer moves in, sets up camp, and is gracious enough to share its bounty of European knowledge and values with the primitive native societies. Such a rationale implied that both societies benefit equally from colonialism: the colonized are enlightened by the "superior" European culture and the colonizer's empire expands. This message is delivered loud and clear within the following statement, uttered by 19th century writer and politician Prévost-Paradol: "Africa...should not be for us simply a trading post...it is a French land which as soon as possible should be peopled, possessed, and cultivated by Frenchmen."⁸² This vision, in which both societies mutually benefit from the colonial presence, was the official narrative at the time, adopted by European governments and disseminated to a wide and very receptive public.

The reality of what was going on in colonized areas was, of course, much less idyllic. Contrary to what the European press was printing back home, native peoples were routinely and systematically massacred by colonial regimes. Military activity was poorly

⁸¹ Marshall, 6

⁸² As quoted by Marshall, 28

regulated, giving the soldiers and other personnel living abroad free reign to do as they wished. And when word of questionable goings-on abroad *did* trickle back to Europe, officials usually had little to say: "Parliament made no protest; it did not object to...[for example] the methods of the high officials of the Moroccan protectorate, who provoked riots and unrest on their own initiative in order to get rid of an inconvenient sultan."⁸³ Additionally, stringent and discriminatory laws established by the colonizers left the native people with little to no rights as to their own fate or the fate of their country. Most were deprived of the right to vote, and for those who *were* granted a voice were usually attributed votes that had lesser weight than the votes of the Europeans. This kind of oppression was what gave colonialism a bad name--a period of history that truly "ought not to have existed."⁸⁴

The harsh reality of colonialism was a sharp and direct contrast to the naive optimism and excitement with which many Europeans regarded the colonial project in Africa. As far as France is concerned, no country serves as a better model for examining both "sides" of colonialism than Algeria. The French tie with Algeria is one of its oldest colonial relationships, and it is quite possibly the single most influential foreign relationship in all of France's history. Because of the intensity with which France linked itself to Algeria and because of the subsequent violence which tore apart both countries, the Franco-Algerian relationship has had a profound impact on notions of French national identity and self-hood. Though nearly half a century has passed since decolonization, the reverberations of France's ties with Algeria can still be felt in modern-day France,

⁸³ Luethy, 208

⁸⁴ Luethy, 205

strongly affecting French attitudes toward immigrants, foreigners, and their own national identity.

France's relationship with Algeria began long before the colonial fervor in Europe was in full swing. In May of 1830, a fleet of ships carrying French militiamen took the land by storm: "On May 16, 1830, a fleet of five hundred French ships headed from Toulon to Algiers...on July 5, 1830, the dey⁸⁵ of Algiers signed the act of surrender. The French colonial conquest had begun."⁸⁶ From this date forward, Algeria was a French colonial possession--that much was definitive. What was still unclear was how the military would choose to proceed: "After the surrender of the Algiers authorities, the French military held effective power, but was divided on what course to follow. Should there be limited or total occupation?"⁸⁷ The high level of resistance that the French army encountered complicated the question. Several religious sects in Algeria declared holy war on the French, spurring a series of bloody clashes that continued for the next forty years.

It was not until 1871 that the French army was able to effectively put a stop to the rebellion and begin withdrawing troops from the country. When they left, they transferred the political power to thousands of European settlers (known as *colons*) who lived there. Drawn by (among other things) the lower cost of living and the promise of farmable land, Europeans flocked to Algeria--French, Spanish, Italian, and Maltese alike. ⁸⁸ By 1870,

⁸⁵ Roughly, "governor"

⁸⁶ Stora, Benjamin. *Algeria 1830-2000: A Short History*. 3

⁸⁷ Stora, 4

⁸⁸ Stora, 8-9

there were upwards of 250,000 *colons* living in Algeria,⁸⁹ and by 1896 the number of Europeans born on Algerian soil surpassed the number of immigrants themselves.⁹⁰

The ensemble of these Europeans living in Algeria came to be referred to as *pieds noirs*,⁹¹ and the mere fact of their presence made the Franco-Algerian relationship markedly unique. Not once on any of its other colonial territories had France established a *colonie de peuplement*, or settlement colony, the way it did in Algeria. Bona fide French citizens lived, worked, and built lives and families there, creating stronger and more "intimate" ties between the two countries than France had ever had before. As Luethy claimed, "[Algiers is] as much a French city as Marseilles or Bordeaux, not the capital of a colony, but of a department of France."⁹² Stora uses similar language, referring to Algeria as "a continuation of France on the other side of the Mediterranean."⁹³ Most famously of all, François Mitterrand (who held the post of Prime Minister in France at the time) publicly announced that "*l'Algérie, c'est la France.*"

Such statements are demonstrative of the mixture of idealism and myopia that characterized political discourse about the French/Algerian relationship at the time. If Algeria truly had been France, or even a trans-Mediterranean extension of France, the Algerians would not have suffered the type of injustices that were continuously imposed upon them from the very beginning of French occupation. Despite what politicians like Mitterrand were saying, it had never been their intention to extend equal rights to the Algerian natives: "[France's] aim was to ensure the absolute and complete subjugation of

⁸⁹ Adamson, Kay. *Algeria: A Study in Competing Ideologies*. 36

⁹⁰ Stora, 9

⁹¹ Literally "black feet."

⁹² Luethy, 203

⁹³ Stora, 6

the population to the needs and interests of colonization. The *colons* enjoyed full rights; the colonized were 'subjects' not 'citizens.'⁹⁴

The ruthlessness with which the French authorities oppressed the Muslim populations of Algeria is perhaps most evident in the context of housing and land. Ever since the inception of the colony in 1830, the French had no qualms about taking land from the Algerian people. They took what land they needed for their own enterprises by force, regardless of whether or not the land was designated holy or religious land by the natives. On the basis of their *soi-disant* cultural and racial superiority, they felt entitled to it. In time, this attitude generated some extremely alarming statistics: "Between 1871 and 1919, 215 million acres were handed over to the *colons*...by 1919, the Muslims had lost 18.5 million acres, which the state, individuals, and major companies had divided up amongst themselves."⁹⁵

This loss of land was devastating for the native people, and it occurred on such a massive scale that it changed the entire layout of Algerian cities: "In the city of Algiers alone, excluding its outskirts, 120 slums, like a cancer growing on all available land, had some 80,000 Muslims crowded together in unbelievable living conditions." Astoundingly, the Casbah⁹⁶ sustained even worse levels of overcrowding than the slums: "The Casbah...crammed 70,000 residents into its 50 acres, breaking world records in human density."⁹⁷ As if being made to live in unimaginable conditions were not enough, the Muslim Algerians were also subject to a series of repressive measures that were solidified

⁹⁴ Stora, 6

⁹⁵ Stora, 7

⁹⁶ Or *Kasbah*, a walled structure or fortress that is typical in North African cities. The Casbah in Algiers played a particularly important role in the Franco-Algerian War, and thus tends to be the most well known. (Old English Dictionary online: www.oed.com).

⁹⁷ Stora, 23, quoting Jacques Chevallier, the then-mayor of the city of Algiers

by the *Code de l'Indigénat* (Native Code). The Code, which came into effect in 1881, included "an internal passport system, forced labor, and penalties for acts or remarks prejudicial to French sovereignty."⁹⁸ Because the natives were at this point completely disenfranchised, they were powerless to combat the Code that was imposed upon them.

The treatment of the native Algerians following World Wars I and II is also an injustice that must not be overlooked. During World War I, large numbers of indigenous Algerians and *pieds noirs* alike fought in Europe for the French cause. Their reasons for doing so were varied: some, feeling a genuine allegiance to the French nation, volunteered. Some agreed to fight in hopes that their service would lead to enfranchisement and social advancement. Many, doubtless, were forced into conscription. Whatever their reason, most met the same tragic ending. A staggering total of approximately 22,000 *pieds noirs* and 25,000 Muslim soldiers lost their lives to the war.⁹⁹

This was obviously devastating on both a personal and a national level. But for a number of slightly less obvious reasons, it was especially devastating for the native Algerian veterans who survived the war. The deployment had provided them with the opportunity to see Western society firsthand. For many, it was their first time *seeing* (let alone inhabiting) the France that had been so present in their lives, so--despite the context in which it took place--their experience in Europe left quite an impression. Seeing Frenchmen on their own soil, witnessing a much higher standard of living, and experiencing life free of the Native Code was, for the native Algerians especially, an eye-opening experience. If they were granted the same rights as the *colons*, this is what life could be like every day and all of the time. Returning to Algeria's Native Code was thus

⁹⁸ Smith, Tony. *The French Stake in Algeria, 1945-1962*. 97

⁹⁹ Stora, 12

extremely difficult: "Dissatisfaction was the very logical result of the gap between the possibilities they had glimpsed in France and the wretchedness of what was now their daily fate."¹⁰⁰ After getting a taste of freedom, it was virtually impossible to go back to the way things were. In this way, World War I triggered an important shift in Algerian attitudes toward the French occupation: the seeds of major unrest had been sewn.

The interwar period was characterized both by immigration and emigration: thousands more Europeans poured into Algeria, and significant numbers of both *pieds noirs* and native Algerians chose to immigrate to France. The latter group was motivated largely by economic reasons. A growing population made for a dwindling number of jobs in Algeria,¹⁰¹ and reconstruction efforts after the war opened up plenty of employment opportunities in France. France itself had suffered an enormous number of casualties in the war (1,322,000 dead and another 3 million wounded),¹⁰² and this fact combined with historically low French birth rates made the need for foreign labor virtually inexhaustible. To ensure that labor needs were met, France implemented an economic immigration program for the first time, whereby the government could control the flow of incoming workers as it saw fit: "In contrast with the pre-war situation, where immigrant labor was largely unregulated, the State itself took charge of organizing the supply of foreign workers."¹⁰³ This kind of formal recruitment provided Algerian and other North African residents with official channels to go through if they wished to immigrate to France. It

¹⁰⁰ Stora, 14

¹⁰¹ Stora, 17

¹⁰² McMillan, 80

¹⁰³ McMillan, 79

was through this mechanism that France became "the world's [single] largest importer of people."¹⁰⁴

In spite of this claim, French attitudes vis-à-vis the unprecedented number of new arrivals in their country were usually blatantly hostile. The French overlooked the fact that these immigrants were doing them a service by helping to rebuild their country, giving way instead to resentment and deeply-rooted prejudice: "However much they may have benefited from being released from the dirtiest and most menial jobs, [French native workers] strongly resented the presence of foreigners in their midst and rarely extended a hand of welcome or friendship."¹⁰⁵ Racist discourse contributed greatly to French hostility toward immigrants, often targeting Algeria's Arab population. According to late 19th century anthropologist Gustave Le Bon, "the intellectual and moral character of a race was the basis for classification," and in this regard "the Arab population of Algeria was distinctly lacking." Le Bon also stated that the indigenous Algerians were nothing more than "[the] degenerate products of all the conquerors who had ruled them."¹⁰⁶ In view of all that the Algerian and other African immigrants had done for France, the barbarous treatment they received was a moral outrage.

