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Abstract

“Beyond the Banlieue: French Postcolonial Migration & the Politics of a Sub-Saharan Identity” details and historicizes the interstitial area between French state acculturation policies and the lived experience of Afro-French residents from 1945-2018. The project uses oral histories from Black communities in Paris to reveal a rich legacy of sociopolitical, economic and cultural efforts to navigate and negotiate this divide. These narratives offer an alternative perspective to prevailing scholarly and popular discourses emphasizing decline, resentment, intractability and rebellion as the defining features of French race relations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. This dissertation examines the attempts and attitudes of activists, entrepreneurs, artists, authors, teachers, youth and politicians to reclaim a largely untold history of the way that three generations of African migrants have contested the “invisibility” of race and the shortcomings of state policy to forge communities and multilayered identities in the postcolonial era. Interweaving the processes of migration and acculturation, this project mines the experiences of black diasporic populations in Paris over the past seventy years to reimagine the place and power of race in contemporary French history.

Beyond the Banlieue: French Postcolonial Migration & the Politics of a Sub-Saharan Identity

by

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Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in *History*

Syracuse University

May 2019

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In loving memory of mi abuela Gloria E. Morales, who taught me perseverance and my great-uncle William F. Crum, who taught me persistence. Together these forces and their love sustained me and this project.

Acknowledgements

Over the years, a host of individuals and groups indelibly shaped this project. Syracuse University and the History Department funded the majority of the research, writing and editing that comprise this dissertation. Funding from the Moynihan Institute's Center for European Studies, the Roscoe-Martin Fund and a Ronald E. McNair Fellowship financed additional archival and ethnographic research.

A group of activists, intellectuals and Afro-French citizens were critical to breathing life into this project. I am indebted to the following individuals: Gaelle, Laurent, Fanta, Christian, Kady, Kahi, Patricia, Elikya, Sophien, Mikeal, René, Ibrahim, Franck, Medina, Abdallah, Baba and Oumou. Thank you for entrusting me with your life experiences. I am much obliged to Professor Pap Ndiaye, Professor Mabaoula Soumahouro, Professor Louis-Georges Tin and Suzanne Diop for taking time out of their hectic schedules to discuss my research and challenge my Americanisms. I am grateful to Joel Dreyfuss, Luc Saint-Éloy, Astrid Stiwanker, Cathlixé Beyala, Kevi Donat, Sylvia Serbin, Sidiki Bakaba and Isabelle Boni-Claverie for shaping much of my analysis on activism and media in Paris. Finally, Thomas Plaza walked me through years of football history. He helped me understand how much the sport and its players mean to Black French people.

Words are not enough to thank the faculty that encouraged and pushed me to my full potential as a budding scholar. As an undergraduate student, Professor Janis Mayes accepted my application to join the 2011 Paris Noir cohort. This study abroad program changed the trajectory of my life. She served as my mentor and inspired me to consider graduate school as a veritable option. Most importantly, she believed that my research needed to continue. Without her vision,

support and network, this project would not exist. (Jërëjëf!) A special thank you to the African American Studies Department for providing me with a home. Over the past 10 years, Professor Herbert Ruffin, Professor Rennie Simson, Professor Linda Carty, Professor Joan Bryant and Ms. Williams contributed to my growth as a person and also reminded me to share this knowledge with the community. (*Ujima*)

Mere acknowledgments are insufficient to recognize my dissertation committee. On each of the following pages, you will hear the voices of Jeffrey Gonda, Junko Takeda and Gladys McCormick. For six years, my advisor Jeffrey Gonda dedicated incalculable hours to molding me into a stalwart historian. From countless meetings, suggestions for revisions and his never-ending efforts to make my writing stronger and contributions to the field more pronounced, I am eternally grateful for your mentorship. Professor Takeda, thank you for rescuing me in France and remaining a constant source of support as well as always providing razor-sharp critique. Professor McCormick, I am especially thankful that you equipped me with the toolkit and methodology of oral history. This project endeavors to reflect your training and bring marginalized voices to the fore. Professor Murphy, thank you for your encouragement and belief that I should continue teaching within and beyond the confines of academia. I am forever indebted to each of you for investing in me and making sure I saw this project through to the finish line. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the following individuals. Bob Davis challenged me to re-think the contours of economic opportunity. Scarlett Rebman, Dr. Crystal Eddins, Joelle Nivens, Tom Bouril, Mohammad Ebad Athar, Camilla Bell, Max Lewis and Malcolm Bevel each served as steadfast colleagues. Their comments and critiques helped refine this project.

To my family and friends, who cheered me on from start to finish, this dissertation is for you. My deepest appreciation for being patient as I missed countless holidays, birthdays, life milestones and personal crises while in France, pulling all-nighters or simply disappearing for days and sometimes weeks. Finally, I would not have made it without my parents, Shawn and François Soljour. Your prayers, unwavering faith, love, and support made this possible. Not only did it keep me sane as I balanced life on two different continents but it reminded me that I am not an island. Thank you for sacrificing more than I'll ever know. You will forever have my undying love and gratitude. (*Tetelestai*)

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Introduction:

Africa on the Seine: Immigration, Community and the Post-Colonial Diaspora

The long avenue of the Champs-Élysées was crowded with thousands of soldiers and civilians on August 26, 1944. Even before the formal parade began, joyous spectators celebrated in the street. As the 2nd Armored Division of the French army marched toward the Arc de Triomphe, bystanders hugged each other as they watched their heroes pass by. The tri-colored French flag flapped triumphantly in the summer breeze. After almost two weeks of armed volleys between Nazi and Allied Forces, the crowd gathered to rejoice in Paris' liberation.¹

The final advance toward freedom from Nazi rule began in the Parisian suburb of Pantin on August 15th. Allied forces recruited local residents to join the final “struggle against the invader.”² In an effort to counter this mass mobilization, Adolf Hitler instructed his army to destroy Paris. For the next ten days, explosions shook the streets. As Allied troops advanced, they fired rounds into the air. When German General Dietrick von Cholitz surrendered, Parisians descended from their flats and flooded the streets singing “*La Marseillaise*.”³ In celebration of

¹ The parade on August 26, 1944 is detailed in the following monographs, newspaper articles, and documentary film: Michael S. Neiberg, *The Blood of Free Men: The Liberation of Paris, 1944* (New York: Basic Books, 2012); Ray Argyle and Maurice Vaïsse, *The Paris Game: Charles De Gaulle, the Liberation of Paris, and the Gamble That Won France* (Toronto, Ont.: Dundurn, 2014); Matthew Cobb, *Eleven Days in August: The Liberation of Paris in 1944* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2014); *The Spirit of Liberation*. Directed by Konstantin Von Zur Mühlen. Germany: Kronos Media, 2017. DVD; General De Gaulle's Triumphant Entry into Paris after Its Liberation. Illustrated London News (London, England), Saturday, September 02, 1944; pg. 264; Issue 5498; Meyer Berger, “Grimness Tinges Joy of French.” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Aug 24, 1944; “AP PHOTO ON NEW STAMP.” *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Aug 31, 1945.

² Marvin Perry, *World War II in Europe: A Concise History* (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2013), 220.

³ “*La Marseillaise*” is the French national anthem.

their deliverance from German occupation, General Charles De Gaulle delivered an emotional speech. He declared that Paris had been “liberated by itself, liberated by its people with the help of the French armies.”⁴ For the next several days, the city reveled in its new found *carte blanche*.

The masses of troops that risked their lives to save the city were honored. In the public celebrations that swept Paris, soldiers were at the center of the pomp and circumstance. Yet in the photographs and films that immortalize the armed forces, the swarms of faces are homogenously white.⁵ Glaringly absent are the almost 200,000 Sub-Saharan African soldiers that comprised the French forces throughout World War II.⁶

⁴ Charles Kaiser, *The Cost of Courage* (New York: Other Press, 2017), 173.

⁵ Cécile Bishop, "Photography, Race And Invisibility," *Photographies* 11, no. 2-3 (2018): 193-213; "Liberation of Paris in Images." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (2010); Luc Briand and Aude Deraedt, "Libération De Paris: Pourquoi Il N'y a (presque) Pas De Noirs Sur Les Photos." *Libération*, published on August 25, 2014, https://www.liberation.fr/photographie/2014/08/20/paris-libere-uniquement-par-des-soldats-blancs_1083150; Éric Lafon, "Photographie De Dukson, « Un Oublié De L'histoire » De La Libération." *La Fondation De La Résistance, La Fondation Pour La Mémoire De La Déportation, Le Ministère De La Culture* (direction Des Archives De France) Et Le Ministère De La Défense (direction Des Patrimoines, De La Mémoire, Et Des Archives), accessed on February 21, 2019, http://www.fondationresistance.org/pages/rech_doc/dukson-oublie-histoire-liberation_photo10.html.

⁶Historian Gregory Mann details the 100,000 West African soldiers mobilized during the Fall of France during 1939-1940. See Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 18. Historian Ruth Ginio describes French efforts in 1942 to recruit an additional 100,000 soldiers. See Ruth Ginio, *The French Army and Its African Soldiers: The Years of Decolonization* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 15. Their work built upon the landmark study by Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Senegalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991). For more monographs examining the role of Black soldiers in World War II see, David Killingray and Martin Plaut, *Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2012); Timothy L. Schroer, *Recasting Race after World War II: Germans and African Americans in American-occupied Germany* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007) and Raffael Scheck, *Hitlers African Victims: The German Army Massacres of Black French Soldiers in 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).



Figure 1. Claude Mamba Sy pictured in 1945.

In the months leading up to the liberation of Paris, De Gaulle withdrew the remaining 20,000 *tirailleurs* stationed in France and replaced them with white troops.⁷ This erasure from the public narrative of victory was contested by Black armed forces. In the months following the triumph of France, a series of violent incidents ensued between African and white French soldiers.⁸ The most tragic of these events occurred on November 30, 1944. At an army base outside of Dakar, 1,000 Senegalese soldiers protested the French government's failure to pay their military pensions. In retaliation, several white French soldiers shot over thirty five of the protesters.⁹

⁷ *Tirailleurs* (is an abbreviation of the term *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*) which refers to colonial troops recruited from West, Central and East Africa known collectively as Sub-Saharan or Black Africa. See, Eric Deroo and Antoine Champeaux, *La Force Noire: Gloire Et Infortunes D'une Légende Coloniale* (Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2006). This process of demobilizing African troops is known as *blanchissement* (whitening) included West African soldiers being removed from the front lines of the battle, forced removal of "American issued" uniforms and weaponry and being sent to repatriation centers. See Mann, *Native Sons*, 116-119.

⁸ These incidents occurred at transit camps throughout provincial cities both in France and West Africa.

⁹ For more on clashes at Camp Thiaroye, see Sabrina Parent, *Cultural Representations of Massacre: Reinterpretations of the Mutiny of Senegal* (Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and Nancy Ellen Lawler, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivoirien Tirailleurs of World War II* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992).

In the wake of World War II, France lay in ruins. More than 567,000 civilians and soldiers died. Its farm lands were destroyed and public morale was low. Later that year, General turned President Charles De Gaulle announced his plan to rebuild the nation. The era that followed is what historians call “*Les Trente Glorieuses*” of prosperity and consumption.¹⁰ The French economy saw unprecedented growth. To sustain this rapid expansion, French companies and officials recruited immigrant laborers. Comprised of mostly colonial populations, these migrants posed a particular challenge to France’s commitment to a uniform national language, culture and raceless identity. Immigrating from Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania, they were employed in French steel factories, along car plant assembly lines and as street-sweepers. In the same way that African soldiers were crucial to France’s victory over German Nazis, Black workforces were critical to sustaining the French postwar economic boom. During these years of frenzied development, waves of Sub-Saharan migrants arrived in France uninhibited by legislation. They constructed much of the nation’s current infrastructure. When an economic decline in 1973 brought an end to France’s extraordinary expansion, the government hastily curtailed immigration in 1975. In the years that followed, France increasingly targeted Black migrants as the scapegoats for unemployment, urban decay and political turmoil.

In a society that touts its “racelessness,” the lives of Black French men and women reveal the chasm between attitudes and actuality. It is within the gaps between policy and personal experience that this dissertation situates itself. “Beyond the *Banlieue*” details and historicizes the interstitial area between French state acculturation policies and the lived experience of Black French residents. The narratives that emerge from Black communities in Paris reveal a rich

¹⁰ “*Les Trente Glorieuses*” or Thirty Glorious Years.

legacy of sociopolitical, economic and cultural efforts to navigate and negotiate this divide.¹¹

They offer an alternative perspective to prevailing scholarly and popular discourses emphasizing decline, resentment, intractability and rebellion as the defining features of French race relations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.¹² This dissertation reclaims a largely untold history of the way that three generations of African migrants have contested the “invisibility” of race and the shortcomings of state policy to forge communities and multilayered identities in the postcolonial era.¹³ The lives of activists, entrepreneurs, artists, authors, teachers, youth and politicians are interwoven with the processes of migration and acculturation. Taken together, these experiences reveal how Black diasporic populations in Paris over the past seventy years have reimagined the place and power of race in contemporary French history.

¹¹ Various grassroots initiatives have taken place in France to encourage African immigrant sociopolitical, cultural and economic growth. These efforts encourage maintaining a connection to Africa based upon ancestral origin but also a space to experiment with political and social agendas. For more information see, Diobaye Ndeye, “True Loves: African entrepreneurs are welcomed to Paris for this Hackathon, *True Africa*, published on February 18, 2016, <http://trueafrica.co/article/true-loves-african-entrepreneurs-are-welcomed-to-paris-for-this-hackathon/>; Suzanne Gauch, "Sampling Globalization in Calixthe Beyala's *Le Petit Prince De Belleville*." *Research in African Literatures* 41, no. 2 (2010): 203-21; Elisa Joy White, "Paris: The Liberating Quality of Race," in *Modernity, Freedom, and the African Diaspora: Dublin, New Orleans, Paris* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 227-37; Medhi Kabara and Régis Chaoupa, *Diaspora. La communauté noire en France* (Diaspora Communication, 2006).

¹² For more information about the conditions of the Black migrants living in Paris today, see Angelique Chrisafis, “‘Nothing’s changed’: 10 years after French riots, *banlieues* remain in crisis,” *The Guardian*, published on October 22, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/nothings-changed-10-years-after-french-riots-banlieues-remain-in-crisis>; Donna Rachel Edmunds, “Paris Banlieues aren’t producing rioters, ‘They are producing terrorists’,” *Breitbart*, published on October 27, 2015, <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/10/27/paris-banlieues-arent-producing-rioters-producing-terrorists/>; “Ten years after Paris suburb riots has anything really changed?,” *France 24*, published on October 27, 2015, <http://www.france24.com/en/20151026-france-10-years-after-riots-life-paris-suburb-clichy-sous-bois-integration-police>; Hugh Schofield, “Fears the banlieues could burn again,” *BBC News*, published on October 27, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34636104>; Sylvia Zappi, “Dix ans après les émeutes, le sentiment d’abandon des banlieues,” *Le Monde*, published on October 26, 2015; “2005-2015. Emeutes dans les banlieues, notre site special,” *Le Parisien*, published on October 24, 2015, <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/2005-2015-emeutes-dans-les-banlieues-notre-site-special-24-10-2015-5215915.php>.

¹³ Within the dissertation, the terms immigrant and migrant are used interchangeably recognizing Sub-Saharan African immigration to France and migration from various African nation-states.

Contemporary France: The History of Immigration and Post-Colonial Movement

The story of French migration in the post-World War II era has largely been framed around two thematic generations of historiography: modern immigration to France and the emergence of multicultural France. Pioneered by French historian Gérard Noiriel, the study of modern immigration to France emerged as a “sociohistory of the political.”¹⁴ Historians situated within this body of scholarship responded directly to the centrality of immigration as a pressing social and political issue in France during the 1980’s. Their works aimed to deconstruct “two contradictory positions on immigration [posited by intellectuals and French public officials]: on the one hand, denying that France had any particular problem with immigrants; on the other, decrying the latest streams of immigrants as threats to the country’s unity and viability.”¹⁵ Noiriel in particular positioned his analysis of French immigration within three fields of scholarship: legal history of immigration and assimilation, social history of immigrant experiences and the political role of immigration within modern French history. In order to unpend these contradictions, he used comparative studies to examine immigration in France and the United States.

In response to his work, scholars charted the sustained waves of immigration after World War II and their impact on French conceptions of national identity. This revisionist effort pointed

¹⁴Originally published in French under the title *Le creuset français. Histoire de l'immigration XIXe-XXe siècles* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988). This dissertation relies on the translated version of the monograph. See Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity (Contradictions of Modernity)* Translated by Geoffroy De Laforcad (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), xi.

¹⁵ Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, vii.

to “*Les Trente Glorieuses*” (1945-1975) as the fundamental catalyst to the largest period of mass immigration in the country’s history. Scholarship on modern French immigration emphasized the material conditions of French immigrant communities, native attitudes toward immigration and the impact of legislative reform.¹⁶ The most recent literature uses a sociopolitical lens to approach national acculturation policy as a fluid and evolving field.¹⁷ These monographs acknowledge the ways in which the French state has reimagined the history of immigration due to new pressures and geopolitical urgencies. Even within this burgeoning body of scholarship, Black populations remained largely at the margins.

A second generation of scholars in the mid-1990’s and into the new millennium attempted to redress the silences of race and ethnicity within French history. Their works examined the emergence of multi-ethnic France, created as a result of post-colonial immigration to France. Focusing in particular on the period after 1974, scholars shifted their attention towards

¹⁶ For works exploring the social conditions of immigrants in France see, Alec G. Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France: Immigration, Politics, Culture, and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Patricia M. E. Lorcin, and David G. Troyansky, *Transnational Spaces and Identities in the Francophone World*. Edited by Hafid Gafaïti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). For works exploring French native perspectives on immigrants, see Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France* (London: Routledge, 1992); Peter Sahlin, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and after* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: MIT, 1998). For a monograph exploring immigration legislation after 1975 see, Clifford D Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Vittorio Longhi and Janet Eastwood, *The Immigrant War: A Global Movement against Discrimination and Exploitation* (Bristol: Policy Press University of Bristol, 2014); Martin Schain, *The Politics of Immigration in France, Britain, and the United States: A Comparative Study* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Giovanna Zincone, Rinus Penninx, and Maren Borkert, *Migration Policymaking in Europe: The Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in past and Present* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011); Catherine Raissiguier, *Reinventing the Republic: Gender, Migration, and Citizenship in France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); This most recent wave is still indebted to works that tried to address these issues earlier including most notably Patrick Ireland’s work, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity: Immigrant Politics in France and Switzerland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

“ethnic relations in France... [and] on immigrants from Africa and Asia.”¹⁸ However, much of this historiographical literature concentrated on the Maghreb as the target of analysis to examine the rupture in French national identity after the Algerian War.¹⁹ Scholars explained this demographic focus on North Africa by arguing that “Maghrebis [were] by far the largest single group among the population of immigrant origin [living in France].”²⁰ Indeed, when scholars considered Sub-Saharan migrants their participation was framed as ancillary to North African migration activity.

A critical turning point within these scholarly conversations occurred in 2005. The urban uprisings that enveloped France during November 2005 propelled scholars to reexamine the historical roots of frustration that consumed the mainly North and Sub-Saharan African participants. French historians shifted their focus toward the increasingly xenophobic and nationalist terminology deployed by the government that separated “immigrants” from “French” nationals. These monographs brought together post-colonial studies, the histories of colonialism and decolonization as well as modern African Diaspora studies to “explore the complex

¹⁸ Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (New York: Routledge, 1995), xiv and xvii.

¹⁹ This recent trend is best explained in the following monographs: Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction: Voices from the North African Community in France* (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Todd Shepard, *Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Elaine R. Thomas, *Immigration, Islam, and the Politics of Belonging in France: A Comparative Framework* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Amelia H. Lyons, *The Civilizing Mission in the Metropole: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State during Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Kate Marsh, *France's Lost Empires: Fragmentation, Nostalgia, and La Fracture Coloniale* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011); Nadia Kiwan, *Identities, Discourses and Experiences: Young People of North African Origin in France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010) and Susan Ireland and Patrice J. Proulx, *Immigrant Narratives in Contemporary France* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001).

²⁰ Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity*, xiv and xvii.

intersection of citizenship, race and class in contemporary France.”²¹ As a result of the urban uprisings, race and ethnicity became a central feature in scholarly investigations of immigration. Moreover, a demographic focus on Sub-Saharan Africa increased.²² Scholars from various disciplines, offered explanations for the explosion of fury that detonated in 2005. Noted French scholar Tyler Stovall used transnationalism as a theoretical framework to interrogate “debates in contemporary France about multiculturalism, race and national identity.”²³ His scholarship represents the newest turn within the historiography, emphasizing the synergetic relationship between transnational movement and global economic frameworks in relation to race and French immigration.

Even within the growing body of scholarship on modern immigration to France, the experiences of Sub-Saharan Africans and their descendants remains relatively under-explored. In the emerging field of “Black French Studies,” monographs examined Black migration to France from the Caribbean and the United States. Others began to explore the lives of Sub-Saharan African immigrants. However, these scholarly works largely focus on the period before 2005.²⁴

²¹ Charles Tshimanga, Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom, *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 9.

²² Indeed there are studies and monographs that pre-date the 2005 uprisings, and these bodies of work are used throughout the dissertation. For several examples see, Michel Wieviorka and Philippe Bataille, *La France Raciste*. (Paris: Seuil, 1993); Sue Peabody and Tyler Edward Stovall, *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2003); Tyler Edward Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele, *French Civilization and Its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003).

²³ Tyler Edward Stovall, *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation* (Boulder: Westview, 2015), 3. Spanning the French Revolution to present times, he wrote a transnational history of a “universal nation” in order to bolster his argument that globalization is not a recent phenomenon. Stovall’s benevolent treatment of universalism is a direct response to Tzvetan Todorov’s disapproval of universalism as a useful category of analysis. See, Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 157.

²⁴ A growing number of historiographical works considered various waves of Black migration to Paris. Focusing on the creation of racial communities these works are foundational to my study. For examples see, Margaret Byron and Stéphanie Condon, *Migration in Comparative Perspective: Caribbean Communities in Britain and France* (New

This dissertation responds to a growing number of monographs that examine the experiences of Afro-French populations.²⁵ These works have begun to give voice to Sub-Saharan African migrants and examined socio-political, economic and cultural conditions. Among the leading texts in this vein is *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness*, a multidisciplinary collection of essays that explores Black French identity and confronts the controversial nature of discussing race in France. Contributors to the collection acknowledge that their work is “no more than a start” to contending with issues of racial discrimination, inequality and belonging in France.²⁶ Despite these crucial and much needed additions to the field, critical gaps remain. Women and Gender Studies scholar Alexander C. Weheliye notes that “ideas about how gender and sexuality inflect blackness in France are virtually absent.”²⁷ Historian Rachel Anne Gillett underscores that “music and sport...are underserved.”²⁸ Moreover, a consideration

York: Routledge, 2008); Mann, *Native Sons*; Tyler Edward Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996). This project’s later end point has the advantage of considering how youth were impacted by earlier generational efforts to create a community united by race but individualized based on various lived experiences.

²⁵ See Darlene Clark Hine, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small, *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2009); Yasser A. Munif, “French Postcolonial Nationalism and Afro-French Subjectivities” (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 2011); Trica Danielle Keaton, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Tyler Edward Stovall, *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Bennetta Jules-Rosette, *Black Paris: The African Writers' Landscape* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Loretta Bass, *African immigrant families in another France* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014); Thomas, Dominic Richard David, *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) and Pap Ndiaye, *La Condition Noire: Essai Sur Une Minorité Français* (Paris: Folio Actuel, 2009).

²⁶ Keaton, Sharpley-Whiting, and Stovall, *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 11. This monograph also contends with that comparative studies remains particularly salient post-2005.

²⁷ Alexander G. Weheliye, "Book Review: "Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness," *The Black Scholar* 43, no. 3 (2013): 92-94.

²⁸ Rachel Anne Gillett, "A Review of "Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness," *History: Reviews of New Books* 41, no. 3 (2013): 102-03.

of Black French migrant intergenerational negotiations of policy and protest remains woefully under-examined. In order to fill in these gaps, this dissertation adopts a unique analytical framework to address the contours of French policy, national society and racial identity.

Beyond the *Banlieue*: Immigration, Space and Race

“Beyond the *Banlieue*” offers a new perspective on Black French communities. Four distinctive elements of this project combine to intervene in discussions of French contemporary history, race and migration. First, it focuses on the often overlooked experiences of Sub-Saharan African migrants. Secondly, it foregrounds intergenerational exchanges as key sites of formation and friction over identity and protest. Third, it adopts a historical perspective that incorporates and critically engages various forms of cultural production. Finally, it examines the processes of migration and community organization within the context of a “postcolonial diaspora” that shaped the sociopolitical and economic dimensions of immigrant acculturation in France particularly after 1975 and 2005.

One of the most significant interventions to be made is a more comprehensive consideration of Sub-Saharan African migrants. The bulk of recent scholarly attention and literature has focused on North African immigration and the contrast between Muslim religious identity and French polices of *laïcité*.²⁹ The substantial but often ignored flows of migration from Sub-Saharan Africa offer a distinct set of narratives that complicate but also work in

²⁹ Much of the historical emphasis on postcolonial immigration to France has remained focused on Algeria and the Maghreb as France’s focal sphere of influence and the initial source of tension over differences of religion, ethnicity and national belonging. For examples see, John Richard Bowen, *Why the French Don’t Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) and Trica Danielle Keaton, *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics, and Social Exclusion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

dialogue with North African migrant experiences.³⁰ By shifting the focus to Sub-Saharan Africa without devaluing the experiences of North African populations, this dissertation offers a compelling new perspective on the agency of Black migrants apart from the standard tropes of declension and rebellion. Chronicling individual immigration histories from Mali, Senegal, Gabon, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and other francophone Sub-Saharan African nation-states, this dissertation deploys their experiences to offer a more nuanced description of modern French immigration. Furthermore, this project seeks to redefine what it means to be French. In its analysis, chapters consider not only how Black French populations define themselves but also how white French citizens self-identify often in opposition to North and Sub-Saharan Africans.

This project also interrogates the generational transfer of knowledge and tensions over identity within these Sub-Saharan African migrant waves. Scholars of non-white migration to France have typically analyzed either first generation or second-generation migrants and their experiences of acculturation. Few, if any studies have probed the ways in which these groups have shaped each other.³¹ By framing the experiences of three generations of migrants as central to negotiations of racial identity in France, this work contextualizes how race remains a fundamental part of their lived experiences. Moreover, tracking the evolution of these intergenerational relationships and the different battles that emerge, subsequent chapters identify

³⁰ The historical separation of Africa between “North” Africa (including Egypt) and Sub-Saharan “Black Africa” carries colonial connotations and silences the socioeconomic, political and cultural connections between these African nation-states.

³¹ For studies examining Sub-Saharan immigration by generation see Bass, *African immigrant families in another France*; Caroline H. Bledsoe and Papa Sow, "Back to Africa: Second Chances for the Children of West African Immigrants." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73, no. 4 (July 15, 2011): 747-62; Roxane Silberman, Richard Alba, and Irène Fournier, "Segmented Assimilation in France? Discrimination in the Labour Market against the Second Generation." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007): 1-27; Richard D. Alba and Mary C. Waters, *The next Generation: Immigrant Youth in a Comparative Perspective* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

points of continuity and rupture at the individual, familial and community level. These narratives frame how Black French populations have navigated the pressures and priorities of the French state with respect to acculturation and racelessness as well as detail the nature of life at the “everyday” level that escapes even as it shapes current national debate.³² A more concrete understanding of Black intergenerational relationships links the urban uprisings of 2005 to a much longer history of activism around *banlieue* conditions.

Beyond the demographic composition of these migration flows and the generational exchanges within them, the third feature of my analytical framework examines the cultural expressions that emerge from these communities. The arena of culture represents a fertile but underexplored area of historical investigation. Most historians of race in France tended to emphasize social structures.³³ Scholars that have evaluated Black French culture have largely

³² Situated within the Cultural Turn of the 1970's, historians of race and ethnicity demonstrate that race is not a static nor fixed construction. The most recent wave of African American and Diaspora Studies scholars has experimented with various models to explain evolutions in racial identity formulation. Thomas Holt's concept of the “Cultural Paradigm” argued that racism is embedded in a social formation that is both material and specific to locale. Thus, a critical study of “everydayness” links the social and individual levels of behavior and helps explain how racialized paradigms can remain the same despite historical change. This concept also recognized that behavioral patterns must continually change as a result of dynamic shifts in local economic and social conditions. For examples see Leora Auslander and Thomas C. Holt, “Sambo in Paris: Race and Racism in the Iconography of the Everyday” in *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, edited by Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 147-184; Thomas C. Holt, “Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History,” *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (February 1995), 1-20; Daniel Wickberg, “Heterosexual White Male: Some Recent Inversions in American Cultural History,” *Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (June 2005), 136-157.

³³ A second generation of literature focusing on social conditions in the metropole, particularly in the *banlieue*, consider how discriminatory practices employed by the state birthed a community of angry immigrant youth and a pervasive sentiment of hopelessness that came to the fore with the 2005 uprisings. For examples see, Chakri Belaïd, *Banlieue, Lendemain De Révolte* (Paris: La Dispute, 2006); Robert Castel, *La Discrimination Négative: Citoyens Ou Indigènes* (Paris: La République des Idées, 2007); Denis Fougère, Francis Kramarz, Roland Rathelot, and Mirna Safi, “Social Housing and Location Choices of Immigrants in France.” *International Journal of Manpower* 34, no. 1 (2013): 56-69; Véronique Le Goaziou and Laurent Mucchielli, *Quand Les Banlieues Brûlent: Retour Sur Les Émeutes De Novembre 2005* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006); Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Michael J. Balz, “The October Riots in France: A Failed Immigration Policy or the Empire Strikes Back?” *International Migration* 44, no. 2 (2006): 23-34; Leland Ware, “Color-blind Racism in France: Bias Against Ethnic Minority Immigrants.” *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy* 46, no. 185 (2015): 185-244, http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1848&context=law_journal_law_policy.

come from outside the field of history.³⁴ This project fills a historiographical gap by considering the ways that cultural expression have been used to shape Black French identity and popular narratives about the role of race in French society. From the French World Cup victories in 1998 and 2018 to the growth of Hip Hop in France and the campaigns for greater diversity in French media, subsequent chapters address the ways that cultural arenas have witnessed their own contestations over the inclusiveness of the French state and challenges to racelessness. The cultural works examined in this dissertation respond to African historian Florence Bernault's two-part call for a "new cultural turn," where culture and identity emerge as central battlegrounds for social critique and political action as well as works that contend with "new forces and alternative fronts in France's social and political fabric, particularly among citizens of color and immigrant origin."³⁵

Situated within this new "cultural turn," in its analysis of African francophone cultural productions, this dissertation pays particular attention to the pressure African migrants place on France's often inflexible "social and political" fabric. Furthermore, this work moves beyond

³⁴ For works considering the role of hip hop in the *banlieue*, transnational parallels between France and America, the failure of state policy directed toward racial and economic minorities as well as, focusing on the counter-cultural or oppositional identity of Hip Hop, see, Hisham Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (New York: Random House, 2014); Sophie Body-Gendrot, "Models of Immigrant Integration in France and the United States: Signs of Convergence?" in *The Bubbling Cauldron: Race, Ethnicity, and the Urban Crisis*, edited by Michael P. Smith and Joe R. Feagin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 244-62; Alain-Philippe Durand, *Black, Blanc, Beur: Rap Music and Hip-hop Culture in the Francophone World* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002); James Perkinson, "Imperial Whiteness Meets Hip Hop Blackness: A Spiritual Phenomenology of the Hegemonic Body in the Twenty-first Century USA" in *Religion in Hip Hop: Mapping the New Terrain in the US*, edited by Monica R. Miller, Anthony B. Pinn, and Bernard Freeman (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 115-16; Tandem, "Hardcore 93," in *C'est toujours pour ceux qui savent*, Kilomatre, 2005, CD; "Paname City Rapping. B-boys in the Banlieues & beyond" in *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, edited by Alec Hargreaves (London: Routledge, 1997), 150-66.

³⁵ Florence Bernault, "Colonial Syndrome: French Modern and the Deceptions of History," in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, 121.

scholarly focus on African francophone literature as the focus of cultural investigation.³⁶ This dissertation incorporates a broader array of cultural texts including film, fictional narratives, and Hip Hop/Rap in order to capture popular attitudes and individual efforts at the portrayal of migrant experiences and challenges. These works offer a unique window into the overlapping and multivalent identities that characterize Black French immigrant populations.³⁷ To examine these identities and their progression over time, subsequent chapters analyze the evolution of student and worker archetypes and the shifts that occur as a result of this change. Within this dissertation, cultural productions by African migrants are used to challenge one of the overriding conventional assumptions about French immigration policy, which is that prior to 1975 this was largely a “laissez-faire” approach. This project argues that this notion of a “laissez-faire” approach significantly discounts the amount of surveillance, engagement and contact with the French state that Black migrant populations experienced and endured. These embedded

³⁶ For works analyzing African Francophone literature in relation to sociopolitical action and immigration see, Dominic Thomas, *Black France*, Jules-Rosette Bennetta's *Black Paris*; F. Abiola Irele, *The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Alec G. Hargreaves, *Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France: Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction* (Providence: Berg, 1992); Christopher Miller, *Nationalists and Nomads: Essays on Francophone African Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 2002).

³⁷ The use of Hip Hop as a social and cultural analytic focuses on youth from the 1980-2000's. Consequently, scholars described a predominantly male narrative and concentrated on the *banlieue* as a space of festering anger. This dissertation invites a new perspective on other geographic spaces that Black people occupy and complicates the narrative of angry youth rap to consider the message of “hope” within protest rap, for example see, Kery James, “Banlieusards,” in *À l'ombre du show business*, Up Music, 2008, CD. Drawing inspiration from Tupac Shakur's “Keep Your Head Up” James introduces “hope” within the reactionary ghettoized narrative of the *banlieue*. Scholarship on Black French women rappers analyzed through the lens of protest and feminism is still relatively limited. Their oversight offers a particularly fertile field for historical inquiry. This dissertation builds on the work of Lakeyta M. Bonnette to fill this gap. See, *Pulse of the People: Political Rap Music and Black Politics* (Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press, 2015). In addition to music, this project uses film to portray the difficulties of grappling with an African identity influenced by a sense of French nationalism. This project builds upon the most recent attempts to write a Francophone film historiography, see Melissa Thackway, *Africa Shoots Back: Alternative Perspectives in Sub-Saharan Francophone African Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); Mahriana Rofheart, *Shifting Perceptions of Migration in Senegalese Literature, Film, and Social Media* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

communal structures inform African migrant identity at the tail end of colonialism and lay the foundation for an Afropean identity in the postcolonial era in addition to linking postcolonial migration to a new evolution with the African Diaspora.

Finally, “Beyond the *Banlieue*” seeks to understand each of these components of Black French identity within the context of a “postcolonial diaspora.”³⁸ Scholars exploring African migration recognized decolonization as a distinct moment within the diasporic process. Rather than using the “postcolonial diaspora” as its theoretical framework, this dissertation considers the postcolonial diaspora as its subject. While the project does not deploy Marxist analysis, it does take seriously the contours of the diaspora in the postcolonial moment. Subsequent chapters explore African diasporic migration in the postcolonial/neo-colonial era and focuses on individual as well as communal agency. Thus, it critically investigates postcolonial and African diasporic actors at the local level.

My work expands upon this emerging field of study to understand how the empowering effects of decolonization and the stultifying effects of neocolonialism have combined to shape the political, economic and social priorities of African immigrants to France. Intervening in scholarly interpretations of postcolonial migration, this project deviates from understanding this process as rooted solely in feelings of anger or resentment over decolonization struggles. Instead, it draws new contours from the varied motivations of voluntary migration, self-determination

³⁸ These interrelated processes of migration, self-determination, the formation of a racial and national identity are explored more concretely in David Chariandy’s “Postcolonial Diasporas.” *Postcolonial Text*, Vol 2, No 1., 2006, <http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/440/839/>. For more on the theoretical approaches of the postcolonial diaspora, see J. Dillon Brown and Leah Rosenberg, *Beyond Windrush: Rethinking Postwar Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015); Paul Bandia, *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse: Africa, the Caribbean, Diaspora* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014); Yaw B. Agawu-Kakraba, and F. Komla Aggor, *Diasporic Identities within Afro-Hispanic and African Contexts* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

and the countervailing pressures of neocolonial influence and French internal colonization. This dissertation forges conceptual links between a continuous history of modern African diasporic migration and a profound rupture point in 1975 that necessitated negotiations of transnational, racial and national identity.

Within its chapters, this project unearths how the systemic shift from policing of immigration policy to policing of Black French populations are intertwined and how they affected the personal security, economic status and political identities of Afro-French people. In addition, this work contributes to the burgeoning catalog of monographs that examine the urban uprisings of 2005. The combination of these distinct analytic perspectives offers an important avenue to challenge the prevailing interpretations of the historical roots and political legacies of the uprisings.³⁹ My work contextualizes the 2005 rupture but seeks to also understand its aftermath and Black French responses to this moment. It aims to situate the post-2005 era as a distinct shift in terms of defining Black French identity as well as connecting millennial Afro-French activism to a larger wave of transnational activism occurring throughout the African Diaspora. This combination of perspectives reveals a far more complex process of contestation, community building, and self-empowerment. Ultimately, this dissertation recognizes a much greater degree of Black French agency and efforts to engage with the French state through other mechanisms than violence.

³⁹ Tshimanga, Gondola, and Bloom challenge the recent body of historiography that use “colonial paradigms” to explain the 2005 uprisings because these works do not include a space for diasporic identity and they emphasize a culturally unassimilable African “other” as a racial and social identity that carries political utility in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora*, 5-10.

Terminology

Beyond the *Banlieue* uses a variety of terms to discuss Sub-Saharan African migrants and subsequent generations of Black French populations. This dissertation builds on scholarship that recognizes “immigrants of Sub-Saharan descent are heterogeneous because they arrive in France with varying customs, languages, social capital, and even economic resources, [though] it should be acknowledged that they are typically perceived and treated as a homogenous “other” category by French society.”⁴⁰ Throughout the dissertation, French language terms are italicized and translated either in a footnote or parenthetical notations. These terms are also found in the Appendix under “Glossary.” As discussed in *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness*, terms used to discuss Black populations remain highly controversial and contested in France.⁴¹ The enduring legacies of “racelessness” and French republican ideologies of universalism undermine the use of terms or phrases that denote racial identities. Yet throughout history, terms such as “*Nègre*” (meaning Negro also pejoratively as nigger), “Black” (an English term used to describe African diasporic populations in France as well as distance French language speakers from a maternal language reference to race) and “*Noire*” (meaning Black) populate French film, music, literature and popular media.⁴² These various terms are used

⁴⁰ Bass, *African immigrant families in another France*, 14.

⁴¹ Keaton, Sharpley-Whiting, and Stovall, *Black France/France Noire*, 1-14.

⁴² In France, a recent movement called “*Je suis Noire*” has publicized the shift from using the English term “Black” to describe African diasporic populations to utilizing “*Noire*.” This dissertation recognizes the linguistic legacy of French use of the word “Black” to describe this population and only uses this term given its Anglophone audience. The second chapter analyzes a critical use of the word “Black” within French contexts specifically during the 1998 World Cup under the slogan, “*Black, Blanc, Beur*” used to describe France’s multi-ethnic national soccer team. Within this slogan the only French language term is “Blanc” meaning “white.” *Beur* finds its origins in the verlan inversion of “arabe” inverted first as “*rebeu*” and secondly as “*beur*” used to describe people of North African descent. For more on the movement “*Je suis Noire*” see, “Je suis noire, mais belle!” *Le Monde*, published on April 29, 1980, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1980/04/30/i-je-suis-noire-mais-belle_2802347_1819218.html; “Noir, Pas Black.” *ARTE Radio*, published on January 11, 2016,

in different social contexts and carry different meanings when used in conversation. Part of the complexity of French racelessness is that these terms are not formal designations of racial identity substantiated by French law, but rather monikers of description used by non-Black populations to denote racial inferiority or terms of self-description used by Black peoples within France. Often these terms of self-description are malleable and tend to accentuate an individual's connection to Africa, Black Diasporic populations more broadly or connections to the French state and national identity. In subsequent chapters, several terms are used interchangeably to describe Black populations in France. They include: "Black French" or "Afro-French," which are concretely associated with a connection to national, linguistic and racial identity. A third term, "Afropean," offers a more diasporic sense of being Black in Europe.

Methodology & Sources

In order to capture the varied perspectives that shape this study, the project mines an array of archival sources, oral histories, digital and print media, interviews, film, fiction and music. This multivalent perspective enriches current understandings of the interrelated constitution of race, gender and class identity. An ethnographic study facilitates these goals by stitching together several interdisciplinary frameworks to provide a portrait that depicts the Sub-Saharan African experiences of migration, acculturation and isolation in contemporary France.⁴³

https://www.arteradio.com/son/61657765/noir_pas_black; Jadine Labbé Pacheco, "Je Suis Noire, Pas 'black'." *L'Obs*, published on August 29, 2017, <https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/nos-vies-intimes/20170828.OBS3873/je-suis-noire-pas-black.html> and Éric Mukendi, "Le Black Est-il L'avenir Du Noir ?" *Jeune Afrique*, published on December 16, 2015, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/287317/societe/le-black-est-il-lavenir-du-noir/>.

⁴³ This comprehensive portrait of the Sub-Saharan experience in France will be derived from an analysis of social media, personal interviews, artistic production and cultural expression, as well as, more traditional archival sources such as national immigration legislation, education policies, integration programs, local newspapers, colonial reports and worker contracts.

This project uses materials from two archives within its chapters. The *Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer* in Aix-en-Provence (ANOM-AEF) house French colonial administration records from 1800-1975. This archival material encompasses labor recruitment and immigration management efforts from Sub-Saharan Africa in the period before 1975. These materials contextualize why 1975 was a transformative moment for migrants and is particularly important for the early portion of the dissertation. The *Archives Nationales* in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (AN) contain documents outlining the legislative approach to immigration management between 1945-present. These documents chart state acculturation efforts, housing conditions of immigrant populations and the Ministry of Interior as well as police records that carefully tracked Sub-Saharan African populations.⁴⁴

A local study emphasizing the experiences of Black communities in Paris represents the most fruitful method to address these perspectives. Sociologist Loretta Bass examined the varied lives of Sub-Saharan immigrants in France, but her focus was primarily in provincial cities that had “proportionally high immigrant populations.”⁴⁵ This dissertation builds upon Bass’ work by redirecting attention from the provincial cities back to Paris.⁴⁶ It departs from her

⁴⁴ In addition to these two archives spaces, I also used materials from the National Library of France particularly national legislation, Parliament proceedings and Official French National Journal reports.

⁴⁵ Bass gathers her ethnographic data from a “city of one million inhabitants in the southwest region of France.” *African immigrant families in another France*, 13 and 20.

⁴⁶ In 2008, 3.1 million descendants of immigrants ages 18 to 50 were living in France—comprising 12 percent of the French population. Fifty percent has a parent born in Europe, and 40 percent a parent born in Africa (mainly the Maghreb). The younger the person, however, the more likely he or she was to have a parent born in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sixty percent of second-generation immigrants who had at least one parent from Sub-Saharan Africa were under 26. Descendants of immigrants were concentrated in the same areas as recent immigrant, namely Paris (30 percent) and the southeast of France (16 percent). This may be due in part to a lack of resources and a low level of social mobility. The geographical concentration of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa was even higher than the average: 65 percent lived in Paris. For more information, see Angeline Escafre-Dublet, “Mainstreaming Immigrant Integration Policy in France: Education, Employment and Social Cohesion Initiatives.” *Migration Policy Institute*

methodological approach by integrating analysis of Sub-Saharan immigrant oral sources along with that of French legal policy and Black cultural productions.

To best capture the lived experiences of these Black Parisian communities, this study relies heavily on oral history. Over a period of four years, I collected thirty oral histories tracing individual migration paths from Mali, Senegal, Gabon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and other francophone Sub-Saharan African nation-states. I gathered participants from first generation immigrants and subsequent generations. These interviews occurred multiple times (5-8 meetings) and trace familial roots, descriptions of migration, the process of acculturation, important events and a larger discussion of everyday life. Interviews took place primarily in and around Paris. Designed to be a “tool of critical reflection and for human liberation,” the interviews invite participants to reflect on their political identities and goals for the future.⁴⁷ This methodological approach encompasses the perspectives of “ordinary people” that are not often considered in national debates over citizenship, immigration legislation and naturalization.⁴⁸ In addition to oral histories gathered from “ordinary people,” I examined published interviews as well as public statements from prominent Black French cultural and political figures including Christiane

Europe (August 2014), <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/mainstreaming-immigrant-integration-policy-france-education-employment-and-social-cohesion>.

⁴⁷ Nancy Scheper-Hughes. "The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 36, no. 3 (1995), 418.

⁴⁸ Patricia Lim, James Morrison and Chong Kwa describe the process of collecting oral histories to access the perspectives of “ordinary people” in the following quote, “The intimacy provided by intensive and prolonged fieldwork helps us to perceive subtle and remote relations which are frequently missed out in broad surveys, and offers rich and deep cultural and historical insights which are otherwise not obtainable. In doing do, it enables the detailed documentation of “culture-building” by ordinary people, often capturing their innermost feelings on many complex and difficult subjects.” See Patricia Lim, James Morrison and Chong Kwa, *Oral History in Southeast Asia: Theory and Method* (Singapore: National Archives of Singapore and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), 101.