Back in Algeria, the restrictions of the Native Code continued to weigh heavily upon the Muslim Algerians. Disillusioned by the events of World War I, the majority firmly opposed the French presence in their country. Unrest was steadily growing, becoming more and more distinguishable from the "veiled, latent form"¹⁰⁷ it had assumed in the past. There was a small glimmer of hope for the native population in 1936 when

¹⁰⁴ Tombs, 324

¹⁰⁵ McMillan, 80

¹⁰⁶ Lehning, 135

¹⁰⁷ Stora, 11

the French government proposed the Blum-Viollette Plan. In short, the Plan would "grant political equality to a small proportion of the Algerian population, gradually extending it to the majority. Without abandoning Muslim status, a minority would thus have obtained the same political rights as French citizens."¹⁰⁸ The Plan was everything the native Algerians had ever wanted from the French.

The Plan did not, however, come to fruition: the discussion surrounding its passage was so heated and so lengthy that "an attitude of distrust, then of hostility, developed"¹⁰⁹ between Algerian nationalist groups and the French government. The tension eventually became so acute that any possibility of the Plan going into effect disappeared. This affair transformed the social climate in Algeria entirely. By proposing the Plan and failing to implement it, the French government had effectively dangled the carrot of equal rights in front of the noses of the colonized only to snatch it away. Indigenous Algerians were furious: French-Algerian relations were becoming dangerously heated. Already, it looked as if a peace between the two nations was unsalvageable.

If it were possible, the beginning of World War II in 1939 strained Franco-Algerian relations even more. Again huge numbers of indigenous Algerians and *pieds noirs* fought on behalf of France, and again huge numbers lost their lives: in terms of military service, the situation remained the same. The situation also remained the same with regard to the overall lack of recognition that the native Algerian veterans received from the French government. De Gaulle did extend French citizenship to a limited

¹⁰⁸ Stora, 18

¹⁰⁹ Stora, 19

number of veterans and other Algerian Muslims in 1943¹¹⁰, but the majority received nothing more than accolades for their service: "As recompense, France had merely given them medals, war pendants, and government jobs. Many who had hoped to obtain French citizenship or at least equal rights with French Algerians were dismayed by this ingratitude."¹¹¹

The lack of adequate recognition by the French government was like a slap in the face, and one they refused to endure any longer. The unrest came to a boiling point at the same time the war ended: "On May 8, 1945, the day the armistice was signed, Muslim Algerians paraded in most of the cities of Algeria, with banners bearing the slogan 'Down with fascism and colonialism.'"¹¹² What had previously been mere demonstrations turned into full-on violent riots. Muslim Algerians were demanding change loudly, and miraculously--for the first time since 1830--the French government listened. As part of its decolonization effort, the government passed a bill in 1946 stating "All subjects of overseas territories, including Algeria, possess the quality of citizens with the same rights as French citizens in the home country and in the overseas territories."¹¹³ In the context of the nearly nonexistent rights of the past, this was quite a boon. And perhaps if it had been offered earlier, the native Algerians would have accepted it gladly. But as it were, it was simply too late: henceforth, it would be independence or nothing.

¹¹⁰ Stora, 21

¹¹¹ Gilles Martin, 52

¹¹² Stora, 21

¹¹³ Luethy, 220

IV. *La Guerre Sans Nom*: The Franco-Algerian War, 1954-1962

The Franco-Algerian War officially began on November 1st, 1954,¹¹⁴ but the violent attacks that would come to be characteristic of the war as a whole began long before. Algerian nationalists were the first to act, targeting *pieds noirs*, French, and other Europeans as early as 1950: "The rebellion broke out in Aurès, one of the most destitute regions in Algeria. Its beginnings were marked by subversive acts and the massacre of Europeans." These acts were accompanied by a swift and rallying call to action: "On November 1, 1950, the leaders of the rebellion issued an appeal to the Algerian people to combat colonialism."¹¹⁵ Algerian Muslims answered the call enthusiastically, responding to the nationalistic climate that was sweeping the country.

By 1954, what were in previous years several disparate rebel groups had consolidated into one centralized group called the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN). The group, described by Stora as "the sole heir to Algerian nationalism,"¹¹⁶ was extremist from the get-go. Its leaders used a combination of "propaganda and coercion"¹¹⁷ to gain support and incite nationalism among Muslim Algerians, who rallied behind the group swiftly and enthusiastically. In the beginning, the FLN seemed to them to be the embodiment of everything they had been pursuing: it demanded independence for Algeria, and it demanded it loudly. It combined a nationalistic ideal with a heavy-handed approach, two components that would be necessary in dealing with the French colonial giant. But the people were largely unprepared for the enormous breadth and scope of the violence that was to be unleashed on the French armies two years later.

¹¹⁴ Stora, 44

¹¹⁵ De Carmoy, Guy. *The Foreign Policies of France: 1944-1968*. 155

¹¹⁶ Stora, 29

¹¹⁷ De Carmoy, 113

In the interim between the FLN's inception in 1954 and its first violent attacks in 1956,¹¹⁸ the French government occupied itself with internal negotiations for which there was seemingly no end. What to do about the rebellion in Algeria? The government was sharply divided on the issue: "The prolongation of the war led to a debate in metropolitan France on the status of Algeria. The alternatives were integration, independence, or partition--each entailing radical changes."¹¹⁹ Each of the three courses of action represented a commitment that France was, as of yet, unwilling to make. The only thing government officials *did* agree on was that withdrawing from Algeria point-blank was out of the question. The two countries had simply been tied too closely for too long. After all, *l'Algérie, c'était la France*: Governor general Jacques Soustelle proclaimed that "France would no more leave Algeria than she would leave Provence or Brittany."¹²⁰

Soustelle's statement places France's decision to stay in Algeria in a very moral framework, implying that France was so dedicated the Algerian cause that it would stick by the people even in times of hardship. This was decidedly not the case: France acted the way it did out of pure self-interest. Having an authoritarian and military presence in Algeria had been economically and strategically advantageous to France for decades, and the government was not interested in losing these advantages. There is the additional possibility that part of the reason why France was so invested in Algeria was due to the natural gas and oil reserves discovered in the Sahara in 1952: "The sizable investments in the Sahara were mentioned by some Frenchmen as a...reason for continuing the war."¹²¹ Stora chimes in on this topic as well and even goes a step further, suggesting that the

¹¹⁸ Stora, 47

¹¹⁹ De Carmoy, 161

¹²⁰ De Carmoy, 157

¹²¹ De Carmoy, 160

expansive space of the Sahara gave the French a perfect place to test their nuclear weapons: "In the course of the war itself, the discovery of oil and the decision to use the vast Sahara for the first nuclear space experiments came to be added to...[the] rationale."¹²² It is unclear whether or not these factors played into the French government's thinking about Algeria, but the fact that prominent historians are suggesting it is significant: France was acting not out of humanitarian or fraternal loyalty to the Algerian people, but based on its own self-motivated interests.

For the time being, however, France's approach to the crisis in Algeria remained shaky. Clinging to the idea that reconciliation under their terms was still possible, the French government decided to pursue a policy of pacification: in 1955, "peacekeeping" troops were poured into Algeria by the thousands. This action was met with violent protest on the part of the French soldiers, many of whom had already spent years in Algeria with the French military and had since been recalled home: "On September 1, at the *Gare de l'Est* in Paris, two thousand young people refused to board trains, shouting 'Civilian life!' 'No war in Algeria!'"¹²³ These *manifestations* were indicative not only of the soldiers' anger and anxiety at being redeployed, but also of the presence of a general public opposition to the war as a whole.

The heightened French military presence had even more disastrous consequences on Algerian soil. The soldiers were increasingly repressive of the Algerian natives, behaving in brutally discriminatory ways on a regular basis. Wherever they went, they spread violence and destroyed Algerian villages.¹²⁴ Any individual rights that had

¹²² Stora, 30

¹²³ Stora, 44

¹²⁴ "The Torture of Algiers," Adam Shatz. Web.

previously been extended to Algerians were officially revoked, prompting large numbers of young Algerians to join with the FLN: "The repression pushed thousands of young Algerians toward the guerrilla forces (students in particular, who organized a strike in 1956)."¹²⁵ In February of the same year, the FLN decided it would abide the influx of troops and the repression of Algeria no longer: the first organized attacks on French soldiers, police forces, and *pieds noirs* took place in the city of Oran. On the French side, this meant complete and total chaos: for want of adequate training, the troops were fatally taken by surprise.¹²⁶

After the initial strike, one thing became clear: if the French were to successfully maintain their stake in Algeria, they would need to up the ante. So it did just that: in response to the violence in Oran, the French government pumped still more troops into the heart of Algeria. "The extremist *pieds noirs* and the army demanded an increase in the number of soldiers, already 190,000 strong in February 1956."¹²⁷ Accompanying this new wave of soldiers was a fleet of helicopters, sent to support the French military's newest and most drastic endeavor to date: the partitioning of the capital city of Algiers. They divided it cleanly into three "zones," each one designated for a different military operation and strategy: "In the zone of operation, the objective would be to 'crush the rebels.' In the pacification zones, the 'protection' of European and Muslim populations was foreseen...forbidden zones were to be evacuated, and the population assembled in 'settlement camps' and placed under control of the army."¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Stora, 48

¹²⁶ Stora, 47

¹²⁷ Stora, 46

¹²⁸ Stora, 46

This was the first major manifestation of French military strategy on the ground in Algeria, and it was significant for several reasons. For one, it represented somewhat of a turning point in France's foreign policy in Algeria. Since the onset of the war, French government officials had been indecisive as to how to deal with the hostile rebel groups and the emerging FLN. Faced with a series of choices that were equally unappealing, the French had government pursued no definitive course of action beyond further "assimilation" of the Algerian people: "The attitude of the authorities in Algeria was that of a series of refusals amounting to a total denial of reality. The truth was unbearable because it was tragic. A choice had to be made between prolonging the war and granting independence."¹²⁹ The partitioning of the city of Algiers made it clear which choice France had made. The French government had unequivocally refused to withdraw from the country, and the war would continue to wreak havoc on two continents for another six long years.

The partitioning of Algiers also had the effect of geographically refocusing both French military efforts and FLN-led attacks. For the remainder of the war, the majority of the violence was concentrated in the capital city: "The city became a permanent stage for latent violence, justified by social exploitation, combined with national oppression, and which manifested itself...in sudden outbreaks of open conflict."¹³⁰ In January of 1957, the worst outbreak of "open conflict" yet was occurred at the hands of the FLN. A small group of FLN party members clandestinely planted bombs in two centrally located, popular bars in the heart of Algiers: "The horror reached its peak on January 26. Within a few minutes of each other, two charges exploded, the first in the bar *L'Otomatic*, the

¹²⁹ De Carmoy, 166

¹³⁰ Stora, 24

second in the café *Le Coq Hardi*, in the very center of Algiers."¹³¹ Both the civilian death toll and the extent of the damage were unprecedented. The tragedy was absolute: the attacks (which feature prominently in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film "*La Bataille d'Alger*") are demonstrative of the kind of violence and terrorism that the FLN engaged in on a regular basis. January 26th, 1957 would go down in history as one of the single most devastating dates of the Franco-Algerian War.

In the context of a discussion of FLN-perpetrated violence, it is of the utmost importance to emphasize that its severity and magnitude were *entirely* reciprocated by the French military forces. The chaos and turmoil in Algiers and elsewhere in the country provided soldiers and military officials with the opportunity to engage in unspeakable acts of violence, including the random physical harming and/or murder of Algerian civilians. Political assassinations were particularly prominent, and civilian deaths factored highly into these casualties: "[French military forces] arrested one hundred suspects and shot them on the spot. By the end of the week, well over a thousand Algerians, mostly civilians, lay dead, marking what Frantz Fanon later called 'the point of no return.'"¹³² Algerian women were targeted as well, enduring intense physical and emotional abuse: "The history that emerges in [these women's] texts confirms the physical and psychological abuse inflicted upon Algerian women combatants by the French military during the anti-colonial struggle."¹³³ The trauma of this type of abuse still persists today, weighing heavily on the lives of the women that it impacts.

¹³¹ Stora, 49

¹³² "The Torture of Algiers," Adam Shatz

¹³³ "Tortured Bodies, resilient souls: Algeria's women combatants depicted by Daniele Djamila Amrane-Minne, Louise Ighilahriz, and Assia Djebar," Mildred Mortimer. Web.

The most shocking violence that occurred at the hands of the French, however, was yet to be fully discovered by the international community: the French military was torturing its Algerian political prisoners. Drawing on methods of torture that had been employed by the Nazis during World War II, the French government used a wide variety of inhumane, atrocious, and shameful tactics to extract information from those it held captive. Most often, the military was seeking information concerning the identities and whereabouts of FLN party leaders. The FLN's infrastructure was purposefully and carefully obscured from the French, so information about who was giving orders and where to find them was extremely valuable. So valuable, apparently, that the French military was willing to subject its prisoners to physical, psychological, and sexual torture until they got it.

This was not limited to a few, isolated incidents, but occurred continuously and on a regular basis: it was a fundamental part of French "military strategy" in Algeria. General Jacques Massu "conceded...that torture had systematically been carried out by the soldiers under his command, particularly during the 'Battle of Algiers.'"¹³⁴ Massu was one individual who later expressed regret about his involvement in torture. In an interview with prominent French newspaper *Le Monde*, he stated that "Torture...isn't indispensable in times of war, and one can very well do without it. When I look back on Algeria, it saddens me...one could have done things differently."¹³⁵ Not everyone who was implicated in torture, however, attempted to repent for it later. Paul Aussaresses, a French officer who himself had ordered and carried out torture, did just the opposite: "In a shameful book, Paul Aussaresses, who held the rank of major at the time, had the

¹³⁴ Alleg, Henri. *The Question*. 100

¹³⁵ "The Torture of Algiers," Adam Shatz

audacity to take credit for, and actually revel in, his crimes."¹³⁶ Aussaresses's comments (made public through the release of his memoirs) were met with moral outrage in France. How could it possibly be that the great *République* had engaged in such horrible, inhuman acts? If the government knew about it, why did they not put a stop to it?

This last question is especially apt, because the French government *did* in fact know about the torture that was going on in Algeria. As early as three years before the War even started, journalist Claude Bourdet wrote an article on the subject for *L'Observateur* that questioned the ethics of French interrogation practices in Algeria. In 1955 he wrote a second article, which was expository in nature and which cited specific names of people who had been tortured.¹³⁷ In 1960, Henri Alleg published a book that provided a first person account of his own torture in Algeria. The book, entitled *La Question*, "sold 60,000 copies in one day" and was subsequently "banned by the French police."¹³⁸ Given the presence of these published and widely read accounts and allegations of torture, it is impossible that the French government did not know what was going on. But it continued to adamantly deny its involvement in torture for decades after the War's end.

It bears mentioning that there were a select few members of the French military forces who openly objected to the use of torture in Algeria. General Paris Bollardière is the most well-known of these men: "General Paris Bollardière resigned from his post in 1957 on the grounds that the torturing of Algerian citizens contradicted everything he had

¹³⁶ Alleg, 100

¹³⁷ Beigbeder, Yves. *Judging War Crimes and Torture: French Justice and International Criminal Tribunals and Commissions*, 110

¹³⁸ "The Torture of Algiers," Adam Shatz

fought against during WWII. He was subsequently reprimanded and thrown in prison."¹³⁹

This example is both heartening and disheartening. On one hand, it proves that not all French soldiers were in favor of or indifferent to the use of torture in military practice:

"Some of the torturers were sadists, to be sure. But many officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers would live with that nightmare for the rest of their lives."¹⁴⁰

Bollardière, who had the courage to stand up to something as immoral and inhumane as torture, should be commended. But the fact remains that the vast majority of the French military *and* the French government remained compliant, creating a deep scar that would send the entire country reeling for years to come.

What complicates the matter further is that the FLN, too, was involved in torture. It too contains party members who both ordered and participated in the torture of French *and pied noir* prisoners, and these individuals have had to go through their own process of coming to terms with what they did during the War. Did the FLN torture on the same level and with the same frequency that the French forces did? Probably not. And it is true that the FLN never would have come into existence if it were not for the decades of repression and marginalization that the French colonial power inflicted on Algeria's native population: "The FLN owed its birth, and much of its appeal, to a history of violent conquest, racial inequality, and colonial arrogance, during which the French brutally repressed any stirring of indigenous nationalism."¹⁴¹ Despite these facts, however, the torture and the terrorism that the FLN perpetuated remain unjustifiable. The practice of torture during the Franco-Algerian War remains a stain on both France *and*

¹³⁹ Stora, 50

¹⁴⁰ Stora, 50

¹⁴¹ "The Torture of Algiers," Adam Shatz

Algeria. It is an intense and collective trauma that both countries are very much still grappling with today.

V. *Dans l'Ombre de Ses Crimes: The Challenges of the North African Immigrant in Postcolonial France, 1962-2000*

In the wake of the Franco-Algerian War, France settled into a deep silence. The atrocities that had been committed were just too horrible to face while the wounds were still raw. Victims of torture and perpetrators of torture simply tucked their experiences away, burying the trauma of what they had lived deep within the vaults of a collective cultural memory. It would be an astonishing thirty-seven years before the French parliament even acknowledged that there had been a war in Algeria. When they had to refer to the war at all, they used epithets: "After the French defeat, the Algerian war was referred to as 'the war without a name' [*la guerre sans nom*], or, even more obliquely, as 'the events' [*les événements*]." ¹⁴² The act of overtly naming the Franco-Algerian War would have allowed it to take on a power and an immediacy that French society was not ready to cope with.

This unspoken trauma had strong, far-reaching impacts for those immigrating to France in the late 1960s. Immediately following the war, there was an influx of migration (both refugees and voluntary migrants) from Algeria itself. A mixture of native Algerian refugees, *pieds noirs*, and *harkis* ¹⁴³ arrived on French soil: "In a matter of weeks, a million forlorn refugees (two percent of the French population in 1962) arrived in southern France." ¹⁴⁴ As Gilles Martin points out, the number of refugees was astounding, accounting for a full two percent of the entire French population at the time. Because of the sheer number of Algerian migrants, it was impossible for the French people to simply

¹⁴² "The Torture of Algiers," Adam Shatz

¹⁴³ A term used to refer to Muslim Algerians who were sympathetic to the French cause and who fought alongside France during the war.

¹⁴⁴ Gilles Martin, 54

ignore them: they were there, in French communities, looking to rebuild their war-torn lives and start anew. Some kind of assimilation was clearly necessary. But this was much easier said than done. How could the French people, shocked into silence by the events of the war, arrive at a place where assimilation would be at all possible? And how could the *pieds noirs* and other Algerian migrants, who had been "driven from the only home that most of them had ever known," manage to surmount the "acute sense of betrayal"¹⁴⁵ that they felt so deeply?

The difficulty of assimilating inhabitants of former French colonies had been predicted long before these migrants began to arrive in France. Gustave LeBon spoke of the impossibility of assimilating indigenous populations as early as the 1870s: "'Two races so dissimilar,' he wrote, 'could never live in peace on the same soil.'"¹⁴⁶ 19th century racial hierarchy theories placed the indigenous people of colonized countries far below the "purebred" white, Christian Europeans, creating a perception of French superiority that never seemed to dispel: "Racial stereotypes in which these differences were often expressed found an unusual virulence when used to describe colonial subjects."¹⁴⁷ As such, Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, and Malian immigrants (among others) were confronted with racism and discrimination in France on a regular basis. Hampered by stereotypes that held that Arab Muslims were lazy, incompetent, and degenerate, it was often difficult for them to find jobs or pursue an education:

¹⁴⁵ "The Torture of Algiers," Adam Shatz

¹⁴⁶ Lehning, 135

¹⁴⁷ Lehning, 129

"Immigrants and their children tended to be excluded from the usual French route to social advancement."¹⁴⁸

The way that housing was set up by the State also contributed heavily to the social exclusion that immigrants faced. The end of World War II in 1945 and the end of the Franco-Algerian War in 1962 gave way to large numbers of migrants who wished to come live and work in France, which was problematic for one important reason: there were not enough accommodations available for them. The need for more low-income housing quickly became apparent, and the government set about constructing hostels and low-income apartments (widely known today as *HLM*¹⁴⁹): "In the 1950s [and 1960s] the state built hostels and low-rent apartments for single workers near factories and away from city centers, a decision that was intended to...tightly link immigration to specific labor needs."¹⁵⁰ The idea behind this housing design was that single male workers who immigrated to France for labor purposes would be able to afford a room or an apartment while still maintaining proximity to the workplace.