Taubira, Harry Roselmack, Kery James, Calixthe Beyala, and Kylian Mbappé. Including their perspectives along with those of “everyday people” are critical to developing a more nuanced narrative. This project answers the recent call of postcolonial literary scholar Robert Marzec to incorporate a greater array of voices and to map the struggle for social and political agency amongst Black French immigrant communities.⁴⁹ Acknowledging their collective agency requires reading “with and against the grain” of official sources along with oral histories to understand how Sub-Saharan immigrants destabilize prevailing discourses of non-agency and unassimilability.⁵⁰

Focusing primarily on the impact of both immigration and integration on individual and community identities, this dissertation gathers perspectives that are missing from official narratives and press.⁵¹ African migrants have been consistently confined to the margins of national legislative, political, economic and social conversations. Therefore, introducing these ethnographic sources fills an acute void within traditional archival spaces and historical scholarship on immigration to France. Oral history interviews also often provide an entrée into obtaining documents that are not a part of official archives, but that are nonetheless relevant to understanding the lived experiences of interviewees. These have included family photos, diaries,

⁴⁹Robert P. Marzec, *Postcolonial Literary Studies: The First Thirty Years* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 142.

⁵⁰ Andrew Smith, "Reading against the Postcolonial Grain: Migrancy and Exile in the Short Stories of Kanchana Ugbabe," *Research in African Literatures* 35, no. 3 (2004): 62-75.

⁵¹ This dissertation relies heavily on periodicals and other print media to establish a chronology of events and identifying popular and public commentary regarding immigration, race, and national debates about citizenship. The bulk of these sources are major distribution newspapers in Paris with some provincial coverage (*20 Minutes*, *Le Monde* and *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Parisien*). The absence of an archive for Paris-based Afro-French newspapers represents a challenge but Afro-French magazines (including *Présence Africaine*, *Africulture*, *Jeune Afrique*, *Amina*, and *Revue Noire*) provide a rich perspective on the intellectual and cultural life of Black French communities.

and other forms of media. As a result, oral histories are corrective instruments of scholarly inquiry preserving the experiences of subaltern people from marginalization in day-to-day existence and historical memory. As a scholarly tool wielding transformative power, these ethnographic interviews were collected and interpreted using a methodology that is deliberate and specific to the unconventional nature of these sources.⁵² Deploying this approach thus maximizes the efficacy of the source base. This project also utilizes oral histories and other published interviews to analyze how migrants navigate multi-layered identities. Pairing these oral sources with official documents, “Beyond the *Banlieue*” employs Sub-Saharan migrant narratives to highlight the ways in which their locally lived experiences are affected by national policy.

This project foregrounds the use of a “Millennial Oral History” to permit a closer-examination of the “everyday” experiences impacting Sub-Saharan migrants. With the use of technology and social media, scholars can gain a unique glimpse into the instantaneous thought-processes of individuals. By developing social media profiles for interviewees based on their posts from Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat, my dissertation interrogates opinions and perspectives composed for public consumption. Traditionally, oral histories have been troubled by a romanticization of the past, memory, and self-censorship.⁵³ This process is

⁵² The oral history methodology of this project is rooted in the work of Daniel James, Sidney Mintz, Alessandro Portelli, Donald A. Ritchie, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, and Steve Stern. Daniel James, *Doña María's story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Sidney W. Mintz, *Worker in the Cane; a Puerto Rican Life History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960); Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Buffalo: State University of New York Press, 1990); Donald A. Ritchie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 36, no. 3 (1995): 409-40; Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London, 1998* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁵³ Ritchie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, 182.

applied particularly in its third chapter to circumvent much of the self-censorship imposed by a direct line of open-ended questions routinely used in oral history interviews. Additionally, permitting participants to discuss their personal thoughts placed within public forums offers an original entry point into their opinions on social issues, trending topics and milestone life events. This project applies the data collected from these social media profiles both during the interviews and in the post-interview analysis. During the interview process, social media postings are used to reference specific issues, dates and events in order to “jog the memory” of participants.⁵⁴ In the post-interview analysis, social media posts are used to cross-examine retrospective comments offered during the interview and compare them with what participants wrote in real time. A “Millennial Oral History” endeavors to utilize interviews and social media in conjunction with each other to offer a more extensive account of life events.

This project combines the methodological use of oral history with the theoretical framework of intersectionality. Latin American historian Daniel James argued that life narratives must be examined within a *kaleidoscope of difference*: class culture, workplace, family, geographical community, religious and ethnic identity, political activism...all emerge within gendered terms.⁵⁵ This project recognizes that James’ rendering of a complex, layered mosaic of life experiences allocates a space for a seemingly contradictory, uneasy and disjointed narrative. Accepting a “messy” story replicates a closer glimpse of reality and particularly facilitates the realization that women and men have distinct lived experiences.

⁵⁴ This allows the researcher to move beyond the rehearsed script interviewees often rely on when discussing particular milestone events. Ritchie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, 98-99.

⁵⁵ James, *Doña María's story*, 220.

By embracing an intersectional methodology to highlight the compound identities of individuals, my work draws upon Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*. Collins defines intersectionality as "an analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and age form mutually constructing features of social organization."⁵⁶ Accordingly, these features converge and influence the individual experiences of women. Although intersectionality is chiefly concerned with qualifying subjective lived experiences; this analytic framework is upheld by a matrix of domination. Collins frames this matrix of domination as interconnected systems of structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal oppression. Consequently, this framework prioritizes the relationship between the individual and oppressive systems of power. This intersectional approach is indispensable to revealing how gender is at the heart of various experiences of empowerment and disempowerment in recent French history.

Finally, these oral history methodologies and theoretical frameworks are supplemented by a close-reading critique of literature, film, and music.⁵⁷ Building on the recent

⁵⁶ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 299.

⁵⁷ Francophone literature, film and music comprise additional source bases that are not represented within the national archives or print media but are essential to understanding the varied experiences of Sub-Saharan immigrants in France. These include colonial-era fictional narratives written by Camara Laye, Ferdinand Oyono and Ousmane Sembène. Taken together, these foundational works describe the "push-pull factors" for the earliest waves of Sub-Saharan African immigration before 1975 and help to contextualize the earlier generation of migrants. In addition, these works detail the personal process of acculturation in France as well as familial reactions from those left behind in Africa. This project also includes an examination of two films by Sub-Saharan African directors. Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and Mamadou Sarr's *Afrique sur Seine (Africa on the Seine)* released in 1955 and Ndèye Marame Guèye's film *Une Africaine sur Seine (An African Woman on the Seine)* completed in 2016. These films explore the processes of immigration, familial tensions, and African migrant observations of the French state to offer an overlooked but critically important perspective. Finally, I analyze the lyrics and themes presented by several Hip Hop/Rap artists (MC Solaar, Casey, Kery James, Bams and Youssoupha). These artists produce music that span from the "Golden Age of French Hip Hop" to the present expressing the struggles and triumphs of African migrants living in France. Analyzing their lyrical work alongside popular criticism of their performances offers an additional way to explore the links between cultural expression and sociopolitical action.

interdisciplinary work produced by Brent Hayes Edwards, Michelle Stephens, and Dominic Thomas, this project engages in a similar style of close readings to draw out issues of translation, stratification and *décalage* in Black cultural production.⁵⁸ Their work not only critically examined the substance of African diasporic audio-visual and written expression but also linked the cultural to the political.⁵⁹ This project leverages that body of scholarship to analyze the use of language and the visual representation of racial identity. Close-reading analysis exposes the multiple uses of art within African diasporic communities.⁶⁰ Embracing this array of methodological approaches is invaluable to extracting the significance of race at the international, state, community and individual level.

Chapter Overview

Through these sources and layered methodologies, “Beyond the *Banlieue*” constructs a largely thematic narrative of the period between 1945 and 2018. Highlighting the roots of official immigration policy, the sociopolitical negotiation of successive waves of immigration, the spatialization of race in a “raceless society,” efforts for socioeconomic uplift and improvement,

⁵⁸ Brent Hayes Edwards defines *décalage* as a “gap” in space and time. He uses this word to represent the unevenness of the African Diaspora and as a model for individual experiences that resist and or escape linguistic translation. See *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation and the Rise of Black Nationalism*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 15. This project is informed by the work of Brent Hayes Edwards, Michelle Stephens and Dominic Thomas. Their scholarship uses a close-reading approach to examine the role of race, travel and articulation within transnational literary dialogue. See Michelle Ann Stephens, *Skin Acts: Race, Psychoanalysis, and the Black Male Performer* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Dominic Richard Thomas, *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) and *Africa and France: Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁵⁹ Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 13.

⁶⁰ Broadening their perspective beyond local regions Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, Paul E. Lovejoy, and David Vincent Trotman explore the relationship between literary works and history within the African Diaspora using close-reading analysis in *Africa and Trans-Atlantic Memories: Literary and Aesthetic Manifestations of Diaspora and History* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008).

and popular cultural expression of identity, this dissertation tracks some of the myriad ways that Black French populations have defined themselves both within and in opposition to institutions of the French state.

Each of the following chapters interrogates three overarching themes. The first is the evolution of agency, resistance and socioeconomic empowerment within Black communities. They explore the tactics, ideas and organizations that Afro-French communities have used to offer various methods of uplift. The second theme focuses on the tensions between individual and community identity and the sociopolitical emphasis on racelessness from the French state. It examines the varied roles and definitions of racial identity and ‘Frenchness’ for Sub-Saharan African migrants. The final theme contests a narrative of sociopolitical declension that resulted from the events of 2005. Instead, it seeks to contextualize and understand the ways in which both black and white populations have mobilized differing notions of violence in postcolonial France.

Chapter 1 maps the interrelated processes of Sub-Saharan African migration with particular attention to government legislation that abetted and then later restricted this immigration to France. Tracing the transformation of perceptions on immigration, it explores the sentiments of African migrants and the goals of the French state in revising immigration policy. The discussion encompasses three waves of immigration. The first two waves took place during *Les Trente Glorieuses* (1945-1975). The third wave took place after the restrictive immigration legislation of 1975 and proved to be the largest and most controversial.⁶¹ African peoples were

⁶¹ The first wave of migrations (1945-1960) from Sub-Saharan Africa were often temporary and dominated by males. Migrating to France for travel and or education, African males arrived in relatively small numbers in comparison to European and Maghreb male immigrants. The second wave of migrations (1960-1975) responded to the economic changes occurring within the succession of newly independent African nations and France’s increasing demand for an industrial labor force in mining, steel, railroad construction and public service. France’s need for a labor population that would accept lower wages, longer hours, and unskilled labor came to a stuttering halt with the oil crisis of 1973. The third and largest wave of migrations (1975-1995) responded to worsening

agents of change within both the periphery and the metropole. Their cultural and sociopolitical activity maintained and fostered links between Africa and France. Using film and oral histories, the chapter uncovers the responses of the French state, policymakers and Sub-Saharan migrants to these concerns of identity, citizenship and acculturation.

The second chapter explores the unique challenges facing Black migrants in Paris. Focusing on immigration policy, activism and cultural expression, this chapter argues that African immigration forced France to redefine the contours of its national identity. In the years after 1975, Sub-Saharan migrants responded to reactionary immigration legislation deploying a variety of tactics. Using this tension between the government and Black populations as the vehicle to examine first and second generation negotiation and rejection of French policy, the analysis explores two forms of cultural expression: music and sport. Uncovering the voices of protest in the *banlieue* that challenge racial, spatial and class discrimination, this chapter analyzes Black French responses to social and political exclusion. Chronicling critical turning points in 1998, 2002 and 2005, this chapter introduces sport as a cultural flashpoint that contends with the inclusivity of French national identity. It also argues that 2002 was an important but overlooked year by the current historiography in terms of white French national identity retrenchment. These concluding segments scrutinize the long roots of the millennial urban uprisings as well as cultural reactions to these events.

diplomatic relations between France and its former colonial entities (particularly the Maghreb). Male workers induced the *feminization* wave of immigration relocating their wives and children to France preempting the closing of the borders. Coinciding with family reunification was the increase of Sub-Saharan immigration under “extended tourism.” This twofold wave of mass immigration to France exasperated already tenuous economic, social and political structures.

The third chapter surveys a new wave of Black entrepreneurship and economic self-empowerment that subsequently shaped a segment of the French economy. Offering a counter-narrative to the socioeconomic marginalization of African migrants, the discussion begins with the shift from a first generation “worker” identity to attempts at increasing the middle class as Black French populations became more established and economically mobile. Exploring the lives of men and women who graduated from French universities, these stories are central to expanding the narrative of opportunity and change for African migrants beyond the *banlieue* uprisings of 2005. Next, the chapter examines how migrants established businesses that bridge the gap between their lives in France and a commitment to improving conditions in individual African nation-states. Using oral histories with various Afropean entrepreneurs in Paris, these interviews investigate their attempts to circumvent French employment discrimination by creating their own businesses and employing other people of African descent. As entrepreneurs endeavor to create a space of their own to service Black communities, their increasing visibility challenges the contours of marginalization, promotes individual access to increased economic resources and intra-community competition.

The final chapter centers on Black French activism in the new millennium. It addresses the shift from protests around the nature of immigration to a strong focus on the experiences of second and third generation Black French youths. Notions of police violence rather than the policing of borders have come to propel activists’ agendas. This twenty-first century evolution in Black French activism builds upon discourses examined in the previous three chapters. The analysis contends with how Afropean individuals, artistic communities and media personalities are making concerted efforts to challenge the national government’s pace of change. Using activist campaigns around media representation and the Black Lives Matter France movement,

these two case studies represent a key shift in the platforms used to gain political traction in France. This chapter offers insight on the inclusion of African immigrants within existing power structures. Focusing on protest efforts against inequality and the government's use of "racelessness" to circumvent addressing racial discrimination, it argues that race remains the defining feature of the Black experience in France.

Chapter One: *From the Seuil de Tolerance to Zero Tolerance: Charting the shifting attitudes toward immigration from 1945 to 1974 in France*

“Each one follows his own destiny, my son...This opportunity is within your reach. You must seize it...Yes, I want you to go to France. I want that now, just as much as you do. Soon we’ll be needing men like you here [in Guinea]...May you not be gone too long!”⁶²

Laye Camara was nineteen years old when he was faced with the decision to leave Guinea to continue his studies in France.⁶³ Camara won first place in his final examinations for the *Certificat D’Aptitude Professionnelle de Mecanicien* in 1946. This distinction was rewarded with a government scholarship to study abroad. His excitement hit an impasse when the school director informed him that he needed his parent’s permission to accept the offer. Upon returning to his hometown in Kouroussa, Guinea, Camara set out to receive his parents’ blessing. His father had long resigned himself to his son’s departure, “I knew quite well that eventually you would leave us. I knew it the very first time you set foot in school. I watched you studying with such eagerness, such passionate eagerness!...Yes, since that day I have known how it would be.”⁶⁴ His mother also knew the day would come for her son’s departure, but she could not resign herself in the same way as her husband, “Yesterday it was the school in Conakry [Guinea]; today it’s the school in France; tomorrow...what will it be tomorrow? Every day

⁶² Camara Laye, *The Dark Child*. Translated by James Kirkup (London: Collins, 1989), 182.

⁶³ For the purposes of this dissertation, Laye Camara is referred to by the original composition of his first and last name. The formulation Camara Laye was used by the colonial school administration in Guinea, he would later publish his written work using this format. See Adele King, *The Writings of Camara Laye* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 1.

⁶⁴ Laye, *The Dark Child*, 182.

there's some mad scheme to take my son away from me!"⁶⁵ Despite her aversion to the extensive travel that propelled his studies, she ultimately helped Camara prepare for the voyage to France in 1947.

Camara joined a small group of Guinean students studying in France on the eve of decolonization.⁶⁶ After landing at Orly airport, he was overwhelmed by the sights and sounds of Paris. Unlike many of the African students who studied and lived in the city center, Camara's first home was in the Parisian suburb of Argenteuil. There he studied at the Central School of Automobile Engineering where he earned an Automobile Mechanics' Certificate.⁶⁷ When his government scholarship was not renewed, Camara decided to stay in France to continue his studies but now had to support himself through a variety of jobs. During the day, he worked as a porter for a local market, for the city public transit system and as a skilled laborer at the Simca car assembly plant. At night, Camara studied at the *Conservatoire National des Arts et Métier*. On the road to earning another diploma in engineering, he suspended his studies several times due to lack of funds.⁶⁸ During this period of time, Camara struggled to balance his role as both student and worker. These moments of abject poverty and feelings of loneliness drove him to reflect on happier times in Guinea. Growing increasingly frustrated with his experiences in France and the limitations of his technical education, Camara believed, "it was not...worth the

⁶⁵ Laye, *The Dark Child*, 182.

⁶⁶ Estimates reveal that by 1952 less than 100 Guinean students residing in France. See Jean Suret-Canale, *La République De Guinée* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1970), 147.

⁶⁷ While working on this certificate, Camara also pursued his *baccalauréat* (the American equivalent to a high school diploma).

⁶⁸ King, *The Writings of Camara Laye*, 2.

trouble to leave Africa only to become a mechanic. It was too simple a job.”⁶⁹ This frustration fueled idyllic recollections of his motherland, his family, and identity which he wrote about over the course of several years. His autobiographical memoir was originally entitled *L’Enfant de Guinée* (The Child of Guinea). In 1953, Plon publishing changed the title of the manuscript to *L’Enfant Noir* (The Black Child) to gain broader appeal. Camara published this first book at the age of twenty five. Simultaneously demonized by a number of African anti-colonial activists and acclaimed by a host of white French literary critics, Laye was awarded the Prix Charles Veillon in February 1954.⁷⁰ This mainstream success resulted in interviews on several French radio stations, adaptations of the novel published in West Africa and in colonies within the Pacific as well as the financial freedom to purchase a car, rent his own apartment and travel extensively.

Laye Camara was among a growing subset of African students writing about their experiences in France during the 1950’s.⁷¹ This community of writers published in France but was acutely connected to the mounting wave of anti-colonial protest in Africa. His work along with that of Ousmane Socé, Ake Loba, Ferdinand Oyono, Cheikh H. Kane, Bernard Dadié and Ousmane Sembène formed a new generation of African authors that contended with their transnational movement.⁷² Building on the intellectual ingenuity of the Négritude movement,

⁶⁹ Recorded Interview with J. Sorel. From King, *The Writings of Camara Laye*, 3.

⁷⁰ The Prix Charles Veillon was a Swiss literary award first created in 1947. When Camara won the award in 1954, he was the first non-European to receive the honor. *L’Enfant Noir* was most notoriously criticized by Cameroonian author Mongo Beti. In an article published by *Présence Africaine*, he wrote a searing reproach of the novel for not engaging with the sociopolitical truth of colonialism. See Alexandre Biyidi, “*L’Enfant noir*,” *Présence Africaine* 16 (1954) 419-420. Among the more laudatory critics was Jean Blanzat, who wrote a review for *Le Figaro littéraire*. See Jean Blanzat, *Le Figaro Littéraire*, March 6, 1956.

⁷¹ Abdoulaye Gueye estimates that by 1952-1953 there were about four thousand African students residing in France. See Abdoulaye Gueye, *Les intellectuels africains en France*. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002), 72.

⁷² For more on the “generation of 1928” see Sonia Lee, *Camara Laye* (Boston: Twayne Publishers), 4. One of the first Senegalese novelists, Ousmane Socé published *Mirages de Paris* in 1937. Building on this tradition of

these authors moved beyond contending with assimilation to the possibility of integrating within the French society. Both proudly African and officially French, these literary works examine blending two worlds to which they felt linked.⁷³ Their novels explore a range of topics including: life in Africa, motivations for traveling to France, reception by white Frenchmen, notions of an African community in France and a longing to return to Africa. Read together, late colonial-era African francophone literature acts as a representation of the success of French state actors' interpretation of "civilizing mission," but it also serves as a departure point. These authors used the French language to advocate for a dual identity of unapologetic Blackness and Frenchness which remains oppositional to the republican vision of a singular, all-encompassing, 'raceless' national identity.⁷⁴

These male writers differed from the waves of African labor migrants that arrived after the period of decolonization, both in the purpose of their stay within France and their reception

exploring life in France, the following books were published by Camara's contemporaries. Ousmane Sembène was a Senegal writer who published *Le Docker noir* in 1956. Ferdinand Oyono was a Cameroonian author who published *Une Vie de boy* also in 1956. Bernard Dadié is an Ivorian writer who published *Un nègre à Paris* in 1959. Aké Loba was an Ivorian writer who published *Kocumbo, l'étudiant noir* in 1960, Cheikh H. Kane is a Senegalese writer that published *L'Aventure ambiguë* in 1961.

⁷³ Major theoreticians of the Négritude movement include Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas. For more on the Négritude movement, see Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*; King, *The Writings of Camara Laye*, 23 and 63; Thomas, *Black France*, 42-43.

⁷⁴ Thomas, *Black France*, 6 and 28. This assessment by Thomas weighs heavily on interpretations from white French audiences. A deeper examination of Black authors who published in *Présence Africaine* underscores the centrality of Black reading audiences. *Présence Africaine* founder Alioune Diop made this position clear in the first publication of the journal. He stated, "The language in which [the voice of Africa] will be expressed, in our journal, will not fail to unveil new themes ... and original forms of sensibility ..." From Alioune Diop, "Niam Ngoura Ou Les Raisons D'être De Présence Africaine." Translated by Janis Mayes. *Présence Africaine*, no. 1 (1947): 12. African authors that submitted their work to white French publishing companies were aware that their authentic voice would be manipulated to reach a broader audience, which meant yielding to a considerable amount of editing and titles changes (this is made exceedingly clear in the process of *L'Enfant Noir's* publication through Plon. At the 1st International Conference of Negro Writers and Artists hosted by the Sorbonne in Paris from September 19th-22nd 1956, writers and artists from the Africa Diaspora formulated positions on Black identity disassociated from French colonialism.

by white French populations. These African authors represented the last gasp of the colonial era. During the period between 1945 and 1955, African Francophone literary figures moved freely between Africa and France. Protected by legislation that supported their French “citizenship,” these former student-authors served as key strategists of the movement toward decolonization even if that was not always their ultimate goal. Profoundly impacted by their time in France, Camara, Senghor, and Socé attempted to preserve the link between Africa and France.⁷⁵ Many of their experiences within the metropole were a result of their small community size and individual status as intellectuals. Reflected in their writing, these colonial-era texts can be seen as “the precursors to contemporary immigrant narratives.”⁷⁶ Laye Camara, both student and worker, represents a bridge between two dominating archetypes seen in African francophone literature and film that would increasingly become the focus of French immigration policy in the period between 1965 and 1975. During this time, national lawmaking was reactive and often uneasy about the growing presence of Black bodies within the metropole. This fomented the embrace of student and worker archetypes to rationalize their presence as well as the constant renegotiation of policy.

This chapter contextualizes the proliferation of immigration legislation crafted by a variety of nation-state actors in the French government across thirty years. By using archival interviews and African francophone film, this analysis foregrounds and calls attention to African responses to these laws. The chapter argues that Black migrants were subject to a level of

⁷⁵ Ousmane Socé served in the French Senate from 1946-1953 and in the Sénat de la Communauté française from 1959-1961. Léopold Senghor served as member of the Fifth Republic’s Constitutional Commission in 1958. Camara Laye returned to Guinea to participate in the post-colonial transition and later served as the first ambassador to Ghana. He helped secure aid for Guinea after the French stopped providing funding.