For a while, this system functioned reasonably well. Single male workers lived either in hostels (designated "immigrant housing") or in small *HLM* apartments located near their place of employment. Some of these migrants stayed in France for long periods of time, while others came, completed work, and then promptly returned to their home countries. But by the 1960s, the mentality of migrant workers was changing. Drawn to

¹⁴⁸ Tombs, 309

¹⁴⁹ *HLM: habitations à loyer modéré*. The French equivalent of rent-controlled apartments, or housing projects. Today, the acronym connotes deplorable living conditions, urban violence, and immigrant families, even though the majority of those living in HLMs are in fact low-income native French families.

¹⁵⁰ Bowen, John R. *Can Islam Be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*. 19

what was, for most migrants, a more developed society and an overall higher standard of living, they decided to stay in France permanently. Many foreign laborers also had families that they aspired to bring to over in the future using a family reunification visa. Living in France afforded migrant families economic opportunities that were not available in their home countries, and parents wanted to provide their children with the best life that they could give.

One byproduct of this decision to settle in France permanently was that the housing the government had built (and continued to build throughout the late 1900s) was insufficient in a variety of ways. For one, the *HLM* apartments were extremely cramped. They had been constructed with the occupancy of one single male worker in mind, so fitting entire families into an apartment was quite a feat. They were also extremely inconveniently located: "Following the modernist style of the day, projects were built as separated islands of 500 or more apartments, often far from public transportation."¹⁵¹ *HLM* apartments were usually built on the outskirts of major cities (Paris, Lyon, Marseille, and in the Alsace and Mosel regions¹⁵²), and as such were isolated from the heart of urban social life.

This physical isolation is a manifestation of the kind of social exclusion that North African immigrants faced (and continue to face) in France. Most could not afford their own vehicle, so without easy access to public transportation, migrants had no way of accessing the cultural resources available to them in more central parts of the city. Their geographic isolation also effectively limited or prevented them from forming any kind of social network outside of their immediate environments (workplace and the *HLM*

¹⁵¹ Bowen, 19

¹⁵² Bowen, 17

apartment complex), creating conditions that gave rise to widespread loneliness and depression. Most migrants maintained close ties with relatives and friends in their countries of origin as a way of combating these feelings, making frequent phone calls and sending mail. Those who could afford it made periodic visits back to their home countries, returning to France out of financial necessity or because their visas or residence permits stipulated that they had to.

By the 1980s, the first generation of North African migrants had given way to a second generation. Born on French soil to immigrant parents,¹⁵³ these "second generation" children faced a whole slew of social, economic, and personal difficulties. As author and professor Mireille Rosello points out, the challenges that this second generation faced--and also the advantages they possessed--were distinct from those of their parents: "By the 1980s, the single male migrant worker of the 1950s and 1960s had been replaced by a whole generation...whose relationship to France, to French culture, and to French laws needed to be rearticulated."¹⁵⁴ Unlike their parents, this second generation possessed legal French citizenship. They were born in France, raised in France, and educated in French schools. They spoke the language fluently whereas their parents, in many cases, did not. Based on these facts alone, it would seem that the second generation had an easier time functioning and achieving upward mobility in French society than did their parents.

This, however, was quite decidedly not the case. While a command of the French language and a more thorough knowledge of French society and culture *were* both

¹⁵³ This is not to say that the "first generation" North African immigrants never married "native French" spouses, but the case was most often (at least, at the time) that migrants married other migrants.

¹⁵⁴ Rosello, 5

significant advantages for the second generation, they encountered an entirely new set of biases and challenges that were specific to their time period. Unemployment was one of these challenges. Generally speaking, the waves of *chômage* in France were a structural problem that affected everyone. It had been nearly thirty full years since the end of World War II, so the country was no longer in need of a body of foreign labor to help with rebuilding efforts. Women were also getting more involved in the workplace, and the postwar baby-boom generation was coming of age right around the 1980s.¹⁵⁵ All of these circumstances paved the way for high rates of unemployment for second-generation children of immigrant parents.

This structural explanation is all well and good, and it is certainly not inaccurate. But the heart of the problem, and the reason why unemployment hit children North African immigrants harder than any other population, was unadulterated discrimination and racial profiling. Employers made pre-judgments about non-white job candidates on a regular basis, automatically shifting (whether literally or figuratively) the applications of persons of color to the bottom of the pile. Non-whiteness was associated with non-Frenchness, and the quality of being native French (*français de souche*) was a quality that was increasingly valued above all others. This applied not only to the workplace, but to the larger French social environment as well. Skin color was constantly being used as a barometer for character, placing non-white children of immigrants at a continuous social disadvantage and barring them from a variety of different kinds of success from a very young age. If one was not white and born in France of native French parents, one was almost certain to be pre-judged and misconstrued.

¹⁵⁵ Malinvaud, E. "The Rise of Unemployment in France." S199

Second-generation children of immigrants also had to grapple with what were often conflicting expectations and desires from their parents' end. Being first-generation immigrants themselves, parents had various degrees of immersion in French society. Some (mainly those whose country of origin was a former French colony) spoke French fluently and held decently paying jobs. They maintained a high degree of contact with society and were thus up to date on contemporary trends, mores, and social knowhow. The children of these immigrant parents belonged to more privileged milieus and usually encountered very little cultural identity-related conflict at home. This group of parents, however, was a very small minority, and was not at all representative of most first-generation immigrants' situations. The majority spoke imperfect or broken French, and many were functionally or completely illiterate (*analphabètes*). They held menial jobs (housecleaning, janitorial work, etc.) that paid meager wages, lived in deplorable conditions, and generally struggled to get by on a day-to-day basis.

It is the children of *this* group of first-generation immigrants who faced--and who continue to face--a set of profound familial tensions at home. France has, in many senses of the word, been extremely cruel to the parents, breeding an acute sense of resentment that leads them to reject involvement with the greater French society. Quite understandably, they cling to cultural customs from their countries of origin, passing on their native language, values, and practices to their children. Today, this results in a sort of juggling act for the second-generation child: at home, he or she speaks a language that is not French and speaks and acts according to the customs of the parents' native culture. In public life, on the other hand--at school, with friends, in stores and public venues--he or she is a fully functioning French citizen. This involvement in what are essentially two

entirely different worlds has some very real implications for the child's own sense of cultural and personal identity. In one sense, both of these identities belong to the child. He or she is technically French, but grew up speaking a language that was not French, and observed different cultural customs in the domestic space. This renders the parents' native culture an equally fundamental part of his or her identity.

In another, opposite (yet equally true) sense, the children of immigrant parents feel that they can lay claim to neither of these two identities. They feel themselves to be caught between two cultures, and are never able to fully identify a hundred percent with one or the other: "The children of North African immigrants are often held responsible for the success or failure of cultural exchange or cohabitation: they are seen as mediators, as go-betweens, whose seemingly natural function is to occupy the no man's land between the perpetual host and the eternal guest."¹⁵⁶ Because of this sense of "stuckness," it is not uncommon for second-generation children feel an intense sense of resentment towards France that is akin to the resentment their parents feel. They are perceived as second-rate citizens and afforded fewer rights and opportunities than their peers who are born of native French parents.

Mehdi Charef's¹⁵⁷ 1983 novel *Le Thé au Harem* (Tea in the Harem) treats this sense of resentment, anger, and frustration extensively, taking as its protagonist a second-generation child of immigrant parents named Majid. The book jacket reads as follows: "A housing estate in the Paris suburbs. Majid is growing up caught between two cultures. At home; he listens to his mother's constant invective in Arabic as she attempts to make

¹⁵⁶ Rosello, 90

¹⁵⁷ Mehdi Charef is himself a child of immigrant parents, born in Algeria in 1952 and brought to France under a family reunification visa in 1964.

sense of her new surroundings; at school he tries to be part of French culture, a culture that rejects and insults Arabs."¹⁵⁸ Charef's novel and the publication of others like it in the 1980s and 1990s can be seen as a mechanism for challenging the social injustices that immigrants in France are facing. He is spreading awareness while at the same time offering commentary on a situation of which he himself has firsthand knowledge, constituting an important contribution to French cultural consciousness. Novels like *Le Thé au Harem* matter a lot, precisely because they represent a voice that is seldom heard in French society.

Literature also provides a space for exploring multiple facets of personal and cultural identity that France does not allow for in the public sphere.

The abstract, universalist notion of French national identity leaves very little wiggle room for identification with multiple cultures, which is intensely problematic for immigrants and children of immigrants. French Republican principles insist that the notion of the homogeneous, abstract French "citizen" is the basis for equality. But the needs of second-generation children of immigrants mandate a more concrete, more holistic interpretation of identity: "The defenders of the abstract mode argue that it alone guarantees universal equality; the defenders of the concrete mode do not reject universalism but think equality is achieved by addressing rather than ignoring social distinctions."¹⁵⁹ This tension between the abstract and concrete modes of representation is at the very heart of the experience of immigrant populations in France. How is it finally possible to call oneself a citizen of a country whose notion of citizenship excludes fundamental and defining aspects of one's personal identity?

¹⁵⁸ Charef, Mehdi. *Le Thé au Harem*. Inside jacket

¹⁵⁹ Wallach Scott, 17

These kinds of questions about immigration, representation, and French national identity became increasingly politicized in the 1990s. The most direct manifestation of this politicization was legislation: two major laws concerning European national identity and the movement of peoples were put in effect in 1992 and 1995, respectively. The first of these was the Maastricht Treaty (*Traité de Maastricht*), which is notable mainly from a symbolic standpoint. Before 1992, the collection of (mostly Western European) countries now known as the European Union was referred to as the European Community, or the EC. Under the Maastricht Treaty, the name was changed, officially establishing the European Union of today.¹⁶⁰ This was of course a legal unification, but it was also a symbolic one, reflective of the individual countries' desire to become part of a singular, united community that had more power and a heightened standard of living. Just three years later in 1995, the Schengen Agreements were implemented, which would henceforth allow members of the European Union to move freely across national borders without a passport.¹⁶¹ Allowing for this kind of internal mobility within the European Union effectively reinforced what the Maastricht Treaty had begun. The EU became a united and powerful conglomerate community, in practice and in theory.