⁷⁶ Thomas, Dominic Richard David. *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007, 4.

surveillance that counters the “*laissez-faire*” immigration model often adopted by French historians and public officials.⁷⁷ Acutely aware of this level of scrutiny by the French state, African migrants formed communities both within Paris and in the *banlieue* to protect each other and their vested interests. Their cultural and sociopolitical activity maintained and fostered links between Africa and France in the period before decolonization and after. Exploring these activities offers a more nuanced sense of the cultural and sociopolitical discourse that emerged between Sub-Saharan African immigrant communities and the French state.

In the wake of World War II, France grappled with a new set of challenges in its effort to keep the colonial empire unified. Colonial soldiers from Sub-Saharan Africa were critical in the ultimate victory of France over the Axis forces. Both in size and military prowess, *les tirailleurs* distinguished themselves in battle within Tunisia, Corsica and Italy and ultimately in France from 1940-1944. During the autumn of 1944, when victory seemed imminent, General Charles De Gaulle withdrew the remaining African soldiers stationed in France. This led to a series of violent altercations between them and white Frenchmen.⁷⁸ In an effort to regain control over the downward spiral of events, De Gaulle gathered colonial leaders later that year in Brazzaville to

⁷⁷ In one of the newest edition of her book, French immigration policy scholar Julie R. Watts describes the period of “laissez-faire immigration” ending abruptly as a result of the 1973 oil crisis. See Julie R. Watts, *Immigration Policy and the Challenge of Globalization: Unions and Employers in Unlikely Alliance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 43. This description is also found in several other landmark monographs about the period. See, Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity*, 177; Messina, *West European Immigration*, 14; Andreas Fahrmeir, Olivier Faron, and Patrick Weil. *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the U.S. from the French Revolution to the Inter-war Period* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 85.

⁷⁸ Ousmane Sembène was a Senegalese *tirailleur* during World War II and was among the soldiers, who fought in a number of battles leading up to the liberation of France. Although there were a number of violent interactions between African soldiers and white Frenchmen, the most notable of these was the Thiaroye massacre. On November 30, 1944, 1,000 Senegalese soldiers participated in an uprising at Camp Thiaroye in protest of the French government’s failure to pay them military pensions. In retaliation, on December 1, 1944, white French soldiers shot over thirty five soldiers. This violent repression was reimagined in a 1988 film by Sembène entitled *Camp de Thiaroye*.

discuss how to quell the roars of resentment as seeds for independence took root. Attuned to these political and social changes, many of the literary figures from the Négritude movement were summoned to calm the sea of discontent. Not writing in a vacuum, Camara's generation of authors were cognizant of the treatment toward Black soldiers and in their writing grappled with the limitations of France's raceless rhetoric.

As migration patterns to France began to shift, legislative priorities transformed from 1945-1975. During this period, France established its modern immigration infrastructure. Historians of contemporary France acknowledge these years as the largest period of mass immigration in the country's history.⁷⁹ Most scholars consider the time before 1974 as the golden age of "laissez-faire" immigration policy.⁸⁰ After 1974, French policy restricted immigration. The government, which had always privileged ostensibly the most assimilable population flows from Europe, while categorizing African immigrants as largely unassimilable and undesirable, increasingly restricted Black migration to France and adopted progressively more punitive policies toward migrants already in the country.⁸¹

Organized in two sections, the first section of this chapter charts the shift of Sub-Saharan Africans as imperial subjects to members of the French community through policy and

⁷⁹ Noiriél, *The French Melting Pot*, 87-90.

⁸⁰ Julie R. Watts, *Immigration policy and the challenge of globalization: unions and employers in unlikely alliance*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002, 43.

⁸¹ For works discussing the categorization of immigrants after 1975, see Pierre Bideberry, Director de l'Office National d'Immigration, "Bilan de Vingt Années d' Immigration-1946-1966," *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales*, No.2, April-June 1967; Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*; Martin Baldwin-Edwards and Martin Schain, *The Politics of Immigration in Western Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Thomas, *Black France*; Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) and Rayna Bailey, *Immigration and Migration* (New York: Facts On File, 2008).

administrative debate. This examination of policy is paired with a close reading of one of the earliest Black French films in order to explore the prevailing archetypes in the French cultural and political imagination. Throughout the period, Sub-Saharan African migrants were understood to be almost exclusively students or workers. These categories conveyed certain expectations with respect to class and gender that shaped not only French policy, but migrant self-perceptions. Subsequent examination introduces film textual analysis as a method that ties together the written and audiovisual art forms. The film *Afrique Sur Seine* (1955) directed by Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and Mamadou Sarr focuses on a student protagonist but also introduces a series of worker characters. This new archetype coincides with the changing volume of African immigration from study-based to labor-based migrations. The section concludes with an analysis of the film on the eve of decolonization. The film foreshadows the shift from Africans as “members of the French community” to the use of “immigrant” nomenclature to describe post-colonial movement during the years that defined France’s loss of its empire and the acquisition of African independence.

The second section, “Post-colonial Africa and Migration to France: 1960-1975,” examines the impact of decolonization on both Africa and France. After the “fall of its empire,” France turned renewed energy toward the metropole in its efforts to spur industrial growth and production which relied heavily on immigrant labor. Due to its dependency on migrant labor, government officials focused on monitoring migrants’ presence through local agencies and police records. This consistent surveillance of African migrants disrupts what scholars have deemed a French “laissez-faire” approach to immigration between 1945 and 1975. Conventional framing by immigration scholars contends that prior to 1974, France had effectively adopted noninterventionist methods for addressing immigration. However, the sheer amount of

legislation, revisions to this policy and contact between the French state and Black migrants suggests that these interactions were not necessarily as “hands-off” as previously considered. Instead, immigration acculturation process was a policed and regulated issue by the government

In the period from 1952 to 1962, the objects of administrative concern were Maghreb migrants politicized by the Algerian revolution. Indeed compared to the 350,000 Algerian laborers working in France, the earliest waves of Sub-Saharan laborers paled in number.⁸² In stark contrast to North Africans, the presence of Black laborers was ostensibly depoliticized by the French government. In an effort to preserve their relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa as Algeria cut its ties, French officials signed bilateral accords with several West and Central African countries to facilitate Black migration without the hassle of the official immigration apparatus which later promoted clandestine movement. However by the mid-1960’s, Black students and workers were increasingly subject to monitoring by the Ministry of Interior and the local police as the African population swelled within Paris. The reality for Sub-Saharan Africans immigrants was that they faced significant levels of contact and scrutiny by the state once they were in France. Counter to the myth of noninterventionist policy, a variety of state agents were heavily involved in monitoring, evaluating and policing of African migrants during the “laissez-faire” period. These methods help to contextualize some of the speed with which the late 1960s and 1970s turn towards a more hardline immigration policy could happen. The seemingly overnight “Africanization” of Paris and its neighboring suburbs from a small community of

⁸² Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 4.

students to highly concentrated 6.3% of the total national population by 1975 made them targets for political reaction.⁸³

The section concludes with an analysis of the politicization of Black workers in France. Using a rich trove of archival interviews from a report conducted by the *Direction de la Population et des Migrations*, these sources reveal the ways in which spatial representations of race were mapped into French cities in response to the growing presence of African migrants. Housing options for Black male workers were commonly overcrowded, decrepit and segregated. This frustration with poor housing conditions fomented the growth of groups lobbying for change. The year 1968 serves as a critical turning point to this “apolitical” folklore, as a large number of Sub-Saharan African students and laborers engaged in vocal protests. Increased political engagement coincided with an economic crisis in 1973 that brought France’s years of growth to a grinding halt. Despite this fiscal collapse, Sub-Saharan migrants arrived in greater numbers than ever before. When the government took steps to close the country’s borders in 1974, it marked key demographic and legal shifts in the status of Black migrants. As a result of this drastic shift in policy and economic realities, Sub-Saharan migrants arrived *en masse* to a nation on edge financially and socio-politically. They became scapegoats for high unemployment numbers, suburban decay and social deviance.

A deeper understanding of the relationship between African migration and the history of French immigration legislation frames Sub-Saharan migrants as objects of policy concern but also cultural construction. This framework offers a lens through which to examine the

⁸³ Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Kimberly A. Hamilton, *Converging Paths to Restriction: French, Italian and British Responses to Immigration* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), 8 and Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

convergence of voluntary migration, policy and generational sociopolitical negotiations that shaped subsequent evolutions in Black French identity. Juxtaposing French policy with Black cultural production is a frame of analysis that draws new contours from the varied motivations of self-determination and the countervailing pressures of neocolonial influence and French internal colonization. This chapter forges conceptual links between a continuous history of modern African diasporic migration and the profound rupture point in 1974 that curtailed labor immigration. The period between World War II and 1975 necessitated transformations in transnational, racial and intranational identity that in turn affected the process of African settlement and community-building.

Colonial France and Africa (1945-1959)

Contemporary French nationality policy classifies residents within three categories: nationals, foreigners and immigrants. A French national is the equivalent of a citizen. By legal definition foreigners are those who “simply do not have French nationality... [Immigrants] are people living in France who were born abroad...Immigrants who acquired French nationality are no longer foreigners.”⁸⁴ Immigrants are residents that have not acquired full citizenship. Thus, a foreigner may be born in France (a product of immigrant parents) and a French person born outside of France can be considered an immigrant upon return to the country.⁸⁵ As a result, “only foreigners, i.e. people permanently residing in France who state that they do not have French nationality are officially registered [by the government]. Immigrants are not registered as such once they have become French: they disappear as immigrants from the general population

⁸⁴ Emmanuel Peignard, *Immigration in France*. Embassy of France in the United States, July 2001.

⁸⁵ Rayna Bailey, *Immigration and Migration* (New York: Facts On File, 2008), 69-70.

census.”⁸⁶ These porous boundaries between the categories of nationals, foreigners and immigrants have historically encouraged movement between all three classifications from 1945 until 1974. French colonial immigration policy in the first 15 years after World War II hardly bothered to categorize Black populations as “immigrants” or “foreigners.” It is partly because Africa received so little consideration during these years that the initial establishment of French immigration policy lent itself to a porous set of categories between French nationals, foreigners and immigrants. Understanding how these categories crystallized and hardened in reaction to a more substantial Black population in the metropole ultimately provides a clearer sense of the evolution of French state policy in response to race. France’s wrestling with the transition from colonialism to decolonization during this era reshaped national policy and redefined the boundaries of French citizenship. Charting the evolutions of immigration policy in reaction to demographic change and permanency underscores French racial anxieties.

During this period, French policymakers reframed how they understood the intentionality of foreign movement. The distinction between the terminology of immigration and migration is critical to understanding the complicated nature of French policy. These distinctions were part of the root causes for France’s nearly constant revision of immigration policy. Ironically, the lack of guidelines differentiating the use of the two terms during this period stands in stark contrast to the strict control that would discourage one and eschew the other, in practice, over the following decades. Contemporary scholars define immigration as the movement of people from one country to another with the intent of becoming permanent residents of the country to which they are relocating. Migration, on the other hand, is the temporary movement of people from one

⁸⁶ Peignard, *Immigration in France*.

country to another. Although some migrants may eventually become permanent residents of the country, ideally, the French believed the majority of such people would return to their native country.⁸⁷ The creation of new immigration laws and institutions constrained the formerly porous classifications in order to maintain the socioeconomic and political hierarchy of France. These newly constructed boundaries transformed the language used to describe former colonial subjects into “non-desirable immigrants” and as a result prevented their ability to be integrated into the French society. Rather than assist in the process of assimilation, these new postcolonial policies encouraged repatriation to African nation-states.⁸⁸

Following World War II, the expanding economy required a larger labor force.⁸⁹ France needed a labor population that would accept lower wages and longer hours for unskilled labor.

⁸⁷ The motivations for movement to another country either to immigrate or migrate are driven by “push and pull factors.” Push and pull factors are influenced by the economic, political, cultural and environmental conditions of both the native and foreign countries. The push factors for immigrants during the *Trente Glorieuses* were rising unemployment rates and socio-political instability with their native countries. The pull factors towards France for immigrants were the plethora of jobs available for unskilled laborers and relative socio-political stability. See Bailey, *Immigration and Migration*, 3-4.

⁸⁸ After the collapse of the France’s colonial empire, waves of non-European immigrants complicated previous categories of nationals, foreigners and immigrants. Thus, the revisionist immigration policy implemented during and after *Les Trente Glorieuses* had to “undo” much of the policy that supported colonial migration and facilitated the permanent presence of migrants within the metropole. The later French reactionary immigration policies responding to the “problem” of immigration and backpedaled French republican ideology that the assimilation of non-white individuals could be included within a singular national identity was possible. In France, immigrants must relinquish their native identity in embrace of a French national identity in order to achieve full citizenship. This process is enabled through naturalization, assimilation education and colorblind legislation. Immigration policy became increasingly polarized along economic, social and political lines in its attempt to assimilate some immigrants but not others. The transition of French immigration policy of *Les Trente Glorieuses* beginning in 1945 from depoliticization of immigration as an economic stimulus to the socio-cultural problematization of immigration in 1975 ushered in a new era of policy reform has reached a crisis point today. See Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*.

⁸⁹ France has a long history of attracting European immigrant populations as temporary workforces. Beginning in the 1600’s, Europeans from various countries began moving to France. During the 17th century, Jews, Armenians, Swiss and Italians flocked to ports like Marseille. These port cities has royally sanctioned pro-immigrant policies. In addition, these immigrant populations could naturalize as subjects of the King. However, these actions were often met with local resistance. Migration increased in the twentieth century but was not seen as problem post-World War I due to the fact that the war decimated the male population in France. However, French fascists resented the growth of foreigners in the workforce. For more literature on these policies and local resistance, see Peter Sahlins,

This demand resulted in the arrival of millions of non-Western immigrants. Despite conquering its *dénatalité française* with a significant baby boom, the reality remained that French nationals alone could not fulfill the labor demands of mining, steel mills, railroad construction and public service jobs.⁹⁰ As a result, the French government deregulated immigration. It was considered a tool of economic growth for private companies and the government.

The deregulation of immigration was a temporary solution to labor shortages that permanently changed France's demographic composition. Former Interior Minister Charles Pasqua—an architect of more restrictive policies in the 1990's—wrote, “early immigration was essentially a labor policy; the government did not carefully reflect on the non-economic consequences of the massive influx of immigrants.”⁹¹ Legislative and judicial organizations drafted policies in the form of ordinances instead of laws ratified by the government and president. More specifically, these ordinances were “developed largely through administrative decisions” by ministerial departments and court proceedings in the Constitutional Court and Council of the State.⁹² Stimulated by the promise of economic and industrial growth, these policies facilitated both demographic change and a new era of policy reform during the last fifty years of the twentieth century. Beyond economic stimuli, two broad processes informed French

Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and after (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) and Dewitte Philippe, Pierre Echinard and Emile Temime *Migrance. Histoire des migrations à Marseille. Volume 1: La préhistoire des migrations (1482-1830)*, 1989. In *Hommes et Migrations*, n°1126, novembre 1989. https://www.persee.fr/doc/homig_1142-852x_1989_num_1126_1_5524_t1_0058_0000_1

⁹⁰ *Dénatalité française*: low population growth

⁹¹ Charles Pasqua served as the Interior Minister of France from 1986-1988 and as an official from 1993-1995 for Edouard Balladur. See Charles Pasqua, “Facing the Facts: An evaluation of Immigration Policy,” *Harvard International Review* (Summer 1994), 32-33.

⁹² Schain, *The Politics of Immigration in France*, 38.

immigration policy during the latter half of the century. The first process involved the active recruitment and absorption of European laborers from Russia, Poland, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Portugal. The second process responded to a decline in European labor sources and subsequent increase of using French colonial subjects to fill this void.⁹³

Two waves of migrations defined contemporary immigration policy in the first half of twentieth century. The first wave of immigrants arriving from various European countries from the late 1800's to the mid-1940s resulted in their absorption into French society through various institutions including the military as well as educational institutions and were defined by the French government's understanding of their permanency. In contrast, the second wave of migrations (1945-1960) from North and Sub-Saharan Africa were often temporary and dominated by males.⁹⁴ Migrating to France for travel and/or education, Black males arrived in relatively small numbers in comparison to European and Maghreb male immigrants.⁹⁵

A month after World War II concluded, France drafted its first immigration law not directly linked to attracting a labor force. Ideologically based on the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man, the ordinance of 1 October 1945 declared all immigrants equal to French

⁹³ Demetrios G. Papademetriou, and Kimberly A. Hamilton, *Converging Paths to Restriction: French, Italian and British Responses to Immigration* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), 6-7.

⁹⁴ "Avis et Rapports du Conseil Économique et Social: problèmes poses par l'immigration des travailleurs africains en France," *Journal Officiel de la République française*, July 24, 1964.

⁹⁵ In the second half of the century, two more waves shifted racial demographics in France. A third wave of migrations (1960-1975) responded to the economic changes occurring within the succession of newly independent African nations and France's increasing demand for an industrial labor force in mining, steel, railroad construction and public service. France's need for a labor population that would accept lower wages, longer hours, and provide unskilled labor came to an abrupt halt with the oil crisis of 1973. The fourth and largest wave of Sub-Saharan migrations (1975-1995) responded to worsening diplomatic relations between France and its former colonial entities (particularly the Maghreb). Male workers induced the feminization wave of immigration relocating their wives and children to France circumventing the closing of the borders.

nationals making “no distinction on the basis of nationality, religious, racial or cultural character.” This ordinance was an official response to the exclusionary rhetoric used by European countries that adopted languages of superiority or nationalistic difference during World War II. The decree declared France “officially open to immigrants and their families.” The ordinance presumed that all immigrants could and would be integrated socially and legally into French society.⁹⁶ Nineteen days later, France amended the 1 October ordinance to address French nationality conditions for immigrants. The ordinance 19 October 1945 for the Codification of Nationality outlined naturalization policies for children born to immigrants as well as voting and citizenship rights for colonial populations.⁹⁷

Shortly following this legislation, the 2 November 1945 ordinance ratified changes made to the 1 October 1945 ordinance. The ordinance determined that foreigners desiring to live in France for more than three months must hold a residence permit. Amending the October ordinances that did not delineate any legal criteria for permanency, the 2 November decree determined that immigrants must secure legal documentation of employment and residency in order to remain in France after three months.⁹⁸ Meant to recruit workers from other European countries—whose populations were “culturally compatible,” the decree also established the *Office National D’ Immigration* (ONI). ONI recruited a male workforce from Italy, Portugal,

⁹⁶ Reynald Blion, “France” in *EU and U.S. approaches to the management of immigration* (Brussels: Migration Policy Group, 2003).

⁹⁷ Ordinance No. 45-2441 (Journal Officiel, p. 6700), Articles 37-39 and 94 (translated by George Rouhette); Paul Weiss, *Nationality and Statelessness in International Law* (The Netherlands: Sijthoff & Noordhoff International, 1979).

⁹⁸ Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*, 36.

Spain, Belgium, Germany, Poland and Russia.⁹⁹ Within a year, the ordinance was amended again to take into consideration changing political and social conditions of European nations and colonial inhabitants.¹⁰⁰

In order to avoid instituting ethnic quotas, French policymakers facilitated bilateral accords with European nations that outlined labor recruitment, family reunification, housing and equal treatment policies. These accords simultaneously stressed “postwar immigration was a temporary movement. As guests, foreign workers were expected to maintain ties with sending-country governments and look first toward homeland officials whenever a grievance arose.”¹⁰¹ The ordinance 2 November 1945 added a caveat that the French government had the power to deport any foreigner that disturbed “public order.” The specifics of “public order” were not clearly outlined within the law and left considerable ambiguity and official discretion on actions that could constitute a threat to public order.¹⁰² Ultimately, the ordinance 2 November 1945 failed to attract a sustainable Western European male worker migration to France. With the exception of Spanish and Portuguese migrants, other European recruited workers did not move to

⁹⁹ The National Office for Immigration (ONI) has since been renamed Office of International Migration (OMI), which is governed by the Ministry of Integration and Combating Social Exclusion. The previous iteration of the ministry during the period 1945-1975 was the Ministry of Social, Health and Urban Affairs. The ONI was responsible for: recruiting foreign workers (excluding workers who migrated to France through bilateral agreements), family reunification, and worker health. Also under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social, Health and Urban Affairs was the Directorate of Population and Migration, which is charged with tracking French citizenship for migrants. The Ministry of the Interior supervises the police and border activities. The ministry of Economy maintains control of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), which collects immigration data and publishes the national census. From Papademetriou and Hamilton, *Converging Paths to Restriction*, 6.

¹⁰⁰ In 1946, 88.7% of foreigners were Europeans, 2.3% were from the Maghreb and 0.8% were from Sub-Saharan Africa. See Hargreaves, *Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, 11 and 26.

¹⁰¹ Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*, 37.

¹⁰² Ordinance No. 45-2441 (Journal Officiel, p. 6700), Articles 714. (Translated by George Rouhette); Weiss, Paul. *Nationality and Statelessness in International Law*. The Netherlands: Sijthoff & Noordhoff International, 1979.

France *en masse* to fill the employment gap. In the wake of World War II, other western European countries worked to develop their economies and discouraged mass immigration. For ten years, France experienced a persistent unskilled labor shortage.

As a result, France looked towards its colonies to jumpstart its economic recovery. Having played a vital role in winning the war, most colonial soldiers maintained the expectation that they would gain citizenship rights. However, upon the conclusion of the World War in 1945, French president Charles De Gaulle gathered colonial leaders in Brazzaville to announce his vision for the future and the role of its colonies within this new world order. Colonial leaders reconfigured the African colonies into a “union.” This process of reconfiguration outlined in the Constitution of 1946 began dismantling the white French administration of the “empire” as power shifted to local leaders. Early drafts of the constitution proposed by government deputies cited that “all subjects should acquire the *qualities* of French citizens with all rights connected to that status. And they should have these rights without having to give up their personal status.”¹⁰³

Senegalese poet and politician Léopold Senghor was a member of the second Constitutional Commission in 1958. He was critical to the development of this constitution and arguments for full citizenship for colonial subjects. Basing his defense for full citizenship in French revolutionary rhetoric, Senghor cited the 1794 National Convention Decree that abolished slavery and established that, “all men, without distinction of color, resident in our

¹⁰³ John Morrow, “Black Africans in World War II: The Soldiers' Stories.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 632 (Nov. 2010), 12–25 and Frederick Cooper, “From Imperial Inclusion to Republican Exclusion?” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora*, 99. (Emphasis added by author)

colonies, are French citizens and enjoy all of the rights assured by the Constitution.”¹⁰⁴ Senghor and other members of the Constitutional Commission revised drafts on the Fourth Republic’s stance on colonial citizenship which was treated separately from Algeria. As the only colonial entity recognized as a legal extension of France, Algerians were granted French citizenship by the *Loi Lamine Guèye* of 1946.¹⁰⁵ Despite Senghor’s efforts, Sub-Saharan colonial subjects would not be covered by *Loi Lamine Guèye*. The final iteration of the Constitution outlined citizenship rights in Article 80, “all inhabitants of overseas territories have the *quality of citizens*, on the same basis as French nationals of the metropole or of the overseas territories. *Specific laws will establish the conditions under which they will exercise their rights as citizens.*”¹⁰⁶ Although the final version of the constitution did not guarantee specific conditions for the exercise of colonial subjects’ rights, Senghor’s petitions were the beginning of a long series of actions that resulted in universal suffrage almost ten years later.

¹⁰⁴ “Decree of the National Convention of 4 February 1794, Abolishing Slavery in all the Colonies,” in *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Lynn Hunt (Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996), 115–116.

¹⁰⁵ “Constitution De La IVe République.” *Constitution De 1946, 4e République, France*. Université De Perpignan, n.d. Web. <<http://mjp.univ-perp.fr/france/co1946-0.htm>>. French citizenship was granted to Algerians by a series of legal polices after World War II, as a result of large numbers of Algerian men serving on behalf of the French military. (The Ordonnance of March 7, 1944, ratified by the *Loi Lamine Guèye* of May 7, 1946 and codified in the 1946 Constitution, followed by the Law of September 20, 1947). The Law of September 20, 1947 revised the *Loi Lamine Guèye* by not obligating Algerians to renounce their Muslim faith as a criteria for citizenship, see Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *Citizenship in the Arab World: Kin, Religion and Nation-state* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 94-95. By 1948 growing nationalist sentiments among Algerian *tirailleurs* (French infantry members from colonial entities) led to a resistance of French domination.

¹⁰⁶ (Emphasis added by author). See Cooper, “From Imperial Inclusion to Republican Exclusion?”, 101 and AOF, Director General des Affaires Politiques, Administratives et Sociales (July 46, 17G 152, AS). For a richer discussion on colonial African citizenship see, Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford: Berg, 2002) and John D. Hargreaves and R. C. Bridges, *Imperialism, Decolonization, and Africa: Studies Presented to John Hargreaves: With an Academic Memoir and Bibliography* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000).

Thus, colonial subjects were “citizens” of France. Their citizenship status was intricately tied to France’s role as an imperial power. As immigration laws delineated work contracts, medical exams and residence permits for immigrants, colonial subjects were not considered in this immigration legislation given their official status as citizens. This citizenship status made the legal distinction between native French and colonial workers almost undistinguishable. Additionally it made colonial workers a more attractive workforce to private and public industries than foreign workers. Foreign workers were subject to the immigration protocol and regulations required by the ONI. In contrast, African migrant laborers had the ability to work and reside in France without following the restrictive policies of residency permits and paperwork required by ONI. As employers shifted their focus from European foreigners to colonial laborers, they took advantage of this policy loophole. Various industries, including railroad and automobile manufacturers, viewed African colonial subjects as key participants in a sustainable labor force and aggressively recruited workers.¹⁰⁷ This new development established migratory patterns that facilitated the movement of laborers between Africa and France supported by bilateral agreements between France and its colonial territories.

After World War II, France focused its efforts on internal colonialism and various forms of external decolonization. This two-fold process allowed for the internalization of metropolitan ideologies within the colonies and their subsequent renovation upon return to the metropole. France exercised considerable power in its exploitive relations with northern and western Africa. By the mid-twentieth century assimilationist policies were all but forgotten for the adoption of associationalist policies. The application of associationalist policies by government ministers

¹⁰⁷James Frank Hollifield, *Immigrants, Markets, and States: The Political Economy of Postwar Europe* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1992, 99-123.

sprung from a belief that it was impossible to assimilate an entire African colonial subject population. Thus, these associationalist policies likened colonial subjects to labor pawns-used for economic gain. Rather than incorporating colonial subjects into the cultural tapestry of the empire, African colonials were subjugated into fitting within the mold of a “model minority.” Significant shifts in French-colonial relations in terms of socio-cultural and political metropolitan responsibilities made the question of assimilation, rather than citizenship, the central issue. Situated within these limitations to French citizenship and forced assimilation, a growing number of Sub-Saharan artists used the medium of film to critique colonial portrayals of themselves but also visualize themselves within the metropole.

The Cultural Turn: Artistic Responses to Anti-Colonialism

Contemporary African film as an artistic medium grew out of the colonial tradition of filmmaking. Primarily funded by the government, these early documentary and ethnographic films were the first of their kind. Shot, produced and edited in Africa, these productions attempted to capture the essence of African life. However, in accordance with colonial protocol and legislation, these early films marginalized African peoples and established French colonial administrators as the sociopolitical and cultural masters of the continent. This subjective lens would remain until African independence. The entrance of African filmmakers into the cinematographic world complicated the ways in which African peoples were seen and responded directly to the colonial film practices that occupied their imaginations. Rooted in responding or retracting colonial imagery, the earliest generation of contemporary African cinematography grappled with the socio-cultural legacy of colonialism.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Anjali Prabhu, *Contemporary cinema of Africa and the diaspora* (Malden: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014), 7.



Figure 2. Paulin Vieyra (pictured standing on the left) and Mamadou Sarr (pictured seated) in 1955 during the filming of *Afrique sur Seine*.

In the groundbreaking 1955 film, *Afrique sur Seine*, filmmakers Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and Mamadou Sarr offer a compelling reversal of the “colonial gaze.”¹⁰⁹ Recognized as the beginning of African cinematography, it is one of the first films produced by African directors. Shot during a period of time when African presence was confined to the margins of French society, it is the first work to give a “panoramic overview of the African community” in Paris. The filmmakers arrived in Paris with the desire to explore the “city of promises made by young men to help their country.” Paulin Vieyra was born in Benin but lived the majority of his life in Senegal. He was a filmmaker who wanted to present a different image of African life than that captured in the colonial films released by his white French counterparts. Funded by the government, the majority of white French filmmakers were paid to come to Africa to make films that promoted colonial agendas and showed France’s control over the African landscape and its inhabitants. Together with fellow Senegalese director and actor Mamadou Sarr, Vieyra wanted to

¹⁰⁹ "Africa in Motion, Decolonizing the image: Repression and resistance in anti-colonial film." *Africa in Motion Film Festival*. November 4, 2016. <http://cca-glasgow.com/programme/africa-in-motion-decolonising-the-image>.

create a more accurate portrayal of themselves on film and to offer an anti-colonial critique of French ethnographic film. The colonial administration, however, refused to give Vieyra and Sarr permission to shoot a film primarily based in Senegal.

Written by Pierre Laval, Minister of the Colonies, the Laval Decree required that all films made in French Africa be submitted for approval by the colonial government.¹¹⁰ Meant to be a safeguard against any films that disputed colonial agendas or objected to colonial rule, the decree censored any and all films coming from Africa.¹¹¹ Given explicit control over all of colonial French Africa by the decree, Laval made it effectively impossible for African filmmakers to create films. After being refused permission to shoot in Africa, Vieyra and Sarr moved to France and reframed their project to make *Afrique sur Seine*: the first film of its kind examining African immigrant life and community in Paris.¹¹²

Afrique sur Seine helps to further disrupt the historiographical consensus around “laissez-faire” French policy and the subsequent treatment of African populations. A careful analysis of this film underscores various elements of socio-cultural and political surveillance. Colonial legislation (i.e. the Laval Decree) served as a tool of cultural and political oppression. It prohibited African filmmakers from creating audio-visual content that would unsettle the

¹¹⁰ “Decree regulating the organization and control of cinema films and phonographic records, of film shooting and audio recordings in French West Africa,” *Journal Officiel de la République française*, (March 11, 1934, 2541); The *Laval Decree* (1934) was designed to prevent African filmmakers from creating films that would critique the French colonial administration in Sub-Saharan Africa. See Onookome Okome, “Film Policy and the development of African cinema.” *African Quarterly on the Arts Vol. 01 No. 2 1995*: 46-53.

¹¹¹ Films censored by the Laval decree included any footage of uprisings by African inhabitants against the colonial government as well as, films written, created and produced by African men and women.

¹¹² Prabhu, *Contemporary cinema of Africa*, 8; Melissa Thackway, *Africa shoots back: alternative perspectives in Sub-Saharan Francophone African film* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2007), 7-19 and Gregory Mann, “What Was the Indigénat? The Empire of Law in French West Africa.” *The Journal of African History* 50.3 (2009): 331-53.

colonial agenda as well as upend stereotypical representations of Black people. In their work, Vieyra and Sarr introduced a new set of characters to colonial-era film. They used elements of French filmmaking to observe and scrutinize the presence of African peoples in the metropole. This film moved the African subject from the margins of cinematography to the center. In its almost singular focus on African individuals, the film foregrounds the ways in which Black immigrants navigated life in France especially in terms of their interactions with each other and white French populations.

Vieyra and Sarr replicate the process of French filmmakers walking through African colonies by similarly “walking” through Paris. Funded by the *Musée de l'Homme*, the short film follows the conventions of French ethnographic filmmaking from its use of long and mid-shots to the presence of a singular omniscient narrator who is only interrupted by pauses in the music.¹¹³ They invert this process by becoming the stars of the film instead of the subjects. The ethnographic documentary guides viewers through the city of Paris juxtaposing its monuments with statuesque visuals of African life and community along the Seine. Despite the various characters’ silence, the film uses their collective images to raise questions about notions of home, identity and assimilation.¹¹⁴ The contrast between the non-speaking people that roam the streets

¹¹³ Thackway, Melissa. *Africa shoots back*, 121.

¹¹⁴ Published a year after the *Afrique sur Seine*’s completion, Vieyra writes a searing critique of French films portraying life in sub-Saharan Africa. Intended for mainly white audiences, he argues these “exotic” films were neither subjects of serious analytic inquiry nor screened by African audiences for an opportunity to criticize them before their release. This type of negligence corresponds with the goals of colonialism that limits Africa’s ability to express “her [own] desires.” Accordingly as anti-colonial protests swelled during the 1950’s, Vieyra identifies that “for Africa itself, the great liberation struggle is underway.” This struggle for Africans to speak for themselves both in law and politics must also extend to the “cultural side.” Especially given Vieyra’s concerns that “Europe speaks and continues to speak exclusively on behalf of Africa, including the film sector.” Within the essay, he analyzes two films created in Africa and produced by French directors to reveal that factors of finance, prejudice and policy are the underpinnings of an industry intent on using cultural productions to propel images of Africans as inferior which subsequently impacts their experiences as immigrants in the metropole. Most importantly, films that do offer a more accurate portrayal of Africans are only “seen by a small number of spectators, either because they are

of Paris and the looming voice of the narrator who speaks in poetic meter are technical devices challenging the conceptualization of the French motto of “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*,” in its everyday application to the African community.

The film begins on the shores of the Niger River. The opening scene shows children playing in the water under the warmth of the sun. Moments later the children are seen walking toward the horizon alluding to their future journey from Africa to Paris. The conscious decision of the directors to begin the film in Africa supports a diasporic framing of migration that “any local African character, space or narrative has a legitimate space in the global reality well beyond the shores of Africa and [into] diasporic contexts.”¹¹⁵ Thus the movement of these African characters from their motherland to Europe fits within a longstanding tradition of diasporic movement that was not interrupted by colonization. Instead colonization is the force propelling them. The narrator begins his monologue by noting the fleeting experience of childhood and the inevitability of migration to France. He states, “We had to grow up, leave home for Paris, capital of the world, capital of Black Africa.”¹¹⁶ The narrator places Paris at the center of the world and “Black” Africa. In addition, he introduces an archetype of “mythic Paris” which later became a standard trope in Francophone cinematography and a lingering idea within the African imagination. Although rooted in French colonial propaganda and education, this notion of Paris being a destination for upward mobility and self-improvement foregrounds a new process within

banned or because distribution is difficult.” With this grim prospects, French cinema cannot speak on behalf of Black Africa. He concludes his essay that within a post-colonial context, “African cinema must be born.” In the future young African students should be granted scholarships to attend film school and film clubs created in Africa to finally allow individuals to speak for themselves. See Paulin Vieyra, “Quand le cinéma français parle au nom de l’Afrique Noire.” *Présence Africaine*, Nouvelle Série, no. 11 (1956): 142-45. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24345498>.

¹¹⁵ Prabhu, *Contemporary cinema of Africa*, 6.

¹¹⁶ *Afrique Sur Seine*. Directed by Paulin S Vieyra and Mamadou Sarr. France: Groupe Africain, 1955. DVD.

the African diaspora mobilized by the first generation of migrants living in France. The fact that they viewed themselves as participants instead of mechanisms of capitalism speaks to both the internalization of colonial agendas and an attempt to work within these socioeconomic structures.

The directors infuse the movement of Black bodies from Africa to France with an unparalleled optimism. Paris is seen as “the center of hope, all hope.”¹¹⁷ In the first sequence shot in Paris, viewers see a range of Black faces that counter the storyline imposed upon colonial films exported to Africa supporting their invisibility. This introduction of a Black presence in Paris not only upsets standard narratives of a “lily-white” Paris but also familiarizes the audience with a host of characters seen in everyday life.¹¹⁸ The establishing shot captures an African young man descending from a street car. The dominant character of the film, he represents the population of young, male students that came to Paris as the epitome of African colonial success.



Figure 3. The African “student” character descending from a street car.

¹¹⁷ *Afrique Sur Seine*

¹¹⁸ John Crawley, *Letters from Paris* (Raleigh: Lulu Press, 2013), 64.

This character is followed by a homeless African man asking for change. Later images include: a young woman walking along the boulevard, an African waiter attempting to persuade a group of students to enter the café, an African street sweeper interrupted from his work by an elderly African man asking for a cigarette, a lonely alcoholic man drinking on a street corner and an African female sex worker who turns from the camera's gaze.



Figure 4. African “street sweeper” character interrupted from his work by an elderly African man asking for a cigarette.

Countering the establishing shot of success represented by the African male student, the film juxtaposes its earlier affirmation of Paris as a “city of hope” with a moment of harsh reality. The later images of African characters are introduced by the narrator’s declaration that in Paris there are days “without hope. The Paris of loneliness, compensated by eternal fraternity.”¹¹⁹

This dichotomy between hope and hopelessness speaks to the lived realities of immigration. The hopeful dreams that many migrants carried with them to Paris were often left

¹¹⁹ *Afrique Sur Seine*

unfulfilled due to the unforgiving set of circumstances that confronted migrants once they arrived in the city of light. In this moment, the film challenges the extent to which universal French values are translated into the specific experience of African immigrants. The filmmakers reveal that hope and the lack thereof must co-exist in order to render a truly accurate portrayal of the immigrant experience in Paris. In their portrayal, hope and optimism are the defining features of the city. Despite the days without hope, African immigrant loneliness is disrupted by a community of individuals that support each other. This process of community-building explored throughout the film is a defining theme within Francophone cinematography and also a key characteristic within the contemporary African diaspora. As this notion of an “African community” in Paris grows and develops beyond the plotline of the film, and becomes such a powerful cultural force that it eventually disrupts the ideological basis of French republican values. Over time this community will be seen as an uncontrollable threat. In growing numbers, these peripheral characters’ arrival within the metropole will be marked by colonial and postcolonial legislation attempting to prohibit the sociopolitical and economic advancement of their community.

During the process of making the film, the directors were intentional in their attempts “to discover Paris, going in search of *Afrique sur Seine*, we have the hope of finding ourselves, the hope of meeting up, the hope of finding civilization.”¹²⁰ Their search to find a community proves to be complex. Unable to bridge the gap between all populations of African immigrants, the film shows moments of solidarity and moments of fracture. Along the path of self-discovery, various characters are plagued by questions of social integration and belonging. A second set of

¹²⁰ *Afrique Sur Seine*

“characters” are woven into the film. The historical and immovable monuments of Paris interact with the characters constantly in motion. The Latin Quarter, Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower and the Seine are reminders of the characters’ physical negotiation of the urban terrain. As the characters meet and confront each other, the monuments serve as a trope for their physical immersion into the city. Navigating through the city of Paris becomes increasingly complicated as the directors introduce four character archetypes meant to represent the African immigrant experience in Paris. The “student,” “the interracial couple,” “the worker” and the “lost” each represent a facet of African life and community. Moreover, they represent varying degrees of assimilation within the larger Parisian community.¹²¹



Figure 5. Central African male “student” character seen laughing and talking with a young white French woman on a motorcycle.

Sarr and Vieyra’s film suggests that the larger Parisian community is both inclusive and exclusive of black bodies. The student represents the central figure of the film’s imagination. Arriving from various African colonies to Paris, these individuals were the focal points of the colonial education agenda. Seen as emblems of “success,” these students signify the arrival of civilization to the African continent within the colonial imagination. The film’s optimism is

¹²¹ Prabhu, *Contemporary cinema of Africa*, 20-24.

supported by the community of African students living in the Latin Quarter that could “gather, assimilate, melting the ancient barriers of prejudice and the monuments of hatred in the sun of love, growing closer, understanding one other.”¹²² Their ability to transcend and meld with colonial ideology is connected to their relationship to the “interracial couple” archetype that represents full immersion into the Parisian community. Two examples of interracial couples are seen during the film. The first example is the central African male student character seen laughing and talking with a young white French woman on a motorcycle. The second example is a young African woman waiting for her French boyfriend. Both couples are interrupted by an African male. Their eyes meet briefly and each character turns away to return to their interactions with French men and women. These fleeting interactions are met with moments of confusion and uncomfortable silence on the part of the African characters and a lack of recognition of this awkwardness by white French onlookers. The movie uses these scenes to introduce the archetype of the “exotic other” often silenced by republican uniformity.¹²³



Figure 6. Screen capture of the “worker” character represented by the street sweeper.

¹²² *Afrique Sur Seine*

¹²³ Barbara Brown, "Africa: Myth and Reality." *Social Education* 58, no. 6 (1994): 374 -379.

The “worker” character represented by the street sweeper is a central figure within the African immigrant community. Symbolizing the thankless and reviled public service employment, the worker gets dirty to keep the city clean. Accepted by Parisian society as a necessary contributor, he is nonetheless not integrated within typical French spaces. Finally, the “lost” represent the lower wrung of society that is at the outskirts of French society. Unable to assimilate into the Parisian community, the homeless, the alcoholic and the prostitute are figures readily seen in daily life. Embodying the harsh realities of immigration, each of these figures came from Africa to Paris with dreams but were unable to succeed. The film’s consideration of Sub-Saharan African presence within the metropole and their varying degrees of assimilation to French society coincided with a growing body of anti-colonial cultural productions that challenged the French colonial representation of Africa.

The decolonization of French Sub-Saharan Africa was propelled by a struggle for representation. In addition to African peoples vying for positions within the government and sociopolitical activism, the arts—both visual and auditory—became increasingly more visible arenas to contest colonial control. Trained within the colonial system, many of these writers and artists traveled to the metropole for their collegiate education. Upon returning to the African colonies, these cultural icons became key administrators within the colonial governments. Several other writers and artists would gain control of French Africa’s postcolonial nations. These early efforts set the stage for an increasing militancy as independence grew closer.

African cinematography created a universe where Black characters, narratives and experiences could be explored on their own subjective terms. Contemporary African cinema is

differentiated from other forms of media due to its development during the post-colonial era.¹²⁴

The generation of African directors that found their voice in the years following independence brought a unique sense of authenticity to African voices that migrated to European nations. In the face of official immigration legislation that banned and denied the existence of any community other than republican France, African directors pointed to the failure of French legal policy to integrate all African peoples into the larger community. At the same time, their work empowered African immigrants with a sense of agency to create their own communities in the face of policy that forbade their existence. This act of resistance and activism reveals the interstitial space between policy and the lived realities of life in Paris in the period before and after decolonization.¹²⁵

The paradox of French decolonization: African migration

It speaks to the complexity and exploitive nature of the age that decolonization coincided with the largest waves of postcolonial immigration to France. In 1960, thirteen colonies received their independence from France. Within a thirty year period, the immigrant population of France doubled to 3.4 million people due in part to the fact that former migrants lost their status as “citizens” and were counted as immigrants. Beginning with the independence struggle of Algeria, French decolonization facilitated the largest migration of former African colonial subjects to the metropole in history.

¹²⁴ Prabhu, *Contemporary cinema of Africa*, 19-21.

¹²⁵ Oliver Barlet, *African Cinemas: Decolonizing the gaze*, translated by Chris Turner (London: Zed Books, 2000), 117-118 and Thackway, *Africa shoots back*, 121.

The Algerian War was a turning point in France's diplomatic relations with its colonial entities. The end of France's "laissez-faire" posture toward immigrants can be seen in the evolution of legal policy that controlled the Maghreb. Beginning in 1948, growing tensions between France and Algeria led to the onset of the Algerian Revolution in 1958. During this period, France's chief goal in Algeria was to prove that complete assimilation to the French republican model was possible. Situating the Algerian Revolution as a French Revolution, the Algerian War posed fundamental questions about "Who was French," and how and by whom the country must be governed. With independence, Algeria symbolized the first failure of the French government's ability to convince its colonial entities to identify as French. This can be seen in the period between 1958 and 1962, when the French government began using religious and racial categories (French, Jew, Arab, European, Muslim, and Algerian) to define different groups within Algeria in an effort to revoke all-inclusive citizenship rights.

During this period of extreme turmoil between France and Algeria, labor-driven immigration shifted to the exodus of more than 100,000 *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* from their native country to France.¹²⁶ Both groups fled Algeria at the end of the war. This mass movement of non-laborers increased xenophobic sentiments and overwhelmed the government.¹²⁷ Coinciding with the movement of refugees was a shortage of labor due to the increasing numbers of restrictions for Algerian laborers imposed by the French government. In 1956, France required all Algerians to enter the country with official visas. This change complicated the process of industrial companies seeking to supplement their labor supply with an expendable source of

¹²⁶ *Pieds-noirs* are Algerian Jews and *harkis* are Algerian Muslims who supported France's presence in Algeria.

¹²⁷ Robert Gildea, *France since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 32.

manpower. Due to these legal restrictions, the population of Algerian migrants dropped expeditiously in the late 1950's. In 1955, 194,000 Algerians arrived in France. One year later, the number fell to 79,000.¹²⁸ During this period of time, those who remained in France were frequently promoted to higher-paying and more prominent jobs. This upward mobility of Algerian workers left a significant shortage in the semi-skilled and low-skilled industrial positions.

The economic boom characterized as *Les Trente Glorieuses* reached its peak in the years between 1956 and 1962. French industries faced a labor shortage of insurmountable proportion, as a result of a lackluster supply of European foreign workers, countless restrictions on Algerian workers until 1962, and an insufficient amount of French citizens willing to work in low level and low paying jobs.¹²⁹ Accordingly, the recruitment of Sub-Saharan African workers was a necessary shift in labor-based migration. Following the migratory patterns of Algerian workers until 1956 when the French implemented visa restrictions, Sub-Saharan African laborers could come to France without the immigration restrictions placed on foreign workers by the ONI. During this six year period, French companies sent representatives to various colonies to recruit their new labor force. Industries ranging from small-scale factories, automobile manufacturers and the Paris city government were all recruiting Sub-Saharan African migrants. Utilizing its networks, recruiters sought out men to work as street sweepers, dock hands, and assembly-line workers. These efforts were compounded by kinship networks and word of the mouth references

¹²⁸ Gillian Glaes, "The Mirage of Fortune: West African Immigration to Paris and the Development of a Post - Colonial Immigrant Community, 1960–1981." (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2007), 57.

¹²⁹ Hollifield and Ross, *Searching for the New France*, 122-124 and Schain, *The Politics of Immigration in France*, 47-48.

from earlier generations of African migrants that spoke of economic mobility and the “mythic” proportions of the city of Paris that welcomed Africa’s children with open arms.