The consolidation of the European Union had important implications for immigration. Both the Maastricht Treaty and the Schengen Agreements resulted in a redefinition of borders, eliminating them on the inside and erecting them on the outside. The European Union became an effectual "fortress," allowing its inhabitants complete internal mobility while at the same time discouraging access from the outside: "The Schengen agreements contributed to the creation of fortress Europe, whose philosophical

¹⁶⁰ Rosello, 50

¹⁶¹ Rosello, 51

(and therefore political and practical) goal was increased freedom within the Schengen bloc and reinforced control on the supranational border line."¹⁶² So its motivations were twofold: to facilitate circulation of goods and people internally, and to heighten security externally. In her book entitled *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*, Rosello discusses the way in which this legislation can be perceived as hostile to non-EU members: "Europe is constantly stressing the concept of 'freedom of movement' within its redefined borders, which means increasing controls on the outskirts of its new symbolic territory, in a general atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion that treats all non-Europeans...as potentially undesirable parasites."¹⁶³ In this way, the Maastricht Treaty and the Schengen Agreements, though not overtly concerned with immigration, can be perceived as hostile to the process.

A third piece of legislation, however, *was* overtly hostile to the immigration process. The Pasqua Laws of 1993 (named after French *Ministère de l'Intérieur* Charles Pasqua) restricted immigration in a variety of ways: it "prohibit[ed] foreign graduates from accepting job offers by French employers and den[ied] them a stable residence status," "increas[ed] the waiting period for family reunification from one to two years," and "den[ied] residency permits to foreign spouses who had been illegally in the country prior to marrying."¹⁶⁴ The Pasqua Laws, some of the most repressive anti-immigration measures ever to be implemented in France, constituted a drastic shift in French immigration policy: "The so-called Pasqua laws became the most obvious manifestation of the French government's anti-immigration attitude. They reflected an increasingly

¹⁶² Rosello, 51

¹⁶³ Rosello, 50

¹⁶⁴ Virginie Guiraudon. "Immigration Policy in France."

repressive and restrictive philosophy, turning the *clandestin* (illegal immigrant) into an enemy of the state, the most easily identifiable national scapegoat." The laws delivered the message loud and clear: France was not only no longer favorable to immigration; it was actively discouraging it with definitive legal measures.

The Laws also had far-reaching effects for migrants whose means to a residency permit had been negated in the process: "These repressive measures rendered formerly legal migration flows illegal. Thus today...there are still many people living in France known as *inexpulsables-irrégularisables*. This group...cannot be expelled, yet it not eligible for residency permits."¹⁶⁵ This is yet another group of people living within France's borders that has found itself between cultural identities. Since they were legal migrants to begin with, they cannot be formally asked to return to their countries of origin. So they continue to live in a country that will never extend them citizenship rights. Even if they speak flawless, beautiful French and are highly involved in their communities--even if they are in all ways indistinguishable from the "native French" among whom they live--they will never be able to identify themselves as legal French citizens.

This shift in French immigration policy has its roots in a broader political context; namely, the rise of the far right political party the *Front National*. Born of the postwar neo-fascist group *Ordre Nouveau*, the *Front National* (or National Front, as it is called in English) officially appeared on the French political scene in 1972. It did not gain much of a following until the late 1970s, when Jean-Marie Le Pen gave the party a complete

¹⁶⁵ Virginie Guiraudon. "Immigration Policy in France."

"ideological and organizational renewal."¹⁶⁶ Le Pen's name has been inextricably linked with the party every since. The *Front National* enjoyed a particular surge in popularity in the early 90s, when the increased North African and Muslim presence in France brought the party's anti-immigration campaign to the forefront.

Anti-immigration and nationalism have always been hallmarks of the far right, but Le Pen was able to frame the specific "issue" of immigration in a way that capitalized on French anxieties about their increasingly multi-racial, pluralistic society: "Immigration [became] a sort of shorthand for a complex pattern of concerns--the fear of unemployment, of housing problems, rising crime, AIDS, drug abuse, and uncertainties about France's place in the world and the meaning of what it is to be French."¹⁶⁷ Even though major migration flows to France had slowed considerably by the 1990s, postwar North African immigrants were very present in French society. Because the majority of these migrants were a) black, b) Arab, and/or c) Muslim, they made much of the "native" French population uneasy: "Immigration, in this populist view, was presented as a rising tide of mainly North African and Muslim faces."¹⁶⁸

Some simply did not know how to go about reconciling these racial and religious differences with traditional French values, while others (like Le Pen) were simply unwilling to try. The *Front National's* ingenious solution was to stem immigration flows altogether: "Politicians...responded by arguing in favor of '*immigration zéro*,'" and the right-wing coalition that came into power in 1993 translated the principle of zero

¹⁶⁶ Marcus, Jonathan. *National Front and French Politics*. 12

¹⁶⁷ Marcus, 76

¹⁶⁸ Marcus, 73

immigration into policy."¹⁶⁹ The policies that eventually resulted were the 1993 Pasqua Laws, a testament to how influential Le Pen and the *Front National* could be. By pointing a finger at immigration, Le Pen was feeding off a powerful set of anxieties that had already begun to formulate in French society. The discourse of the *Front National* was thus a major turning point in the political redefinition of immigration in the 1990s. The *immigration zéro* movement established a powerful precedent for thinking about immigration in a strictly political context, at the exclusion of all other frameworks or contexts in which it could be considered. As Rosello states, "When the analogy between the guest and the immigrant means that the individual is supposed to take it for granted that his or her own foreign guests are undesirable parasites, then it becomes urgent to point out that...the choice of the metaphor is subjected to political agendas."¹⁷⁰ To this day, France has been largely unable to recover these alternative frameworks: immigration remains principally a political issue in the public eye.

¹⁶⁹ Virginie Guiraudon. "Immigration Policy in France."

¹⁷⁰ Rosello, 34

VI. *Les Années Explosives: The Headscarf Affair and Banlieue Violence, 2000-2012*

The politicization of immigration in France was, partly, what allowed a set of virulent clashes to develop in the early 2000s. One was ideological while the other was physical, but they both had an extremely strong impact on French national identity and France's interpretation and perception of immigration in a modern context.

The first was, in effect, a clash between the growing presence of Muslims in France and French notion of secularism. Throughout the postcolonial period, the number of Muslims in France had been steadily increasing. Most Muslim immigrants hailed from the North African countries of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, but a sizeable number came to the *métropole* from French territories like Mayotte and *La Réunion*.¹⁷¹ As early as the 1980's, the Muslim presence in French society (as well as the North African immigrant presence more generally) began to cause anxiety among the native French people. They were unused to being surrounded by so much racial and religious difference, and they felt that their own French national identity was being threatened in the face of so much change: "Politicians, public intellectuals, and the media responded to the fact of a growing population of Muslim 'immigrants' in their midst--immigrants whose diversities were reduced to a single difference that was then taken to be a threat to the very identity of the nation."¹⁷²

This anxiety ultimately manifested itself as a preoccupation with the wearing of the Islamic headscarf, or *hijab*. In 1989, three young girls were asked to remove their headscarves in the halls of their public middle school in Creil (an impoverished Parisian suburb). The girls refused, and were promptly expelled from the school on the grounds

¹⁷¹ Bowen, 18

¹⁷² Wallach Scott, Joan. *The Politics of the Veil*. 9-10

that they had failed to uphold *laïcité* (the French version of secularism).¹⁷³ Being the first of its kind, this event quickly spiraled into the media: "What would at other times have been a minor incident--a school principal disciplining a few of his students--quickly became a major media event, tapping into, and at the same time inflaming, public uneasiness about the place of North African immigrants and their children in French society."¹⁷⁴ The principal's decision became so controversial that it was presented to the *Conseil d'Etat* for consideration a month later. After a short while, the court reached a decision regarding the matter: "The wearing of signs of religious affiliation by students in public schools was not necessarily incompatible with the principle of *laïcité*, as long as these signs were not ostentatious or polemic...[and did not interfere] with the liberties of other students."¹⁷⁵

Public interest and media commentary upon the affair calmed down after the decision was reached, but France had not seen the last of the "headscarf affair." In 1994, right-wing politician Eugène Chénier stirred the pot again when he proposed a bill that would "ban all 'ostentatious' signs of religious affiliation." He campaigned so convincingly for the bill that the minister of education, François Bayrou, eventually signed on: "François Bayrou decreed on September 20, 1994 that 'ostentatious' signs of religious affiliation would henceforth be prohibited in all schools."¹⁷⁶ This decision was again presented to the *Conseil d'Etat*, and (based on the 1989 ruling) it was again

¹⁷³ The easiest English translation of *laïcité* is "secularism," but this translation fails to capture its nuances. *Laïcité* is a fundamental part of French national identity, and is often presented alongside "Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité" as one of the core French values. It also confines religious practice exclusively to private space in a way that secularism does not.

¹⁷⁴ Wallach Scott, Joan. *The Politics of the Veil*. 22

¹⁷⁵ Wallach Scott, Joan. *The Politics of the Veil*. 25

¹⁷⁶ Wallach Scott, Joan. *The Politics of the Veil*. 26-27

overturned. But the seeds of discontentment had been officially planted, and the tension between *laïcité* and the wearing of the headscarf in public schools continued to attract public attention.¹⁷⁷

On March 15th, 2004, the government passed a law that banned young women and girls from wearing the headscarf in public schools definitively.

The language used was as follows: "In public elementary, middle and high schools, the wearing of signs or clothing which conspicuously manifest students' religious affiliations is prohibited."¹⁷⁸ Technically, the law applies to religious symbols in a general sense. But in light of the ongoing controversy about the headscarf and *laïcité* in public schools, there was little doubt that it was directed primarily at Muslim students.