Post-colonial Africa and Migration to France: 1959-1975

The decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa occurred in the wake of the Algerian War for independence. Although violence did occur in the process, it was unmatched by the Algerian War. This fundamental rupture point in colonial history occurred in two forms within the Sub-Saharan African context. One method involved the protracted process of a power transfer. The second resulted in a more immediate outcome of independence. France used its influence with Africa’s intellectual elite to facilitate a part of the “peaceful” decolonization process. The first presidents of newly independent African countries such as Léopold Senghor (Senegal) and Felix Boigny (Côte d’Ivoire) were educated within French institutions. During their presidencies, Senghor and Boigny espoused French ideological principles but encouraged African unity and progressivism.¹³⁰ The Evian Accords finalized the process of decolonization in 1962. The accords outlined French economic control of African oil reserves and other natural resources.¹³¹ France’s formal withdrawal from its African colonies left a political vacuum that was negotiated and contested by elites, student groups and trade organizations. France largely maintained a hands-off foreign policy toward its former African countries, leaving them to “figure it out” on their own as long as it did not conflict with French economic interests.¹³² This stance fostered an

¹³⁰ Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

¹³¹ "Accords D'Evian." *Le Texte Des Accords D'Évian Comprend Deux Parties*. RCD Algérie, 18 Mar. 1962. Web. <http://www.rcd-algerie.org/maj/rcd/texte_fondateur/pdf1214117099LES_ACCORDS_D_EVIAN.pdf>.

¹³² Tamara Giles-Vernick, "The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?" *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* Volume 4, Number 1, (Spring 2003). http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_colonialism_and_colonial_history/summary/v004/4.1gilesvernick.html.

ethos of corruption and tacitly encouraged various forms of oppression that continue to plague Africa in today's era of neocolonialism. African populations escaped the turmoil of their home countries by immigrating to France in search of employment and socio-political stability. This massive influx of Black immigrants caused the French to develop new systems of immigration regulation.

The independence of former French colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa reconfigured the legal pattern of labor migration to France. The citizenship status of Black African workers changed with the disintegration of the French colonial empire. African workers residing in France became "Senegalese," "Malian," or "Ivorian" nationals instead of French citizens. The closing of nationality categorization in the wake of independence once again altered the migration patterns of Sub-Saharan African workers. Instead of moving between the newly independent African nation-states, the thrust of the movement shifted to France permanently. Before independence, Black workers freely circulated between their nation-states and France. Legally protected by French law, workers relied on the 1946 nationality reform to support their free movement. Additionally, they could also obtain French citizenship by law. Legislation passed in 1960 recognized the French citizenship of individuals born in former West African colonies by judicial declaration.¹³³ However between 1963 and 1964, France signed bi-lateral migration treaties with Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. These agreements delineated that legal

¹³³ Loi n° 60-752 du 28 juillet 1960 portant modification de certaines dispositions du code de la nationalité française; see Ruth Donner, *The Regulation of Nationality in International Law*, 2nd Ed, Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1994, Chapter V "Nationality and State Succession", section 3.2.2. "The law of 28 July 1960 permitted French citizens (including those who had been citizens of the "four communes") to keep their French nationality even if they acquired the nationality of the new state, and persons originating from the new states to retain their French nationality by option, under certain conditions (for example, based on service in the French army)." Bronwen Manby, "Nationality, Migration and Statelessness in West Africa: A study for UNHCR and IOM." *International Organisation for Migration* (June 2015). <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55b886154.pdf>.

entry into France of immigrants from the former colonies required the possession of a labor contract and a medical certificate guaranteeing their good health.¹³⁴



Figure 7. A newspaper image of a Black street sweeper in 1963.

Beginning after 1960, a growing amount of African migrants began working in France without residence and working permits. Rather than deporting these non-European “illegal” immigrants, the French government gave them “amnesty ex post facto.” The French government legalized their illegal extended residency and employment in order to counter the national job shortage.¹³⁵ Contrary to the belief that these accords would successfully regulate Sub-Saharan African migration, they instead created a more frenzied and unregulated situation. Most of the immigrants who arrived after the ratification of the accords ignored the stipulations. These workers arrived in France without labor contracts and proper medical documentation. Without these documents, all of these migrants were considered “illegal” immigrants and subject to

¹³⁴ CANCELLATION 19960311 art. 6. “L’étude sur l’immigration des travailleurs africains.” 1969 and Christian Poirer, “Immigration Familiale d’Afrique Noire en Région Ile de France: Famille et Habitat au coeur des mutations,” December 1994 (AN/20140104/123-130).

¹³⁵ Wayne A. Cornelius, Philip L. Martin, and James Frank Hollifield. *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 147.

deportation.¹³⁶ However, French companies continued to recruit these African employees in the face of the new legislation. Eager to profit off the precarious nature of this immigrant labor force, private industries continued to employ Black workers. African laborers continued to arrive in France seeking the endless economic opportunities that colonial folklore foretold.

Enticed by the potential for wealth and social promotion, African young men arrived in Paris prepared to contribute to the booming French economy and seize the opportunity to make enough income to support themselves and their families back in Africa. Instead of encountering the Parisian paradise of their childhood storybooks, most African migrants were confronted by a series of problems. Labor migrants suffered housing shortages, sickness, complicated and often competitive relations with other immigrant communities, racism and exclusion from the larger Parisian society. A byproduct of the French government's inability to predict this mass immigration, the superfluous alterations to immigration policy only accelerated this migration and the constant demand for more workers by companies. Ultimately, Paris was ill-equipped to manage this mass influx of Black inhabitants to the country.¹³⁷

A small community of labor migrants laid the foundation for a permanent African community in the Paris region throughout the 1960's and into the 1970's. Between 1960 and 1974, the Parisian African community was dominated by Senegalese, Malian, and Mauritanian immigrants. A 1960s study adds some numerical contour to the often uncountable influx of migrants. Statistical analysis of African nationalities calculated that 40% of Black Africans in

¹³⁶ François Manchuelle, "Background to black African emigration to France: the labor migrations of the Soninke, 1848-1987." (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1987), 533-536.

¹³⁷ The French car manufacturer, Renault was one of the few private companies that housed its African employees. However this provision of shelter was the exception rather than the rule.

France originated in Mali, while 25% came from Senegal and 25% from Mauritania. Although Sub-Saharan African migration to France seemed to be ballooning during this time it remained the smallest of the immigrant groups that arrived in search of employment. These numbers continued to increase radically in the Paris region and in France. Historian François Manchuelle cites 2,000 African workers in France in 1953 and 15,000 by 1956.¹³⁸ In 1963, he estimates the figure at between 22,000 and 30,000. The Parisian Prefecture de Police placed the population of African workers at 22,000 in 1969.¹³⁹ Other sources cite the numbers capping at 50,000 inhabitants.¹⁴⁰ This wide range in numbers recorded was a response to the rapidly increasing number of “illegal” immigrants. Without work contracts, medical firms, nor guaranteed housing, the French government employed a variety of programmatic agendas to “fix” their immigrant problem. Among these varied tactics, housing proved to be the most decisive approach to preventing Black migrants from integrating within the French socio-economic structure.

Immigration Policy in Practice: Housing Immigrants

The French government’s institutionalization of housing between 1950 and 1975 led to the consolidation of immigrants by nationality and employment. These classifications included public

¹³⁸Manchuelle, "Background to black African emigration to France," 498. An official from the Prefecture de Police estimated the population of Malians, Senegalese, and Mauritanian immigrants in 1960 at 1000, considerably lower than Manchuelle’s figure. ADVN 2018 W. art. 20. Maurice Grimaud to le Ministre de l’Interieur, 1969.

¹³⁹ Gillian Glaes, "The Mirage of Fortune: West African Immigration to Paris and the Development of a Post - Colonial Immigrant Community, 1960–1981." (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2007), 48; ADVN 2018 W. art. 20. Maurice Grimaud to le Ministre de l’Interieur, 1969.

¹⁴⁰ Glaes, "The Mirage of Fortune," 61; CANC 19960311 art. 6. “L’étude sur l’immigration des travailleurs africains.” 1969. AMSD 18 ACW 22/23. “40,000 noirs vivent en France, la plupart dans des conditions épouvantables,” Les Echos, Paris, 1963.

or private housing, specific neighborhoods and types of accommodations. A racial hierarchy determined the government's organization of immigrant housing. According to French social and economic integration standards: Italians and Spaniards formed the highest rungs of assimilability, Portuguese immigrants occupied the middle rung, while North Africans, Sub-Saharan Africans and Turkish immigrants were located at the bottom rungs of this hierarchy, their presence deemed as unassimilable. This categorical method of integration into French society fueled discriminatory and racialized terminology. French nationals used such terminology to restrict immigrants from various forms of employment and entrance into the social order.¹⁴¹

In the years leading up to the Algerian War for independence, migrant housing dominated government debates and programmatic attention. This preoccupation with controlling immigrant accommodations provides a stark counterpoint to a "laissez-faire" model. In fact, the surveillance apparatus constructed for Algerian immigrants was quickly adapted to include Black migrant laborers. Government housing both separated North African and Sub-Saharan workers as well as served as a way to track these communities. In the years between 1950 and 1965, the Parisian region experienced a housing crisis driven by a substantial increase in migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa. These successive waves of migration were propelled by the vacuum of jobs available as Algerian laborers participated in the movement for independence. As more Black migrants arrived, they often competed for both employment and housing.¹⁴² Due to the increasing conflict between Algeria and France, the government created organizations to regulate

¹⁴¹ Albano Cordiero, "La grande communauté 'invisible' de France: Les Portugais." *Travail* 2, no. 7:34-41; Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*; John Rex and Sally Tomlinson. *Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

¹⁴² This intercontinental competition has been a subject of interest for scholars. They examine conflicts between North and Sub-Saharan Africans within the workplace, employment and for government resources.

their presence. The French government deemed housing to be the most pressing issue and the most effective way to infiltrate political networks and daily activity. Thus, housing became a way to police the everyday interactions of Algerian migrant workers to the detriment of Black laborers.

In 1956, the French government established the National Society for the Construction of Housing for Algerian Worker Housing (SONACOTRAL).¹⁴³ This “semi-autonomous” organization regulated housing for the masses of Algerian immigrants working in France. Chiefly concerned with monitoring their political activity during the Algerian War, SONACOTRAL suburbanized the fringes of Paris and its surrounding *banlieues*. Suburbanization was the solution to the growing “problem” of housing Maghrebi immigrants. Containing Algerians had both social and geo-political implications. By distancing them away from the city center, the government limited their access to Paris, censored their activities and prevented their growing presence from disaggregating a nuclear white French identity.

SONACOTRAL’s three ad hoc responses to immigrant housing were: *cités de transit* (housing projects), *habitations à loyer modéré (HLM)* or low cost housing and *foyers* (single-sex dormitories).¹⁴⁴ SONACOTRAL’s “trio of solutions to the housing problem” developed a

¹⁴³ SONACOTRAL’s original purpose was to reorganize the masses of workers living in shantytowns (*bidonvilles*) around the Nanterre area. The goal of redistributing the workers into SONACOTRAL housing was to break apart an important National Liberation Front (FLN) recruitment center for the Algerian independence movement. In addition to consolidating Algerians under the supervision of the government through public housing, the government began the process of urban renewal with the creation of Urban Priority Zones (ZUP). In 1958, ZUP concentrated its spatial reorganization of the following Parisian suburbs: Saint-Denis, Champigny and Aubervilliers, in an effort to “rupture proto-ethnic solidarities considered potentially outside of the law. See Silverstein, *Algeria in France*, 92. It primarily targeted suburban areas with a high population of Algerians, this would later include areas with high concentrations of Black people.

¹⁴⁴ Roughly translated as shantytowns, the *bidonvilles* were built along the periphery of many French cities. Not only did *bidonvilles* spatially segregate immigrant workers from being integrated with French nationals; but also they inadvertently encouraged residential permanency among workers. Due to the utter squalor of these neighborhoods, government workers were unwilling to visit the 119 *bidonvilles* situated throughout France to

hierarchy according to assimilability. The “(HLM) dwellings for those who are to remain, the *cités* for those who may or may not remain but are kept segregated until the choice is clear, and the *foyers* for those who are undesirable as permanent residents.”¹⁴⁵ This umbrella of housing options: dealt with the immediacy of relocating immigrants from shantytowns known as *bidonvilles*, the realization that many immigrants planned on a permanent stay, the presumed level of assimilation for the population, and encouraged repatriation.¹⁴⁶ In accordance with ONI’s recruitment of male laborers, most Algerian workers were housed in *foyers*.

As a result of the government’s almost singular focus on policing Algerian migrant workers, the earliest waves of Sub-Saharan migrants were not considered for public housing accommodations. Black workers were relegated to privately owned lodging. Their options included makeshift shacks, hostels, room rentals and building basements. The overwhelming

check employment and residential permits. The *Loi Debré* legalized the destruction of these neighborhoods in 1964 under the premise of overcrowding. The demolition of the *bidonvilles* gave rise to SONACOTRAL’s three other housing options. For more information the evolution of *bidonvilles* see Monique Hervo and Marie-Ange Charras, *Bidonvilles* (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1971); Paul White, “Immigrants, immigrant areas, and immigrant communities in postwar Paris,” in *Migrants in Modern France: Population Mobility in the Later Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, edited by Philip E. Ogden and Paul E. White (Oxon: Routledge, 1989), 197-200; Patrick Kamoun, “Bidon, Bidon, Bidonville.” *Histoire Du Mouvement HLM. L’Union Sociale Pour L’habitat*, 04 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.union-habitat.org/fles-hlm-le-mag/bloc-notes/25C2%25AB-bidon-bidon-bidonville-%25C2%25BB>>; “Le Service Public De L’accès Au Droit.” *Loi N°59-1557 Du 31 Décembre 1959 DITE DEBRE SUR LES RAPPORTS ENTRE L’ETAT ET LES ETABLISSEMENTS D’ENSEIGNEMENT PRIVES*. Legifrance and Silverstein, *Algeria in France*, 89, 92-97.

¹⁴⁵ Gilles Verbant, “France.” in *European Immigration Policy: A Comparative Study*, edited Tomas Hammar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 149.

¹⁴⁶ *Cités de transit* are “housing complexes dedicated to providing temporary accommodation for families in unstable situations, whose access to permanent housing cannot be considered without socio-education action aimed at encouraging their social integration and promotion.” The July 10, 1970 Law and the August 27 1971 facilitated the eradication of “unsanitary housing.” An addition piece of legislation on April 19, 1972 targeted *cités de transit*. This second text designates their housing target as “only those families who are facing social integration difficulties and who, as such, may risk being “rejected” by the populations that typically reside in social housing.” The hierarchy of housing options situates HLMs (a combination of private and public affordable housing buildings) as the most preferable. Next, *cités de transit* that were heavily influenced by French social welfare programs and policing systems and finally *les foyers*. These hostels built were mostly inhabited by Maghrebi workers and later Sub-Saharan workers.

majority of these lodgings were virtually inhabitable. Migrants were susceptible to life-threatening conditions ranging from infectious diseases to crude heating that often led to house fires.¹⁴⁷ These hazardous living conditions received a considerable amount of press in Parisian newspapers which led to administrative reports and investigations. Chronicled by the *Journal Officiel de la République française*, officials confessed “the African worker is undoubtedly exploited by landlords and property owners.”¹⁴⁸ A combination of philanthropists, employers and religious figures organized in response to this housing crisis. These enterprising individuals formed major associations to support Black migrants. Although the various organizations had different visions, they were united in their effort to create better housing for Sub-Saharan workers.¹⁴⁹ These private initiatives were supported by government funding from the *Fonds*

¹⁴⁷ There were several occurrences of shacks burning down due to defective heating systems. As well as a high number of tuberculosis cases during the winter and various sicknesses caused by close contact with rodents. See Jean-Francois Steiner, "Ils Croyaient Ques Le Paradis S'appelait Paris." *Candide*, August 7, 1963. (AS/208 (XVI)/62 and, 28-31 and Jean-Philippe Dedieu, *La Parole Immigrée. Les Migrants Africains Dans L'espace Public En France (1960-1995)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2012).

¹⁴⁸ “Avis et Rapports du Conseil Économique et Social: problèmes poses par l’immigration des travailleurs africains en France,” *Journal Officiel de la République française*, July 24, 1964, 550.

¹⁴⁹ Over the course of ten years (1955-1965, five major associations were founded. These include: The Association for the Parisian Region Foyers (AFRAP), The Association for the Development of Foyers (ADEF), The Association for the Reception and Training of Migrant Workers (AFTAM), The Association for Assistance to African Workers (ASSOTRAF) and The Association for Solidarity, Dignity and Unity in Welcoming African Workers (SOUNDIATA). AFRAP was created in 1950. (ADEF) was created in 1955, "to facilitate the housing of migrant workers." (AFTAM) was established in 1962 with the goal of "invent[ing] a type of accommodation that safeguards village traditions but facilitates [an eventual] return to [their] country...and [gives] immigrants the opportunity to live simply [so that they can] financially support their home community." (ASSOTRAF) was created in 1965. SOUNDIATA was founded in 1963. With the time period under this chapter’s consideration, it managed 19 foyers comprised of 3,200 beds in the Paris region serving a mainly Sub-Saharan African immigrant population. The association was created with philanthropic support of Catholic parishioners and sought to differentiate itself to fit the specific needs of Sub-Saharan African migrants in contrast with SONACOTRA’s focus on the Maghreb. For more information about these organizations see Dennis D. Cordell, *The Human Tradition in Modern Africa* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012); “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994(AN/20140104/123-130); Christian Poiret, “Immigration Familiale d’Afrique Noire en Region Ile de France: Famille et Habitat au coeur des mutations,” December 1994 (AN/20140104/123-130) and Stephanie Jankel and Trouillet, Caroline, “Les foyers de travailleurs migrants à Paris,” *Atelier Parisien d’Urbanisme*, Septembre 2011.

d'Action sociale (FAS).¹⁵⁰ Rapidly reorganizing Black migrants from scattered houses throughout the area to massive structures often housing hundreds and ultimately thousands of workers, these structures transformed the Parisian landscape. Old factories, warehouses and abandoned buildings were hastily converted into *foyers* around Paris and in surrounding *banlieues*.¹⁵¹

Despite the public attention and subsequent action of private organizations, the French government and SONACOTRAL were reluctant to provide Black migrants with public housing. Administrative reports outlined a need for ‘adapted structures’ in reference Sub-Saharan workers preference for communal living.¹⁵² This sentiment changed in 1962 when SONACONTRA (L) redirected its emphasis to lodge migrant workers regardless of their own nationality.¹⁵³ In

¹⁵⁰ Fonds d'action sociale (FAS) was established in 1958 as “an umbrella agency that funded social welfare programs... [and] was at the center of French efforts to ‘integrate’ immigrants, most from the colonial empire.” See Amelia H. Lyons, "Social Welfare, French Muslims and Decolonization in France: The Case of the Fonds D'Action Sociale." *Patterns of Prejudice* 43, no. 1 (2009): 65-89. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00313220802636072>. For a detailed explanation of FAS' connection to French government subsidies, see Christian Poirer, “Immigration Familiale d’Afrique Noire en Region Ile de France: Famille et Habitat au coeur des mutations,” December 1994 (AN/20140104/123-130).

¹⁵¹ Jean-Philippe Dedieu and Aissatou Mbodj-Pouye. "The First Collective Protest of Black African Migrants in Postcolonial France (1960–1975): A Struggle for Housing and Rights." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, no. 6 (2016), 963. The Bara foyer was a notorious example. Repurposed from an old piano factory to a dormitory in 1968, it was one of the oldest, most dilapidated and overcrowded foyers in the city of Montreuil. See, "Les Foyers De Travailleurs Migrants En Région Parisienne: "copies" Des Villages Africains Ou Centres De Mutations Sociopolitiques?" *Influxus*. September 11, 2014. <http://www.influxus.eu/article845.html>.

¹⁵² Migrants living in these newly constructed foyers were “often grouped according to national, regional or ethnic origins.” See, Dedieu and Mbodj-Pouye, "The First Collective Protest of Black African Migrants in Postcolonial France," 961-963.

¹⁵³ This inclusive migrant worker focus is reflected in its name change from SONACOTRAL to National Society for the Construction of Housing for Worker Housings (SONACOTRA) examined in “Direction de la Population des Migrations,” October 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30). This change was partly due to the unpreparedness of the French government and private associations to house the successive waves of migrant workers arriving in France. The Sub-Saharan African population increased from 2,296 in 1954 to 17,787 in 1962 (Dedieu, 2012, 24-25). This demand for housing forced the government to actively accommodate workers in spite of its reservations. Despite this broadened focus SONACOTRA housed a small population of Black migrants until the late 1970’s, see Choukri

practice, both public and private housing did not vastly improve accommodations for Sub-Saharan workers. The foyers where the majority of Black migrant workers lived were prone to “over-occupancy...hygiene problems, noise and an accelerated rate of [structural] degradation.”¹⁵⁴

In a series of interviews conducted by researchers, workers from West Africa detailed the extent of these awful conditions. One Malian migrant dreamed of “idyllic” living in France. Upon arrival to a foyer in the Parisian suburb of Montreuil, he was sorely disappointed. He stated, “I could never have imagined in Mali that housing conditions in France were also harsh.”¹⁵⁵ Reflecting on his time in the Parisian suburb of Drancy, another worker commented, “It was so noisy...especially during the night. It was very difficult to sleep well. It became unbearable. There was no rest.”¹⁵⁶ In addition to the noise and often unsanitary living arrangements, rooms were overcrowded. Mr. GD arrived from Mali at sixteen years old. His older brother offered him lodging at foyer Bara in Montreuil. The room measured at 7² meters and housed nine other men. These close quarters propelled his desire to repatriate. He stated,

Hmed, *Loger Les étrangers "isolés" En France: Socio-histoire D'une Institution D'État: La Sonacotra (1956-2006)* (PhD diss. Université Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne, 2006), 18-21.

¹⁵⁴ In a government report, a researcher noted in addition to the cited quote that, “although most households in the Paris region are experiencing over-crowding, some of them are mainly occupied by Africans originally from sub-Saharan Africa, with a number of residents living two or three times above their capacity.” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

¹⁵⁵ From “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

¹⁵⁶ Mr. DM stated, “The foyer was too loud and at first I was working at night. It was hard to get good sleep during the day. I looked for an apartments [that cost] 2500 to 3000 francs maximum [per month]. But I could not find any, because my income at the time was too low... [so] I stayed...because I had no other choice.” Entretien Mr.DM, Guinéen, 49 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer SONACOTRA-Paris XIX, from “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30). These sentiments were echoed in three other interviews with Mr. DN, Mr. MY and Mr. SK.

“My presence in France is necessary so that I may return to Mali one day. I have tried to build all the necessary conditions to get there but they have not been fulfilled yet.”¹⁵⁷

The experiences of migration from West Africa and the uncomfortably close quarters also fostered a strong community identity. Several men discussed their arrival to France and the family ties that facilitated both their housing and employment process. Mr. GD left Mali at the age of 17 in 1961 to join his father in Paris. Although he came to France without a work contract, he could legally work and reside in France due to his colonial citizenship. This allowed him to find work quickly as a maintenance man at the Citroën factory where his father worked. Although his father assisted him in finding work, he decided to share a basement room with a friend from his village that also relocated to Paris. Mr. GD remained there for five years before relocating to a neighboring *foyer*.¹⁵⁸

This type of chain migration is replicated in several other interviews with West African migrant workers. Mr. MY boarded a ship from Dakar to France in 1961 to reunite with his uncles who were living and working in provincial city of Rouen. One year later, he received a job offer to join the Renault car factory where he made 3.20 francs per hour. Due to the long commute to the Renault plant, he left his uncle’s home. With the help of a Senegalese friend from the factory, Mr. MY moved to a SONACOTRA foyer in Parisian suburb of Mantes-la-Jolie where he shared a room with three other men from work. Describing his difficulties finding housing, he stated,

¹⁵⁷ "Entretien Mr.DG, Malien, 38 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer ADEF de Montreuil-sous-bois, from “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30)

¹⁵⁸ Over the course of twenty years, Mr. GD lived in three different foyers within the Parisian suburbs including two communal foyers. One in Saint-Denis and another foyer in Pierrefitte before finally earning enough to secure a single room at the foyer SONACOTRA d’Aubervilliers in 1982. Entretien Mr.GD, Malien, 50 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer SONACOTRA d’Aubervilliers, from “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

“You know it was difficult to find housing, not because there were not [homes] but for xenophobic reasons. There were free houses, but they did not want to give them to us...In Mantes-la-Jolie, I was told, ‘We do not want to house any more immigrants.’”¹⁵⁹

Mr. CM moved from Senegal in 1972 at the age of 27. His voyage was paid by his brother who was employed at the Citroën factory in the Parisian suburb of Balard. Upon arrival, he was housed in *Foyer Bisson* located within the 20th arrondissement. A single room had five bunkbeds housing 10 people. Mr. CM reflected upon his first night in the foyer, “My brother and I slept in the same bed...It was very hard. I was completely discouraged the next day. I did not understand how we were going to sleep and work in these conditions. So my brother told me, ‘You’ve got to accept your responsibilities. From today on, you will encounter all types of difficulties here in France.’ So I started looking for a job.”¹⁶⁰ Arriving in France as a visitor, he went to the ONI office to “regularize his situation.” After receiving his residential permit, he sought employment at the same Citroën factory where his brother worked. One year later, the foyer where he resided was deemed inhabitable and demolished.¹⁶¹ Many inhabitants including Mr. CM moved to the foyer SOUNDIATA on the border between Paris and the suburb of Saint-Ouen. Upon securing a higher paying job at the Renault factory, Mr. CM found better housing but

¹⁵⁹ Entretien Mr. MY, Sénégalais, 56 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer SONACOTRA-Buchelay de Mantes-La-Jolie, from “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

¹⁶⁰ Entretien Mr. CM, Sénégalais, 49 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer SOUNDIATA de Porte de Saint-Ouen, from “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

¹⁶¹ Located in the 19th arrondissement, the original foyer Bisson was demolished in 1974 and rebuilt in 1978. See Patrick Jedynak, “Les Résidents Africains Du Foyer Bisson Aiment Leur Quartier.” *Hommes Et Migrations* 1168, no. 1 (1993): 26-30. This type of urban renewal occurred through various neighborhoods in Paris including the 15th arrondissement. The foyer located at 214 rue Raymond was also destroyed in 1974. See, Dedieu, and Mbodj-Pouye, “The First Collective Protest of Black African Migrants in Postcolonial France, 967.

kept his bed at SOUNDIATA, which he gave to a friend but retained the right to reclaim at his convenience.

Although family ties facilitated the arrival of successive waves of migrants, they were also a source of tension. Mr.SG arrived from Senegal on a tourist visa at the age of twenty five. Employed at British Petroleum, his family encouraged him to join an uncle in France to make more money. Contrary to his family's advice, Mr. SG experienced both familial conflict and wages that prevented him from moving out of the room they shared at foyer SOUNDIATA Porte de la Chappelle in Paris. He admitted, "I was completely discouraged. The work was hard and [I was] badly paid. Then I had this sort of generation conflict with my uncle. He was a country man. While I had more of an urban education urban in Senegal. And then, you know, living without papers in France and especially in the Paris region is very hard. But my buddies cheered me up and finally I stayed."¹⁶²

The countervailing pressures of poor housing, spatial segregation and community bonds fueled a wave of protests in the 1960's. Black migrants utilized political networks from their countries of origin to pressure the government into action. Furthermore, workers created organizations that linked shared discriminatory experiences in employment with those in the housing sector.¹⁶³ In addition to applying transnational pressure, migrants also engaged with

¹⁶² Entretien Mr.SG, Sénégalais, 36 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer SOUNDIATA de Porte de la Chapelle, from "Le devenir d'immigrés à la sortie des foyers," *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

¹⁶³ The creation of *Association des travailleurs Maliens en France* (ATMF) in 1963 and *Union Generale des travailleurs senegalais en france* (UGTSF) in 1961 campaigned on the related pressures of housing and employment. For more information on ATMF see Moustapha Diop, "Le Mouvement Associatif Négro-africain En France." *Hommes Et Migrations*1132, no. 1 (1990): 15-20 and Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 120-162. His chapter entitled "Well-Known Strangers: How West Africans Became Foreigners in Postimperial France" provides a concise history of AFTMF activism in the Paris region. Sally N'Dongo served as a key strategist for UGTSF. He used political connections in both France and Senegal to address housing concerns. In his book, he explores the political

local authorities. Representing 200 migrant workers living in Saint-Denis, Galadio Camara wrote a series of letters to the Mayor outlining their grievances.¹⁶⁴ This letter writing campaign started by Camara was replicated by various workers living in the Parisian area.¹⁶⁵ Unlike Galadio Camara, none of the workers interviewed were successful in creating a change to their housing conditions. Mr. GD lamented, “The problem is that nobody gave us the means to get out of [these conditions]...It put us in difficult situations, sometimes even total despair! I was almost desperate. I made multiple demands at the city hall and in the prefecture but I always received negative answers.”¹⁶⁶ These sentiments of frustration led to more confrontational approaches including the occupation of the town hall in Garges. Mr. DN recounted, “[Local] families mobilized and decided to occupy the premises...The women and children stayed in the town hall night and day while husbands continue[d] to work. The mayor trie[d] to dissuade them...by

implications of ties between African and France. See Sally N’Dongo, *La "coopération" Franco – Africaine* (Paris: Maspero, 1972). For a more detailed account of UGTSF activities, see Union *Générale Des Travailleurs Sénégalais En France: U.G.T.S.F.: Le Livre Des Travailleurs Africains En France* (Paris: Maspero, 1970); Gillian Glaes, "Marginalised, Yet Mobilised: The UGTSF, African Immigration, and Racial Advocacy in Postcolonial France." *French Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (2013): 174-83 and Felix Germain, "For the Nation and for Work: Black Activism in Paris of the 1960s." *Migration and Activism in Europe Since 1945*, edited by Wendy Pojmann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 15-32.

¹⁶⁴ These written exchanges spurred meeting and the creation of an ‘Assembly of Workers of Black Africa,’ in October 1964. The Assembly developed a resolution “calling for coordinated action between trade unions and workers from sub-Saharan African to seek ‘as soon as possible the financing and construction of home’ and to ensure that African workers enjoyed ‘the same benefits as [white] French workers.” See Dedieu and Mbodj-Pouye, "The First Collective Protest of Black African Migrants in Postcolonial France," 962. Dr. Glaes examines letters written by Camara in the recently published book, *African Political Activism in Postcolonial France: State Surveillance and Social Welfare* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019).

¹⁶⁵ Five interviews conducted with workers outlined writing letters to the municipal mayor. Several of the workers noted they wrote a series of letters sent over the span of months and even years. Testimonies from Mr. DR, Mr. DN, Mr. GD, Mr. DM, and Mr. CB all were met with failure to address their concerns. From “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” Direction de la Population des Migrations, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

¹⁶⁶ Entretien Mr. GD, Malien, 50 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer SONACOTRA d’Aubervilliers, from “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” Direction de la Population des Migrations, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

telling them that ‘this is not how they will get housing.’”¹⁶⁷ After several days, the mayor arranged for a mediator to relay their requests to local housing agencies. Ultimately, very few families were relocated from their previous homes.

Black students and migrant workers were indeed at the forefront of several movements in 1968. Their political engagements propelled them out of these archetypes into activists. Escalating demands and tactics used by Sub-Saharan migrants to garner attention to their conditions coincided with an avalanche of activism that overtook France during the month of May. A major turning point in the history of contemporary France, 1968 is memorialized as the political radicalization of French society. In this celebration of politicization, the actions of white French students and workers dominate the literature.¹⁶⁸ The homogenizing of national protest efforts undercuts the reality that a number of “[white French] radical left wing organizations included the deplorable employment and housing conditions of migrant workers on their political agendas.”¹⁶⁹ In addition to interracial demonstrations and labor coalitions, a number of Black

¹⁶⁷ Entretien Mr., Malien, 39 ans, Ancien Résident du foyer SONACOTRA, from “Le devenir d’immigrés à la sortie des foyers,” *Direction de la Population des Migrations*, Octobre 1994 (AN, 20140104/123-30).

¹⁶⁸ For a list of monographs discussing white French activism in May 1968 see Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2017); Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988); Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013).

¹⁶⁹ Dedieu and Mbodj-Pouye, “The First Collective Protest of Black African Migrants in Postcolonial France,” 964-965. This assessment of “left wing” focus on immigrant is corroborated in a report “on the activity of foreign students and university professors” compiled by the Ministry of Interior. It states, “Since the events of May and June 1968, a fairly large number of foreign students and academics are periodically associated with subterranean political actions. The motives of their intervention are very diverse and at every opportunity the interested parties act in close contact with the different French extremist groups...The main themes of their actions are: the defense of the Palestine cause, the internal divisions which agitate their country of origin...and the defense of foreign migrant workers...Several foreign university students working with left-wing groupings have actively intervened in favor of immigrant workers, whose action was previously reported and which has repeatedly been used to harangue immigrants who are inciting them to react against the conditions of life in France” (AN (19960134/18).

migrants collectively laid claim against the French state. Senegalese students occupied the embassy of Senegal in Paris and a building at *Cité Universitaire* (the main Parisian housing center for foreign students). Organized under the banner *Fédération des Étudiants D'Afrique Noire en France* (F.E.A.N.F), Black students from various countries in Africa campaigned in protest of racism and the establishment of French neo-colonial power in their native nation-states.¹⁷⁰ Some students were apprehended for their activities and the French government planned to deport them. However, they feared that “expulsions generally provoke a movement of solidarity on the part of [white] French leftist movements...reported by the press as a form of resistance to attacks on freedom of speech.”¹⁷¹ In addition to student-led protest, African migrant workers led strikes in factories and foyers.¹⁷² This public display of solidarity by Black student and labor organizations was met with significant reproach by the government in the form of deportations, arrests and new restrictions on work and student visas.¹⁷³ In the wake of 1968, the French government marshalled increased policing powers of African migrants within Paris.

¹⁷⁰ This incident is referenced in Daniel A. Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals. May '68 The Rise of Anti-Racism in France* (Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2012). The ministry of interior filed report marked secret and confidential on the activities of “Les Etudiants d'Afrique Noire et Madagascar en France,” agents infiltrated meetings organized by Federation des Etudiants D'Afrique Noire en France (F.E.A.N.F) and monitoring their planning of protests throughout Paris (AN (19960134/18).

¹⁷¹ From “Activities for immigrant workers” AN (19960134/18).

¹⁷² Dedieu and Mbodj-Pouye, “The First Collective Protest of Black African Migrants in Postcolonial France,” 964-965; Préfecture de Paris, *Logement collectif à caractère non lucratif des travailleurs à Paris et dans les trois départements limitrophes*, 1968 (AN, 20050150/61) and *Fonds d'Action Sociale* (AN 19870056/1).

¹⁷³ In a report by the Ministry of Interior, it states, “the number of foreigners actually blamed for public disturbances by political demonstrations has been significant. It was 270 in 1968, and 53 in 1969. It was 18 in 1970 13 in 1971 and 7 in 1972.” This significant decrease in number is reflective of the government crackdown on students. Later that year in a letter dated September 16, 1968 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Interior, a government official wrote, “at the request of the representative of the Secretary-General for the African and Malagasy community and affairs, the minutes are modified in the following manner...the African and Malagasy communities consider the measures of coercion to be untimely initiative of France.” (AN (19960134/18).

The Prefecture of Police warned, “African migration poses serious problems, specifically in the African foyers that are becoming increasingly disturbed by a climate of demands and violence in the face of which the management organizations appear powerless.”¹⁷⁴ This action on the part of the police, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labor translated into legislative reform in the 1970’s.

The Hate Speech Laws of 1972 addressed the growing public hostility towards various ethnic groups. These defamatory press laws were formed out of the shadows of World War II and prohibited Holocaust denial.¹⁷⁵ The rationale behind addressing ethnic difference extended to racial prejudice against African expatriate labor forces. The French government’s assertion of a singular French national identity led to a subversive racism that marginalized non-French populations. Although racial demarcations were outlawed, French xenophobia towards immigrant cultural practices, race, ethnicity and religion persisted, often virulently.

These laws marked a turning point in the legal reasoning of France.¹⁷⁶ Discrimination was declared illegal and it criminalized press referring to differences between people based upon race. In the same stroke, racial affirmative action was also banned. French policy announced “a racially

¹⁷⁴ Dedieu and Mbodj-Pouye, "The First Collective Protest of Black African Migrants in Postcolonial France," 966. This led to proposals to relocate African migrants through the public housing system to prevent their continued political agitation. (AN/19870056/1)

¹⁷⁵ Herrick Chapman and Laura Levine Frader. *Race in France: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Politics of Difference* (New York: Berghahn, 2004).

¹⁷⁶ Maurice Schumann, "Journal Officiel De La Republique Française." Legifrance.gouv.fr, 2 July 1972. Web. 18 Aug. 2012. <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jopdf/common/jo_pdf.jsp?numJO=0>.

colorblind society.”¹⁷⁷ The dismissal of race as a basis of formal discrimination countered the reality of immigrant socioeconomic treatment. This reality contradicted the legal jargon that declared racist activity a violation of French law by inherently denying that racism existed. Succeeding laws prohibited discrimination based upon ethnicity, which further protected the French government from accusations of racism.¹⁷⁸

As new waves of immigrants continued to relocate to France, the government consciously avoided using race as a distinguishing characteristic to their legal integration into French society. The exclusion of race from governmental information gathering did not facilitate immigrant assimilation. Although discriminatory language and policymaking was illegal, confrontations with race, and the biases that these episodes produced were unavoidable. Distinguished by last name origin, education, employment, and housing, immigrants were still connected to their race. Immigrant racial and ethnic origin maintained its utility as a characteristic for socio-economic containment by employers, educators, law-enforcement and government. This “colorblindness” served as a legal buffer against discrimination cases by immigrants.

¹⁷⁷ Erik Bleich, “The French Model: Color Blind Integration”; “Color Lines: Affirmative Action, Immigration, and Civil Rights Options for America.” Ed. John D. Skrenty. Middlebury, 2001.
http://www.middlebury.edu/media/view/251965/original/The_French_Model.pdf

¹⁷⁸ For example, article one of the Gayssot law states that, “any discrimination founded on membership or non-membership of an ethnic group, a nation, a race or a religion is prohibited.” Born out of the experiences of World War II, the intent of the law was to prohibit individuals, institutions or organizations from negating the existence of the Jewish Holocaust. Article two requires the National Consultative Commission of Human Rights (1947) to publish annual reports detailing how the nation attempts to fight racism. See, “Loi n° 90-615 du 13 juillet 1990 tendant à réprimer tout acte raciste, antisémite ou xenophobe,”
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000532990&categorieLien=id>.

Also ratified in 1972, the Marcellin-Fontanet circulaires curtailed immigration to France. While the Hate Speech Laws of 1972 aided in the erasure of racialized language, the circulaires assisted in the deportation of immigrants. This law's title came from hyphenating the surnames of the Ministers of Interior and Labor. This legislation linked immigration and labor to the need for proper documentation for institutional control.¹⁷⁹ The circulaire made it legally possible to deport any "undocumented" worker who did not possess a valid residential permit and employment contract. This policy gave rise to the contested and politicized population of *sans-papiers* (undocumented workers) who were directly targeted by the French government and police for deportation.

Harkening back to the ordinance 2 November 1945, the circulaires construed the lack of legal immigration documentation as a "threat to public order" and grounds for deportation.¹⁸⁰ Already an easily exploitable population for employers, the laborers' situation became even more precarious following this new law. Laborers who were laid-off or fired from their employment could be deported because of an expired permit and the government's suspension of worker permit renewals. Additionally, the circulaire shifted local regulation of immigrant movement across geographic boundaries to a nationalized focus on border control. This consolidation of immigrant control by the French government was propelled by the downturn of the French economy. Formerly indebted to unskilled immigrant workers for French economic

¹⁷⁹ Interview exclusive de Paul Dijoud, secrétaire d'Etat aux travailleurs immigrés: "Il n'y a qu'une politique de l'immigration," *Croissance des jeunes nations* 172, (June 1976), 4-7; Yvette Rocheron and Christopher Rolfe. *Shifting Frontiers of France and Francophonie* (Oxford: P. Lang, 2004).

¹⁸⁰ Angéline Escafré-Dublet, "France, Immigration, and the Policies of Culture: Understanding the "French Integration Model." (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2007), 6.

growth during the thirty glorious years of expansion and prosperity, immigrants were blamed for its economic demise.

Coinciding with an increase in government policy to control immigration was the economic decline of the *Trente Glorieuses*. Catalyzed by the oil crisis of 1973, the French economy took a downturn that led to rapid unemployment and a sharp increase of xenophobia that associated mass immigration with economic stagnation.¹⁸¹ In October 1973, the *Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries* (OAPEC) declared a five month oil embargo in response to the United States' involvement in the Yom Kippur War.¹⁸² The OAPEC used the oil embargo as political leverage. The embargo deeply impacted the French automobile industry that employed a largely immigrant population. Oil prices quadrupled, causing cycles of unemployment and public demands for social welfare reform. More importantly, it signaled the end of France's thirty glorious years of economic expansion, consumerism and the prosperity of the middle and upper class.¹⁸³ This year was also a critical turning point towards the politicization and criminalization of Black immigrants. Situated within this context of economic crisis, Sub-Saharan African populations were at the center of increasingly punitive and discriminatory legislation that shaped the next thirty years of French immigration policy.

Indeed, the confluence of demographic change, ethnic and class identity form the loci of French anxieties between 1975 and 2005. Over this thirty-year period, France grappled with the

¹⁸¹ Hollifield and Ross, *Searching for the New France*, 129-135.

¹⁸² Countries comprising OAPEC include: Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar and Syria

¹⁸³ Gildea, *France since 1945*, 249-251.

largest wave of Sub-Saharan African migration in the nation's history. The government weaponized legislation as response to growing Black populations. New immigration policy increased police powers and implemented structural barriers to obtaining French citizenship.¹⁸⁴ Black communities subsequently challenged the seemingly endless flurry of legislation that jeopardized their welfare. African migrants responded to these developments through a variety of tactics and gradually gained international attention. Their efforts challenged the inclusivity of republican universalism and national rhetoric about immigrants that shaped three decades worth of policy.

¹⁸⁴ This assimilation process is described as Sociologist, Loretta Bass as a *bouillabaisse*. She states, "The French colonial empire in Africa...serves as the basis for a *bouillabaisse* of varied peoples, some post-colonial and other from European countries, being simmered together in a pot that retains distinctive elements while becoming a French stew....this slow cooking process resembles the integration process which maintains that irrespective of differences all are equal while taking on a particular French flavor..." in *African Immigrant Families in Another France*, 23. While this analogy is poetic it fails to contend with the complexity of the contemporary integration process. Charged with the realities of xenophobia, reactionary politics and racism, all migrants were not equal in France, especially those of African origin. Instead, I offer the analogy of *mille-feuille*, a layered pastry that can only be consumed by slicing into the layers. These thousands of layers are representative of both post-colonial and varied peoples that maintain their individual integrity but can only be enjoyed when consumed together.

Chapter Two: *Tout pour la famille: Mother Africa and the Paternal Practices of France*

“My father came from Senegal...His father used to have a lot of goats and sheep...but I think it’s like the American Dream...most Africans dream of coming to Europe...So because of the colonies, West Africans want to go to France. They say, ‘Okay let’s go to France for a better life for my family and for the future.’ My father arrived in the early 1970’s. He came by himself. When he arrived, the only jobs he could find was working for the automobile industry, making cars...My mom was still in Senegal, she was working for the daughter of Leopold Senghor. After that she worked at a perfume factory. Then she came to visit my father in 1981 and never went back. I was born in 1985 in Paris...”¹⁸⁵

Reflecting on his parents’ journey to France during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Laurent’s narrative overlaps with the largest wave of Sub-Saharan African migration in the twentieth century. Although offering his own history, Laurent’s family migration story can be repeated with variations by many other Afropeans in France today. His father arrived from Senegal as a single male worker. After the government curtailed labor migration, many other West African families induced the feminization wave reuniting male workers with their wives in the early 1980’s.¹⁸⁶ Laurent became a French citizen by *jus soli*.¹⁸⁷ Living in France for the

¹⁸⁵ Laurent (mid-30’s male of Senegalese descent), in discussion with the author. October, 5. 2016.

¹⁸⁶ Cris Beauchemin Catherine Borrel, and Corinne Régnard. "Les Immigrés En France: En Majorité Des Femmes." *Population & Sociétés | Institut National D'études Démographiques*, no. 502 (August 2013), https://www.ined.fr/fichier/s_rubrique/19170/population_societes_2013_502_immigres_femmes.fr.pdf.