The passage of this law elicited immediate, violent reactions from the national press, the international press, and the general public. Some believed that *laïcité* should be enforced at all costs, and thus supported the government's decision. Others maintained that banning the headscarf was discriminatory and unjust for Muslims, and that it eliminated what could have been a lesson in open-mindedness and diversity for non-Muslim students. Still others believed that the government's energy had been misdirected altogether, and that it continued to shy away from the real issues at hand. Wassyla Tamzali suggests that policymakers should have focused more on the individual women and girls in question rather than the impersonal, highly politicized relationship between the headscarf and *laïcité*: "The French National Assembly preferred to open a national

¹⁷⁷ Wallach Scott, Joan. *The Politics of the Veil*. 29

¹⁷⁸ Article 1 of the March 15th, 2004 law. Reproduced by Joan Wallach Scott: *The Politics of the Veil*. 1

debate about *laïcité*, and as such lost an occasion to confront head-on...the question of the equality of the sexes in France."¹⁷⁹

Tamzali's idea is an interesting one because it gets at the heart of the kind of "scapegoating" that has become common in the French government's treatment of immigration in the past decade. The debate about the banning of the headscarf in public schools still persists in today's France, and many writers and researchers attribute this ongoing preoccupation to a set of deeply-rooted societal (and indeed, global) anxieties that have not yet been dealt with. Bowen asserts that "Anxieties about security and integration underlie the series of state efforts to manage Islam,"¹⁸⁰ and Wallach Scott corroborates this statement: "Events in Iran, Israel/Palestine, Algeria, New York City, Afghanistan, and Iraq certainly contributed to anxiety about the place of Muslims in France."¹⁸¹ In other words, the "headscarf affair" is actually about a lot more than just headscarves. Global events such as 9/11 have permanently linked Islam with terrorism in the minds of many, and constant talk about national security and the division between the West and the East only serves to fuel anti-Muslim sentiment: "The radical acts of a few politically inspired Islamists have become a declaration of the intent of many; the religious practices of minorities have been taken to stand for the 'culture' of the whole."¹⁸² France's desire to eliminate Islamic religious symbols in the public sphere can thus be viewed as a manifestation of these kinds of fundamental societal and global anxieties.

Wallach Scott takes the argument even further, proposing that *past* anxieties also play into the overwhelming interest in the "headscarf affair." She suggests that a French

¹⁷⁹ Tamzali, Wassyla. *Une femme en colère*. 51. Translation mine.

¹⁸⁰ Bowen, 26

¹⁸¹ Wallach Scott, Joan. *The Politics of the Veil*. 35

¹⁸² Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*. 3

fear of Islam is part of the Franco-Algerian War heritage, and that today's disapproval of the headscarf is linked to acts of terrorism carried out by the FLN during the War: "By 1958, the FLN was using veiled women to transport weapons and bombs past security checkpoints, so unveiling women was a way of depriving the rebels of a convenient disguise."¹⁸³ Memories of the all-out massacre that was the Franco-Algerian War continue to weigh heavily on the French nation, so Wallach Scott's argument is compelling. It is perfectly plausible that the French people would have an unconscious association between the headscarf and terrorism established in their minds, which would account for the government's ardent desire to eliminate the headscarf in public schools.

It was exactly these kinds of anxieties within the national body that sparked a series of violent conflicts between French police and *banlieue* youth in November of 2005. It all began in *Clichy-Sous-Bois*, a particularly derelict and impoverished Parisian *banlieue* with a high migrant population. While patrolling the area, French police stopped to ask a group of young men of color for their *cartes d'identité* (ID cards). Afraid of police harassment, the young men fled, and the officers followed close behind. The chase ended abruptly when two of the men were electrocuted to death after seeking refuge in an electric transformer. When news of the deaths became public, the *banlieue* went wild with anger: "When two of [the men]--of Mauritanian and Tunisian origin, respectively--died there by accidental electrocution, many in the *banlieues* were quick to blame their deaths on aggressive policing and took to the streets to demonstrate their anger."¹⁸⁴ Bands of teenagers and young adults threw projectiles and burned cars, police stations, and other public buildings. Police officers responded brutally, wielding batons and spraying tear

¹⁸³ Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*. 63

¹⁸⁴ Begag, Aziz. *Ethnicity & Equality: France in the Balance*. xii-xiv

gas to disperse the riot. As newspaper headlines around the world would proclaim in days to come, France was burning.

The riots in the Parisian *banlieues* continued for nearly a month. Things got so bad that Jacques Chirac's government declared a state of emergency, invoking a law that had been inactive for a full fifty years: "Chirac's government...declared a state of emergency, using a 1955 law passed during France's colonial war in Algeria that permits the imposition of a curfew and suspension of civil liberties, including those of the press, and permits detention without trial, the use of military tribunals and bans on public meetings."¹⁸⁵ When the chaos died down, the Republic found itself face-to-face with some very difficult questions. There was clearly pent-up animosity and tension between French police officers and the youth in the *banlieue*, but how and why did the tension come to a breaking point in the way it did?

According to Michel Wieviorka, the answer is twofold. In his book entitled *Violence en France*, Wieviorka distinguishes between two different types of violence. The first, *violence physique*, is physical violence. This is violence in its most basic sense: hitting, kicking, breaking things, throwing projectiles, etc., and these are the actions that the word "violence" most readily connotes. The second type of violence is *violence symbolique*, or symbolic violence. This can take a wide variety of forms: spoken or written comments, deprivation of rights, stereotypes, or any other non-physical form of racism or general discrimination. It is this type of violence that Wieviorka most closely associates with the experience of *banlieue* youth: "The *banlieue* youth who break into riots or who are carried by hate or rage constantly define themselves according to the

¹⁸⁵ Ireland, Doug. "Why is France Burning?"

symbolic violence they endure; the contempt, the negation of their person which first and foremost constitutes racism and social discrimination."¹⁸⁶

Wieviorka's quote reveals the way in which symbolic violence tends to eventually give way to physical violence. Enduring intense discrimination or marginalization on a regular basis causes anger and resentment to build up over time, and it continues to build and build until one day the individual can take it no longer. The internalized feelings the individual has been holding in then spill over into an externalized rage, which often takes the form of physical violence. This was exactly what happened with the *banlieue* youth during the November 2005 riots in *Clichy-Sous-Bois*. The combination of a lifetime of geographical isolation, religious and racial discrimination, and meager opportunities for advancement was the symbolic violence they suffered, and they bore its weight until they could bear it no longer: "The behaviors of youth urban violence are the product of a refused recognition of the unbearable conviction that society is closed...here, violence indicates the desire to modify a situation that has become intolerable."¹⁸⁷

During the 2005 riots, French police officers were the most obvious targets of this violence. But they were not the sole targets, and the fact that youth violence was also directed elsewhere is telling. In addition to police officers' physical person, rioters targeted police cars and other public, government-sanctioned spaces. Banks and post offices, for instance, were targeted because of their close affiliation with the State. So, for the purposes of the rioters, police officers were merely symbolic. As living, breathing representatives of State power, the *gendarmes* were easy objects upon which *banlieue*

¹⁸⁶ Wieviorka, Michel. *Violence en France*. 17. Translation mine

¹⁸⁷ Wieviorka, 19. Translation mine

youth could take out their anger and frustration: the problem they were having was not solely with the cops, but with the French nation itself.

The way that then-*Ministre de l'Intérieur* Nicolas Sarkozy spoke about the youth involved in the riots made the problem even worse, if that were indeed possible. He publicly described the rioters as "racaille," which roughly translates to the word "scum" in English. Many of the youth participating in the *banlieue* riots were children of immigrants or immigrants themselves, so Sarkozy's language can be seen as directly inflammatory on a number of social fronts, and the comment caused quite a bit of public outrage when it was first made. The term was so offensive, in fact, that Sarkozy was asked to retract the comment on numerous occasions: "Pressed repeatedly to retract the term *racaille*, Sarkozy declined numerous opportunities to do so...Instead, he stated, '*Voyous ou racailles, je persiste et signe*' ['Hoodlums or Scum, I stand by every word']."¹⁸⁸ Sarkozy's comments are a perfect example of the kind of symbolic violence that gave rise to the 2005 riots in the first place. Hearing oneself being grouped with the "hoodlums" and "scum" of the *banlieue* only heightens one's sense of anger and indignation at the exclusion one faces, so by making inflammatory comments Sarkozy is only exacerbating the very situation he seeks to resolve.

Neither this controversy nor the headscarf controversy has been put to rest in today's France. The French Muslim population is higher than ever ("Paris proper is 10-15 percent Muslim, Marseille 25 percent, and Roubaix, near Lille, 50 percent"¹⁸⁹), but despite these statistics Muslims in France continue to be marginalized. The French government continues to hide behind the principle of *laïcité* to justify the banning of the

¹⁸⁸ Begag, xvi. Translation his.

¹⁸⁹ Bowen, 18

headscarf in public schools, and Islam--regardless of sect or ideology--continues to carry a stigma. Unrest in French *banlieues* has persisted, resurfacing most notably in 2008 and flaring up marginally in the years that followed. The solution that the French government has pursued thus far for both French Muslims and *banlieue* youth is "integration," but even this term begs some critical thinking and analysis. The government must give further serious consideration to the question of how to move forward in order to best incorporate these groups, because for now, first, second, and third-generation Muslim migrants and youth living in the *banlieue* remain firmly on the margins of the French society that they try continuously to access.

Comment Procéder? Integration Policy, Terminology, and Collective Memory: A

Conclusion in Three Parts

i. Integration Policy

Through the re-writing of the European Constitution, the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 mandated that all European Union member states develop more sophisticated immigration and integration policies.¹⁹⁰ Immigration policies were nothing new, but integration policies were, as of yet, practically unheard of. So each country set about crafting its own integration policy, designed to provide migrants with avenues by which they could attain a higher level of cultural proficiency than they arrived with.

France implemented an integration policy that requires a variety of different steps: first, all migrants must sign a Reception and Integration Contract (CAI: *contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*) upon arrival. They must then attend a mandatory half-day Welcome Session (*plate-forme d'accueil*) and a full day of Civic Training (*Formation Civique*). Depending on their level of cultural proficiency, some must also attend a full day session providing information about living in France (*Session d'Information Vivre en France*). If the migrant is determined to be professional between the ages of 18 and 55, he or she must attend a Skills Assessment (*Bilan de compétences*). Finally, all migrants must attend language-training courses until they have achieved a level A1.1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Rosello, 50

¹⁹¹ All information in this paragraph--and most of the uncited information in this Conclusion section more generally--is information from my own notes and from the research project I completed as part of my internship during the summer of 2011. I

All of this was, doubtless, a step in the right direction. Hundreds of thousands of migrants arrive in host countries in the European Union every day, but huge numbers of these migrants do not speak the language and are completely unfamiliar with their new country's cultural customs. Barred by both their literacy level and their lack of access to computers, migrants have done various degrees of research on basic things like climate, dress, and diet. Some--particularly refugees who are forced to leave their home country in a hurry--have done no planning at all, and show up in countries like France without even a jacket to keep them warm in the wintertime. Because of all of these factors, integration programs are indispensable: they allow the migrant to attain a functional level of cultural proficiency, and the migrant in turn becomes more of an asset to the state.

This exchange presupposes a model in which immigration is framed as a reciprocal process: the migrant benefits from the host country and the host country benefits from the migrant. In order to have this happen, however, the integration programs must be tailored to fit migrants' needs. They must be sufficiently clear and straightforward so as to allow all language levels to benefit from their offerings, and the information they impart must be chosen very carefully by the state. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The countries in the European Union dispose of integration policies that are in various stages of completion, even today. Countries that have had historically low rates of immigration, like Spain, use very loosely based, decentralized integration programs that vary from region to region, while countries like France impose integration requirements that are much more structured and much more involved.

completed the internship during the months of June and July at the *Direction de l'Accueil, de l'Intégration, et de la Citoyenneté*, 3-5 Rue Barbet de Jouy, Paris, France.

Even these more sophisticated integration programs contain deficiencies that need to be addressed. *Le Secrétariat Général à l'Immigration et à l'Intégration*, under the auspices of the *Ministère de l'intérieur*, is the government agency responsible for devising and furnishing integration materials for migrants arriving in France. Among these materials are PowerPoint presentations, videos, booklets, pamphlets, and other handouts containing information about the France's demographics, its history, and its values (to name a few elements). After producing these materials, the ministry (in conjunction with l'OFII, *l'Office Française de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration*) arranges a variety of trainings (*formations*) at which these materials are disseminated to the migrants in attendance.

During the summer of 2011, the materials the *Ministère* was using to help migrants complete these mandatory trainings were sorely lacking. The PowerPoint presentation (the main feature at both the *Formation Civique* and the *Formation Vivre en France*) contained information regarding important legal processes for migrants that was out of date and therefore incorrect. The *formatrice*, or trainer, was unaware that she was presenting incorrect information and proceeded with her training as usual. The presentations were conducted entirely in French save for the presence of a single translator, who translated into one alternative language. The alternative language was not necessarily the native language of all migrants in attendance, but the *Ministère* and l'OFII tried as best they could to pair like groups of migrants with the appropriate translators. This meant that if large numbers of (for example) Russian-speaking migrants happened to attend the same training, they would be assigned a Russian translator. But if a couple of

native Persian speakers whose French wasn't up to par found themselves among that group, they were essentially out of luck.

Adequate secondary materials such as notepaper and pens were also inconsistently distributed to migrants during the trainings. Both trainings are designed to last a full day, so there are large amounts of important information being presented to those in attendance. Some of the contact numbers, agencies, and resources listed on the PowerPoint slides are absolutely indispensable to migrants, as they provide links to information about things like public education, taxes, housing, and the recognition of foreign qualifications. Given the sheer volume of what is being communicated, it is entirely impossible for the government to expect that migrants remember it all without being able to take notes, especially given that not all migrants possess a working knowledge of French. The absence of explanatory reference sheets or "Word Banks" with regards to the various titles and acronyms of the agencies and offices being mentioned was also striking. France is (at least, comparatively) an extremely bureaucratic country, and it is highly difficult for migrants coming in from the outside to understand the structures of the various organisms to which they must submit paperwork or documentation in order to get their new lives started. They have no idea what l'ADIL¹⁹² or l'AFPA¹⁹³ are, and without some kind of a guide to explain it, chances are they are missing out on some very important information.

To facilitate comprehension, the French government should provide adequate writing materials (pen, notepaper, and a clipboards) at each and every training to every migrant in attendance. A reference sheet detailing the contact information that is listed on

¹⁹² *L'Association Départementale pour l'Information sur le Logement*

¹⁹³ *Formation Professionnelle, Formation Adulte, Formation Continue*

the slideshows should also be distributed, with explanations as to what the purpose of each agency is and how it can help the migrant further his or her goals. These sheets could be translated into a multiplicity of different languages and kept permanently on file, allowing migrants to walk into the training and select whichever translation best meets their language needs. Trainers (*formateurs* and *formatrices*) should be kept up-to-date on changing government policies that would affect the accuracy of the information being delivered, and educational materials should be updated regularly so as to avoid confusion. Doing all of these things would go a long way in making the actual integration process in France more effective.

ii. Terminology: "Integration" vs. "Assimilation" and the Power of Language

In addition to these considerations, the French government (and French society in general) must pay specific attention to the set of vocabulary that is currently being used. *L'intégration* seems thus far to be the political watchword of the 21st century, but does the term really, fundamentally mean? The principal definition given by the Oxford English Dictionary is the following: "The making up or composition of a whole by adding together or combining the separate parts or elements; combination into an integral whole: a making whole or entire."¹⁹⁴ This definition implies a certain harmony to the process of creating the whole, a certain ease with which the different yet equally important parts fit together as one. It does not require that the disparate parts change shape or form to have a place with the rest; rather, it all comes together organically.

¹⁹⁴ "Integration." Oxford English Dictionary. Web

By contrast, the definition of the word "assimilation" *does* contain the supposition that the individual, different parts will change in order to fit in. The OED defines assimilation as "The action of making or becoming like; the state of being like; similarity, resemblance, likeness."¹⁹⁵ So assimilation differs from integration rather drastically, even though the two are often used interchangeably as synonyms. The question then becomes, is the act of integration in France measuring up to its own definition? Wallach Scott does not think so. She suggests that what the French government is calling integration is actually just a glorified push for assimilation: "While seeming to wrestle with the various ways to integrate North Africans into French society, [government policy] actually only entertained one idea. The standard for becoming French remained what it had long been: assimilation."¹⁹⁶ Indeed, it would seem that the French model of "integration" would prefer that the migrant conform completely to the traditional French way of life, shedding other cultural customs in favor of blending in and becoming indistinguishable from other members of society.

"Assimilation," then, would seem a more apt term for what the government actually expects. And if this is the case, the vocabulary needs to be changed. Government workers must use more honest and more transparent terminology that does not, in practice, fall short of its own expectations. Asking immigrants to "integrate" when they are really being asked to "assimilate" creates dismay and disillusionment on the part of migrants when they realize what they are really being asked to do, building mistrust of the government and of the nation itself. The migrant feels that he or she has been purposefully misled, and erects emotional and psychological barriers against *the same*

¹⁹⁵ "Assimilation." Oxford English Dictionary. Web

¹⁹⁶ Wallach Scott, 79

abstract body of the nation that he or she is being asked to integrate into. Integration programs (as well as other facets of the immigration process) would thus be better received by migrants and would be more successful if the current vocabulary were reevaluated.

The *Ministère de l'Intérieur's* annual *Prix de l'Intégration*, or "Integration Prize," is a perfect example of the French government's misuse of the term. Every year, locally elected leaders from each *département* (province) nominate a series of candidates from their respective areas and submit them to the *Ministère* for consideration. These candidates are first, second, or (more recently) third-generation immigrants who are determined to have "integrated" exceptionally well into French culture. Common criteria for nominations are education in French schools, impressive professional accomplishments in France, overcoming past adversity, and involvement in the community. More concrete benchmarks like achieving fluency in French or becoming naturalized as a French citizen are also looked upon favorably. Upon receiving the nominations, the *Ministère* appoints a committee, which reviews the candidates and selects the eventual winner. The winner is then nationally recognized at a ceremony held by the *Ministère* and provided with a cash prize, the reward for being the Best and Most Successfully Integrated of them all.

It is apparent that what the *Prix de l'Intégration* is really celebrating is not integration, but assimilation. It is not the man who holds a doctorate from a school in Algeria or the woman who attended medical school in Lebanon who will win the prize-- after all, holders of foreign degrees are not a direct reflection of the French state. It is the person who has "escaped" adversity in his or her home country and who comes to France

to better him or herself that the government is looking to choose. It is these candidates, who have used all of the *ressources incroyables* available in *belle France* to pull themselves up by their bootstraps that are the desirable ones, because they reflect positively on the "integration" work that the government is doing. By holding a public, national competition such as this one, the French government is not only grossly misrepresenting the term "integration" but also earning the disdain of a great many migrants. They resent having their own accomplishments fall short of others who might have taken a more traditionally "French" route to success, and rightfully so: each migrant's *parcours* is unique, and should not be objectified and compared to that of another.

Politicians must also pay particular attention to the language they are using to refer to immigration during speeches and debates. The politician is, by nature, a public figure. The members of French society--and indeed, of any society--count on their public figures to be a barometer for public opinion. So the vocabulary that politicians use is especially important, because it shapes (whether consciously or unconsciously) the way that the whole of society thinks about and interprets any given issue. Rosello, who has studied political discourse and immigration in France extensively, points out that political rhetoric all too often contains underlying and misleading information about immigration: "Political discourses seem to invite us to treat immigrants as if 'France', the country, functioned like a self-contained private house where the owner receives a relative...the representatives of the state, in their political speeches, speak as though France is the house and the immigrants, the Guest, with a capital G."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Rosello, 33

Setting up binary representations in speech such as the one Rosello mentions has very dangerous implications. The power of language in determining the reality of a situation is all too often underestimated, and this has definitely been the case with the binaries that have been employed by politicians in France to describe immigration. So a new vocabulary must again be sought, one that will not perpetuate a series of reductive and therefore unproductive binary oppositions.

iii. Collective Memory: The Importance of Moving Forward

Finally, the government must continue to encourage honest and open discussion about the traumatic events that have taken place in France's past. The Franco-Algerian War was one of the single most traumatic events in French history, and the deep psychological wounds that it resulted in continue to inform the way that North African immigrants are viewed in France today: "The conflict between white French society and the country's minorities has roots in the bitter legacy of the Algerian war of independence from French rule more than four decades ago."¹⁹⁸ The connection between current the French perception of immigration and France's colonial history in Algeria is undeniable, but it is one that goes largely unspoken, even 50 years after the War's end.

In 1999, the French government officially acknowledged that a war in Algeria had taken place, but it has yet to issue a formal apology for having systematically tortured and killed thousands of indigenous Algerians and FLN party members. This lack of apology persists despite campaign promises made to the public by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007: "Sarkozy promised that, once in power, he would officially recognise France's

¹⁹⁸ As reported by Liane Hansen. "Algerian Revolution Echoes in French Violence." National Public Radio.

'responsibility in the abandonment and killing of *harkis* and thousands of other Muslims who trusted France, so the forgotten will not be killed again.' Five years later, members of various *pied-noir* and *harkis* associations are still waiting for that apology."¹⁹⁹ Adel Gastel of France 24 News points out that, furthermore, the digital French Archives on the subject are sorely lacking: "The website explanation ends with an abrupt, 'During this period, the bloodshed continued and affected all communities: Europeans and Muslims, civilians and military.' In one concise line, the trauma of a generation and the birth pains of a new nation have been summarised."²⁰⁰ The description is four short paragraphs in total.

This shroud of silence *must* be lifted before France will be able to resolve the tensions regarding immigrants that exist in the national body. A lack of verbalization of intense emotions like pain and guilt has been damning for any kind of progress between immigrants and the French government that might otherwise have been made. It is silence that has allowed this pain and guilt to deepen, and it is silence that spawns resentment-fueled episodes like the 2005 riots in the French *banlieues*. Officially apologizing for the practice of torture during the Franco-Algerian War would pave the way for a healing dialogue, not only on a national level but also on an individual level. In the meantime, public platforms such as the French Archives website should consider it their duty to provide as much accurate and honest information as possible about the events of the War. Four paragraphs is not a sufficient length for an account of the Franco-Algerian War, and abbreviating its history only heightens the taboo nature of the subject in the public space.

¹⁹⁹ As reported by Adel Gastel. "France remembers the Algerian War, 50 years on." France 24 News.

²⁰⁰ As reported by Adel Gastel. "France remembers the Algerian War, 50 years on." France 24 News.

Encouraging dialogue about the War would go far to assuage the vaults of collective pain, shame, and guilt that continue to be felt in today's France. And encouraging critical, honest dialogue about French national identity *outside* of the political sphere would do wonders to improve the perception and treatment of immigrant populations. As Wallach Scott states, "[France] need[s] to come up with new ways of addressing difference, ways that acknowledge its existence rather than refusing to engage it. The old ways, the insistence on sameness and assimilation, aren't working."²⁰¹ France has come far from its Revolutionary prototype of 1789 "in which all souls would grow larger through the continual communication of republican sentiments,"²⁰² and it is only through continued dialogue and the eventual acceptance of its past that France will be able to move forward.

²⁰¹ Wallach Scott, 17

²⁰² Robespierre, as quoted by Rosanvallon, 36

CISLA Addendum

Immigration is not, in itself, a modern phenomenon. Some of the earliest peoples to walk this planet were nomadic, and did not consider themselves defined and bound by geographical borders in quite the same way that we do today. What *is* modern about immigration, however, are the perceptions associated with it. The way that each individual country perceives and approaches immigration in the modern context is very intricately bound up with sentiments about its own national identity, and in a world that is seemingly more and more of a sprawling colossus every day, it can be difficult for a country to navigate its place in it.

It is from here that my interest, and my topic for my Senior Honors Thesis, arises. I have undertaken to examine, in a very broad sense, the perception of immigration in France. This topic allows for consideration of a wide array of factors that are relevant to the discussion of immigration in contemporary France: things like integration, housing, religious differences, police and youth violence, and cultural anxiety. In writing this addendum, I am going to take the liberty of allowing my subject to remain similarly broad. I will endeavor to apply the third CISLA question, about material, spiritual, and ethical challenges, to immigration in France today, and in doing so I will touch on a wide array of points. It is my hope that the ensemble of these points will contribute to a robustness of vision that will help you, the reader, understand some of the things that my Thesis is really, fundamentally about.

The material challenges that come with immigration to France are manifold. First and foremost, there is the issue of housing. Housing and overcrowding have long since been major problems in densely populated areas of France, like Lyon and the entire *département* of *Ile-de-France* (the *département* that encompasses Paris and its environs). The concern about housing began in the early 1960's, when France received an influx of migrants from its former African colonies. These migrants, who already spoke the French language, arrived seeking a whole slew of new prospects: better jobs, better living conditions, better opportunities for their offspring, and generally better lives. They already spoke the French language, but most of them had never been to France before, and they were enchanted with the romantic vision of the country that spans the globe. In keeping with this vision, the vast majority of these migrants headed for Paris, eager for *les grands jardins* in the spring, the bustling boulevards, and the sparkling lights of the Eiffel Tower.

These things were not, however, what they found. The French government's response to this wave of migration was to expand on their collection of *HLM*. *HLM*, or *habitation à loyer modéré* (rent-controlled apartments), seemed to be the perfect solution to prevent what would otherwise be a housing crisis: they were expansive, inexpensive to construct, and affordable for immigrants. And, initially, the *HLM* functioned quite well as the go-to solution for immigrant housing. But today, it is quite a different story. Many of the *HLM* were not properly kept over the years, and as a result are now extremely dilapidated and dirty. Spatial and social isolation have also made the *HLMs* incredibly desolate places to live. Cut off from outlets of culture and social interaction (like movie theaters, shopping malls, and museums), the inhabitants of the *HLMs* are more likely to

experience depression and general cultural disillusionment. Crime in the *banlieues* (suburbs) where the *HLMs* are located has also become a very real problem. Recognizing that the *HLMs* no longer provide immigrants and their families with acceptable living conditions, the French government has begun to raze certain complexes. But financial (and, dare I say, bureaucratic) constraints have prevented hundreds of *HLMs* from being inspected and razed.

In this way, the challenge of immigrant housing is a double-edged sword: not only is it a material challenge, but it is an ethical challenge as well. Given the miserable state of a large number of the *HLMs*, immigrant housing becomes quite an exploitative process. The reality of it is that the majority of migrants who arrive in France already have extremely limited financial and cultural capital, so their options for finding housing and paying for that housing are extremely narrow. The *HLMs* are, in most cases, the only thing that is financially feasible, especially where whole immigrant families with many mouths to feed are concerned. So if there is only one option, and if that option isn't suitable to live in by anyone's standards (least of all the members of the government that created it), where is there left to go? And where does the line get drawn--to what extent is the French government responsible for securing migrants (particularly non-refugees) with housing? What should the standards for *HLM* housing be?

Another material challenge facing immigration to the EU in general is the financing of integration programs. The European Union stipulates that all of its member countries must have some sort of integration policy in effect for immigrants, but what it does not explicitly stipulate is which party--the State or the migrants themselves--should bear the brunt of the expenses. This also becomes an ethical question. Is it really okay to

make immigrants, who are typically coming from extremely economically disadvantaged areas, pay *any* sum of money for an integration program? Especially when it is the host country, and not the migrant, that deems the integration process necessary in the first place.

It is true that the integration process that the host country has put in place usually ends up benefitting the migrant, improving (among other things) their language skills and overall employability. But I spent all summer studying the various integration programs that are in place in the European Union, and it is my opinion that not all of them are developed enough to justify asking a migrant to pay several hundred Euros in order to participate. The variability of the quality and character of the integration programs across the EU member countries is huge, and as of yet there is no real regulating body that holds the member countries' programs to an established set of standards. France's integration program happens to be free of charge for migrants, which is wonderful.

Even from here, though, another ethical question arises: is it okay to mandate that immigrants integrate into the host country? Because (at least, in the European Union) integration is not a choice: it is a pre-requisite that migrants must fulfill in order to obtain a residence permit. The widely accepted answer to the "is integration ethical" question is yes. The French government claims that it regards integration as a reciprocal process, necessitating efforts from both the State *and* the migrant him or herself. But in the case of France, the State doesn't give as much as the migrant does. Yes, it provides an integration program that is free for migrants. Yes, it provides expedited and specialized programs for asylum seekers. But while the migrant is, in most cases, striving to integrate into French

society and working incredibly hard to get a job, find housing, and learn the French language, the State remains incredibly ideologically closed-minded.

The perception of immigration in France, even by government workers, continues to be shockingly negative, and this perception is perpetuated by the extremely rigid definition of national identity that the State continues to promote. *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*: Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood. It's all well and good when it's sounded from the hills, but if certain populations living in France are being left out of the equation, it isn't really functioning the way it should. So the way the State has been framing French national identity is actually contributing to a lack of reciprocity within the integration process for migrants. They are essentially trying to integrate into a society whose State-established self-definition already excludes them.

The spiritual challenges associated with immigration to France are also manifold, and, like the material challenges, are riddled with ethical questions. The debate about the *foulard* (the headscarf, or *hijab*) in France has received a lot of publicity in recent years, and so will serve as an appropriate and relevant example. But in order to fully understand the debate surrounding the headscarf, one must first understand the concept of *laïcité*. *Laïcité*, or secularism, has an incredible importance in French life. For the French, it is much more than just a practice, like it is in the United States; rather, it is a deeply valued and deeply ingrained way of life, that factors into the makeup of their very identities. So when the government passed a law in 2004 that banned the wearing of the *hijab* in public schools, it did not foresee the law as being particularly problematic, because it was in accordance with the principles of *laïcité*. As it turned out, the law was intensely problematic. It infuriated a lot of people--Muslims, some French, and international

onlookers--who thought that the law was unjust. The law became fringed with ethical questions: does disallowing the headscarf in academic spaces constitute a breach of individual rights? Is it reasonable to expect, as the French government does, that the public space always remain secular, and that only the private space be used for religiosity and faith?

The opponents of the anti-headscarf law pointed out that there was a double standard in play. Visible signs of *Islamic* faith, like the headscarf, were prohibited in schools, but visible signs of Christian or Jewish faith (like crosses and *kippahs*) were not. The statements that various French politicians made concerning the law also angered them. The politicians claimed that the headscarf was symbolic of the oppression of women by a patriarchal society, and that what they were really doing by passing the law was enforcing the French principle of *Egalité*. The counter-argument to this statement is that not all women wear the headscarf for the same reasons. Yes, it *can* be a symbol of the subjugation of women. But some (many) women who wear the headscarf today *choose* to wear it of their own volition. In this way, the headscarf can also be viewed as a symbol of women's empowerment. All in all, it is an incredibly complicated and sensitive issue that France is still grappling with today.

All of these things that I have mentioned are inarguable challenges that today's France faces. And they are difficult challenges to confront and to reconcile, especially because immigration has become such a highly politicized issue just about everywhere. But immigration can be every bit as much an advantage and an opportunity as it is a "problem." Approaching it from a humanitarian standpoint would go a long way in destigmatizing immigration in today's France. Because ultimately, when you put aside

things like racism and xenophobia, immigration is just groups of humans who desire a change.

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