¹⁸⁷ Within French nationality law, *jus soli* is derived from the Latin phrase which means “right of soil.” This right is connected to birthright citizenship. In Laurent’s case, his automatic citizenship was a result of a stipulation in French law that states “a child born in France before January 1, 1994, to a parent born in a former French overseas territory or colony prior to its acquisition of independence,” is French by birth. See, Article 23 of the *Code de la nationalité française*, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071189&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006523995>. Modified by the *Loi n° 73-42 du 9 janvier 1973 complétant et modifiant le code de la nationalité française et relative à certaines dispositions concernant la nationalité française - Article 2*, see, https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=CEE4E4C3E146FF0AF83EA5CA594C670B.tplgfr25s_1?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000684539&dateTexte=20180718. This modification was later repealed by *Loi n° 93-933 du 22 juillet 1993 réformant le droit de la nationalité - Article 50*, see,

entirety of his life, he straddles a complex negotiation of identities that gained traction in the 1980s and 1990s. Questions of nationality, allegiance and ethnicity punctuated French law, media and culture. Moreover, these questions of identity impacted familial relations as parents grappled with raising “French” children while attempting to preserve a connection to their African roots.¹⁸⁸

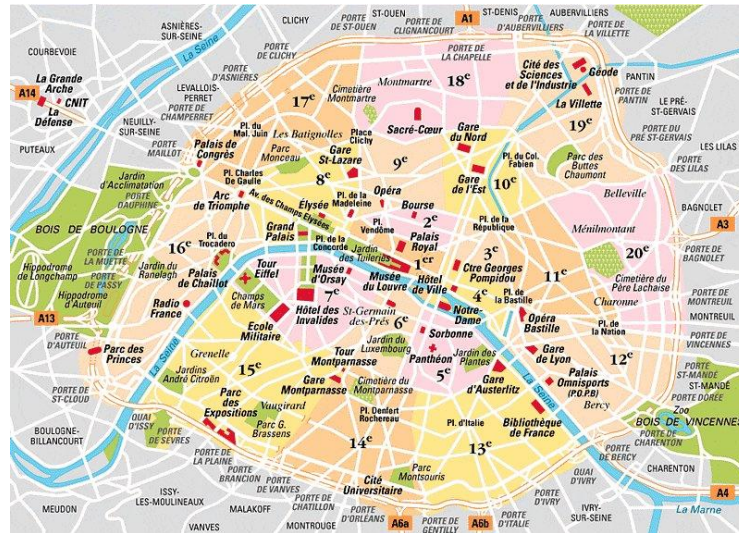


Figure 8. Map of Paris and Neighboring Suburbs

Laurent Gomis grew up in the 18th arrondissement of Paris, commonly known as *Goutte d'Or* (Drop of Gold), more recently referred to as “Little Africa.” This neighborhood located in

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexteArticle.do;jsessionid=CEE4E4C3E146FF0AF83EA5CA594C670B.tplgfr25_1?cidTexte=JORFTEXT00000362019&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006528826&dateTexte=20180718&categorieLien=id#LEGIARTI000006528826. This automatic citizenship law would be replaced by the Méhaignerie Law (1993) and the Guigou Law (1998) which facilitated a naturalization process for children born to foreign parents in France to acquire citizenship at the age of legal majority.

¹⁸⁸ This sentiment was echoed in several of the oral interviews conducted: Gaëlle (late-20’s of Congolese descent), in discussion with the author. December 10, 2016; Fanta (mid-20’s of Senegalese descent), in discussion with the author. April 16, 2017 and Ibrahim (mid-30’s of Mauritanian descent and Senegalese descent), in discussion with the author. November 28, 2017. As well as in studies conducted by interdisciplinary scholars, see Jacques Barou, “Integration of Immigrants in France: A Historical Perspective.” *Identities* 21, no. 6 (2014): 642-57, <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01081685/document>; Camille Jackson, “The Dilemma of Dual Identities in Black France.” *Duke Today*, published on March 20, 2014, <https://today.duke.edu/2014/03/blackfrance> and Patrick Simon, “French National Identity and Integration: Who Belongs to the National Community?” (2012) *Migration Policy Institute*, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/FrenchIdentity.pdf>.

northern Paris forms the border between the city and the suburb of Saint-Denis. Recognized as a working-class epicenter for the past two centuries, the class composition of this location has remained the same despite ethnic demographic change that began in the mid-twentieth century. After the conclusion of World War II, a growing number of North Africans moved into the area. An emergent Sub-Saharan community that arrived in the 1960's eclipsed this initial influx of North Africans. While the fifth arrondissement served as the hub of Black student presence in Paris, the development of a robust Black working class community in the eighteenth arrondissement neighborhood known as *Goutte d'Or* ultimately supplanted the fifth as the epicenter of Black public life. This vibrant neighborhood is categorized as a "sensitive urban zone" (ZUS), and as the central Parisian location for African cuisine, fashion and commerce.¹⁸⁹ Its recognition as a bastion of African presence increasingly fostered police occupation that zeroed in on "illegal immigration" after 1974.

Historical treatment of this period has largely focused on nationality reform and state debates over citizenship.¹⁹⁰ The scholarship examined the evolving construction of a French

¹⁸⁹ "Bouillon De Cultures Africaines à La Goutte-d'Or," *Le Monde*, December 17, 2009, https://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2009/12/17/bouillon-de-cultures-africaines-a-la-goutte-d-or_1282084_3246.html; Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 291; Alice M. Craven, "La Goutte D'ôr: Localizing a Banlieue's Aesthetic." *Transitions | Journal of Franco-Iberian Studies*7 (2011): 17-35, <http://www.transitionsjournal.org/volumes/Volume 7. 2011/Alice Mikal Craven. La goutte d'or.pdf>. More information on zoning practices (ZUS) can be found on page 162 and 163.

¹⁹⁰ For works exploring the social conditions of immigrants in France see Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France*; Patricia M. E. Lorcin, and David G. Troyansky, *Transnational Spaces and Identities in the Francophone World*. Edited by Hafid Gafaïti (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Catherine Raïssiguier, *Reinventing the Republic: Gender, Migration, and Citizenship in France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010). For works exploring French native perspectives on immigrants see, Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France* (London: Routledge, 1992); Peter Sahlin, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and after* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge: MIT, 1998). For works exploring immigration legislation after 1975 see, Clifford D Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2006); Giovanna Zincone, Rinus Penninx, and Maren Borkert.

national identity and the continuous process of redefining nationality in reaction to historical turning points.¹⁹¹ Three themes categorize their work: modernity, memory, and globalization.¹⁹² Historians connected the compounded traumas of World War II occupation and the Algerian War to globalization, decolonization, immigration and economic crisis in modern France.¹⁹³ In the thirty years after World War II, the French economy had seen unprecedented growth and a corresponding rise in immigration. As a result, race remains a central feature in scholarly investigations of migration and universalism. Noted French scholar Tyler Stovall uses transnationalism as a theoretical framework to interrogate “debates in contemporary France about multiculturalism, race and national identity.”¹⁹⁴ His scholarship represents the newest turn within the historiography that emphasizes the synergetic relationship between transnational movement and global economic frameworks.

Using Stovall’s recent work as a departure point, this chapter intervenes in these conversations by challenging historians to recognize the limitations of sociopolitical and economic frameworks in their understanding of globalization’s impact on recent French history.

Migration Policymaking in Europe: The Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in past and Present (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011).

¹⁹¹ Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 6.

¹⁹² Within a broader context, historians have typically treated iterations of modernity and globalization upon the French state as unique to the geopolitical circumstances of post-World War II Western hegemony.

¹⁹³ Historical considerations of globalization explore the interrelated nature of decolonization, immigration and economic crisis. Informed by sociopolitical and economic frameworks, scholarly works explore Americanization and the evolution of the French state to propose a “heterogeneous framework.” See Philip H. Gordon and Sophie Meunier, *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2001), 8-10; Timothy B. Smith, *France in Crisis: Welfare, Inequality, and Globalization since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Thomas, *Black France*, 2-3.

¹⁹⁴ Stovall, *Transnational France*, 3.

By foregrounding the cultural and interpersonal dimensions of transnational history, this chapter introduces a more far-reaching narrative about the ways in which African migration to France after 1975 reshaped not only notions of Black “Frenchness” but also white French identity. Most importantly, it excavates the legacy of white French resistance to Black French efforts to expand concepts of inclusivity and citizenship. Occurring in multiple fora, official legislative debates often excluded the multi-layered viewpoints of Parisian Black populations. Thus, this chapter emphasizes the Afropean position within this debate as a valuable contribution to the current historiography.

As economic historians grappled with financial decline in France, they considered the downfall of the automobile industry, soaring crime rates and an energy crisis. These developments coincided with other transnational economic currents occurring within the western world (United States, England, Germany, Spain, Italy, etc.).¹⁹⁵ Social historians contended with French identity retrenchment toward multiculturalism by exploring French policing of religious paraphernalia. Through their scrutiny of *laïcité*, scholars paired the frustration engendered by a series of “hijab scandals” in the late 1980s with urban rioting in the new millennium.¹⁹⁶ Recent

¹⁹⁵ Several monographs situated the French context within Western decline, see these transitional texts Roderick D. Bush, *The End of White World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009); Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 2008); Jeffrey M. Togman, *The Ramparts of Nations: Institutions and Immigration Policies in France and the United States* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002); Martin Schain, *The Politics of Immigration in France, Britain, and the United States: A Comparative Study* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

¹⁹⁶ *Laïcité* is a concept that endorses secularism. Within France, outward displays of religious patronage are discouraged within the public sphere. Much of the historical emphasis on postcolonial immigration to France has remained focused on Algeria and the Maghreb as France’s focal sphere of influence and the initial source of tension over differences of religion, ethnicity and national belonging. For examples see John Richard Bowen, *Why the French Don’t Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*; Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*; Trica Danielle Keaton, *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics, and Social Exclusion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

scholarship highlighted 1998 as the triumph of diversity and 2005 as the failure of the diversity model.¹⁹⁷ The current periodization is a reaction to the international attention France garnered in celebration of its first World Cup championship in 1998 and the urban uprisings that swept the nation in 2005. By canonizing these two dates, historians have largely disassociated the *sans-papiers* protests of 1996 and France's loss to Senegal in the first round of the 2002 World Cup as critical flash points to this short-lived experiment with diversity.

This chapter reframes how historians have contended with the disaggregation of contemporary French national identity. It bridges the historiographical gap between punitive immigration legislation and its impact on African families by exploring both communal and cultural responses to state-led repression. Most importantly, this examination of national legislation and African responses to these laws complicates the current scholarship's periodization. By focusing on events that predate 1998 and events after 2005, it challenges the utility of linear narratives of success and defeat. Using three case studies, the rise of the National Front (FN), the 1996 *sans-papiers* protests and France's participation in the 1998 and 2002 World Cup matches, this chapter analyzes the significant evolutions in policy and public debate about immigration during this period. Gradually hardening, policy and public opinion veered in the direction of exclusion, marginalization, and demonization. These three case studies were focal points of transnational debate. They underscore France's wrestling with contemporary national identity and the role of race within these negotiations. A final section grapples with how

¹⁹⁷ For more works that examine the trajectory of diversity within public discourse from 1998-2005 see, Dubois *Soccer Empire*, 160-162 and 218; Didier, Gondola, and Bloom, *Frenchness and the African Diaspora*, 11.

Black French youth populations voiced their experiences with this hardening of policy through the medium of Hip Hop.

The first section analyzes the rise of the right-wing political party called the National Front (FN) and its impact on immigration law during the 1980s and 1990s. Pairing legal turning points such as amendments to citizenship and residency criteria with the growth of the FN highlights the crystallization of the national government and public opinion toward immigration. Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 43% from 1990 to 1999.¹⁹⁸ This influx of Black people made them a policy priority for the French government. During this period, the government passed over thirty immigration laws to curtail this demographic shift.¹⁹⁹ The FN gained traction by framing African migrants as a threat to national security and unity. Ultimately, the FN brought together the Left and the Right in their opposition to immigration. This political consolidation spawned legislation that pushed many migrants from “legal” to “illegal” positions in the eyes of the law. Such categorization fostered a racial ethos that targeted non-Europeans as “illegal” irrespective of their citizenship status. Evidenced by the implementation of identity checks, policing forces increasingly targeted Afrobeans as “illegal.” These prescriptive attempts by the government to “fix the immigration problem” were resisted by African peoples in the form of hunger strikes and public protests. Indeed, the violent nature of identity checks, the use of force to end peaceful protests and the occupation of predominantly African neighborhoods

¹⁹⁸ Julien Boëldieu and Catherine Borrel, “La proportion d’immigrés est stable depuis 25 ans, Recensement de la population 1999,” *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* #748, November 2000, <https://www.epsilon.insee.fr/jspui/bitstream/1/551/1/ip748.pdf>

¹⁹⁹ F.N. Buffet, “Rapport n° 716 (2014-2015) fait au nom de la commission des lois, déposé le 30 septembre 2015, Projet de loi relatif au droit des étrangers en France: Annexe 4 - Les lois sur l’immigration depuis 1980,” *Sénat*, 30 September 2015, <http://www.senat.fr/rap/l14-716/l14-716.html>. Since 1981, the year it adopted its first law explicitly providing for immigration detention, the country has passed some 30 immigration laws.

fostered a growing animosity between immigrants and police that detonated in 2005. However, the seeds of this manifestation of fury were planted in the 1980's with the rise of the FN.

In addition to policy, broader currents of popular resistance shaped public narratives around non-white French identity. The second section uses sport as a lens into how Black French and white French populations grappled with expanding conceptions of national identity, particularly in the last decade and a half of the twentieth century. Two of the most prominent of these narratives were the 1998 World Cup championship team and the 2005 urban uprisings. The section analyzes France's national soccer team to consider the possibilities for equality and diversity on the eve of the new millennium. United under the slogan, "*Black, Blanc, Beur,*" this ethnically diverse soccer team evoked both French anxieties about immigration and race as well as hope that "multiculturalism" could work in France. Their ultimate victory during the summer of 1998 not only brought France its first World Cup championship but also changed the face of its national heroes.²⁰⁰ The team comprised of immigrants and the children of recent migrants allowed France to rise above whispers of racism and discrimination to symbolically fulfill its promise of liberty, equality and brotherhood for all. The section concludes with considering life

²⁰⁰ Posterized by historians and the public, Zinedine Zidane became emblematic of France's embrace of diversity and the triumph of immigration. The development of micro-histories about Zidane coincide with "great men" narratives that propose a singular model for diversity. Indeed, the shortcoming of microhistory is that it tells only one story which cannot represent the whole. The over examination of Zidane undermines the activities of his other teammates that were also non-white. See Frédéric Benoit, *Zidane: Média, Mensonges Et Vérité* (Paris: La Revue De Presse, 2012); Hugh Dauncey and Douglas Morrey, "Quiet Contradictions of Celebrity: Zinedine Zidane, Image, Sound, Silence and Fury." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 301-20; Patrick Fort and Jean Philippe, *Zidane* (London: Ebury Press, 2018); Lindsay Sarah Krasnoff, *The Making of Les Bleus: Sport in France, 1958-2010* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013); David Rowe, "Stages of the Global: Media, Sport, Racialization and the Last Temptation of Zinedine Zidane," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45, no. 3 (2010): 355-371. By foregrounding the actions of Zidane's teammates Lilian Thuram, Marcel Desailly and Bernard Lama, this chapter broadens narratives of social and political agency to include Black actors and builds on the scholarship of Laurent Dubois, who examines the lives of both Zidane and Thuram. See Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011).

in the wake of the team's win. How did France arrive at a state of emergency, black and brown bodies lying on the floor of an electrical station and Paris ablaze, just seven years after more than a million French people hugged, joined hands and marched down the long streets of the Champs-Élysées cheering on the triumph of diversity?

In the wake of 2005, international criticism centered on France's failed integration models. In turn, the French government blamed Black migrants for the uprisings. Led by the conservative parliament member François Grosdidier, the Ministry of Justice sought to criminalize the lyrics and content of French Hip Hop.²⁰¹ The final section of this chapter reverses the use of Hip Hop by the government as a destructive force and instead examines it as a tool of societal critique. Describing Hip Hop's migration to France from the United States in the late 1980s and tracking the development of the art form into the new millennium, it details how Hip Hop facilitated an evolution in Black French identity.²⁰² Uncovering the voices of protest in

²⁰¹ For examples of how mainstream media and politicians blame rap and its negative impact on black communities see, Christian Combaz, "Petite Anthologie Du Rap Anti-français." *Le Figaro*. October 05, 2015, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/politique/2015/10/05/31001-20151005ARTFIG00352-petite-anthologie-du-rap-anti-francais.php>; "French MP Blames Riots on Rappers." *BBC News*. November 24, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4467068.stm>; "Grosdidier S'en Prend Au Rap 'anti-blanc'." *L'Obs*. April 28, 2006, <https://www.nouvelobs.com/politique/20060428.OBS5849/grosdidier-s-en-prend-au-rap-anti-blanc.html> and Charles Tshimanga's chapter entitled, "Let the Music Play: The African Diaspora, Popular Culture, and National Identity in Contemporary France," in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora*, 248-276.

²⁰² This burgeoning historiography field has benefited from interdisciplinary scholarship, see, Alain-Philippe Durand, *Black, Blanc, Beur: Rap Music and Hip-hop Culture in the Francophone World* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002); James Perkinson, "Imperial Whiteness Meets Hip Hop Blackness: A Spiritual Phenomenology of the Hegemonic Body in the Twenty-first Century USA" in *Religion in Hip Hop: Mapping the New Terrain in the US*, edited by Monica R. Miller, Anthony B. Pinn, and Bernard Freeman (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 115-16; Tandem, "Hardcore 93," in *C'est toujours pour ceux qui savent*, Kilomatre, 2005, CD; "Paname City Rapping. B-boys in the Banlieues & beyond" in *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, edited by Alec Hargreaves (London: Routledge, 1997), 150-66; Samir Meghelli, "Hip-Hop à La Française." *The New York Times*, October 15, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/10/14/is-france-becoming-too-american/hip-hop-a-la-francaise-29> and Samir Meghelli, "Between New York and Paris: Hip Hop and the Transnational Politics of Race, Culture, and Citizenship." (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012).

the *banlieue*, this section examines how youth addressed the hypocrisy of the French state and how they narrated their parents' and their own struggles for socioeconomic and political inclusion in France. In addition to examining these experiences, this section challenges the gendered narrative of hyper-masculinity within Hip Hop and creates a space to consider the impact of women emcees and their influence on the development of the genre. Studying their lyrics and popular criticism, this work illustrates that rappers consistently protested the conditions of the *banlieue* but also drew artistic inspiration from these spaces. Their songs encouraged youth to transcend disadvantaged conditions and succeed as a metaphorical expletive to France's dominating narrative of urban failure and the state's rationale for an increasingly aggressive and combative presence in their communities.

Together, these case studies and cultural texts examine the distinctive challenges and opportunities facing Sub-Saharan African families in Paris. The legislative debates over immigration that dominated the 1980s came to a crisis point in 1996 with the occupation of the Saint-Bernard parish, hunger strikes and public protests in the *Republique* city square. Two years later, 1.5 million people marched down the Champs-Élysées celebrating France's first World Cup championship won by its "rainbow" team. This public embrace of diversity suffered a decisive blow when the returning champions were defeated in the first round of the 2002 World Cup games. Three years later, suburban fires enveloped the nation. In order to make sense of these disparate manifestations of immigrant mobilization, this chapter foregrounds the ways in which African populations push back against a monolithic national rhetoric. Juxtaposing the political context with cultural case studies in music and sports provides a powerful frame of analysis for examining white France's often contentious relationship with Black French populations.

Legislating Urban Upheaval and Immigration in the 1980s and 1990s

Almost immediately the 1974 prohibition on family reunification came under challenge in the French courts. The 1975 court ruling that overturned the suspension of family reunification induced a wave of feminized migration. Legally allowing families to reunite signaled a residential permanency that previous immigration policy sought to avoid.²⁰³ This process led to a shift in gender dynamics, class positioning and public reception of Black migrant streams. Sub-Saharan women's mass arrival to the metropole enflamed white French anxieties about racialized immigration waves and disrupted the notion of a "uniform" national identity in ways that single Black male migrant presence did not. The gendered structures within these migration patterns contributed to a hardening of immigration policy. Many male workers brought their families to France instead of repatriating. This decision caused the French government to attempt to purge the *banlieues* of 'illegal' residents by conducting deportation raids. Police forces entered immigrant neighborhoods empowered by the 1981 Peyrefitte Law, which permitted them to stop "suspicious-looking" immigrants who appeared to be *sans-papiers*.²⁰⁴ Without any specific criteria outlining the terms of conducting a *contrôle d'identité*, the police intimidated immigrants who did not have paperwork verifying their legal presence.²⁰⁵ Using descriptive terms such as

²⁰³ Jeannette Money, *Fences and Neighbors: The Political Geography of Immigration Control* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 110-115.

²⁰⁴ *Sans-papiers* is the French term for an undocumented immigrant.

²⁰⁵ A *contrôle d'identité* (identity check) can occur at random and is protected under French law. The police can stop anyone and ask for their identification in order to prove their citizenship. Police frequently stop people of North and Sub-Saharan African descent. In recent years these identification checks have become a source of anxiety within the African community. As a result, when police arrive it is often customary to "disperse" in order to avoid these sometimes race-based and at times violent, interrogative and abusive interactions with the police. See for example, "Quelles Sont Les Règles En Matière De Contrôle Et De Vérification D'identité?" *Service-public.fr.Direction de l'information Légale Et Administrative (Premier Ministre)* verified on July 29, 2015,

“good foreigners” and “bad illegal immigrants,” the police deported thousands of *sans-papiers* each year.

The closing of the border signaled a negative shift in national rhetoric and public sentiment towards immigrants. Soaring unemployment rates and the collapse of blue-collar industries propelled public disenchantment and categorized immigration as a “problem.” The French government, led by the newly elected President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, intended to resolve it. Governmental attempts to repatriate immigrants began in 1977. A policy of *aide au retour* gave financial incentives to migrants who returned to their home country. The government offered unemployed immigrants who had previously worked in France for more than five years the equivalent of 1,524 euros to leave. Although the initiative targeted North and Sub-Saharan immigrants, it was Portuguese and Spanish migrants who left in the greatest numbers, totaling over 100,000 people.²⁰⁶ As a result, the government suspended both of the latter groups from program eligibility in 1979. Ultimately, these policies failed to encourage an immigrant exodus and negatively impacted Giscard d'Estaing's popularity.

The French government's frustration with immigrant resistance to returning to Africa surfaced during a wave of deportation raids in 1981. Residents and police clashed violently. Residents overturned police vehicles and police officers often used force to round up “illegal” immigrants. Both Maghrebi and Sub-Saharan African workers used their socio-political networks in the Arab Workers' Movement (*Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes*) and Union

<http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/F1036.xhtml>; "Police et minorités visibles: les contrôles d'identité à Paris," *Le Open Society Justice Initiative* (2009), <http://www.cnrs.fr/inshs/recherche/docs-actualites/rapport-facies.pdf>.

²⁰⁶ Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*, 49.

Générale des Travailleurs Sénégalais en France (UGTSF) to protest these actions.²⁰⁷ The growing marginalization of African populations engendered distrust in the government. These violent confrontations signaled a shift in national sentiment toward separatist phrases such as “France is for the French.” This divisive slogan spearheaded by local politician Jean-Marie Le Pen presented immigrants, specifically non-European immigrants, as a threat to public order and national security.²⁰⁸ French officials and political commentators began referring to these outbreaks of violence between oppressed immigrants and reactionary police as “*problème des banlieues* (suburban problems) or the *violence urbaine* (urban violence).” Popular support for migrants waned in the late 1970s and early 1980s as public opinion deemed African immigrants a “problem.” Despite this categorization by the government, urban uprisings became a tool of “political bargaining” for Black people in order to gain greater access to better housing, education and immigration amendments.²⁰⁹

In an article by the left wing magazine *Libération*, author Thomas Guénolé described French society’s “voluntary...problem of collective amnesia,” in regards to the role of urban uprisings.²¹⁰ The 1981 uprisings in Lyon brought intense attention to the inequitable treatment of

²⁰⁷ Andre Gorz and Philippe Gavi, “La Bataille d’Ivry.” *Les Temps Modernes* (March 1970), 1388-1416; Adrian Adams, “Prisoners in Exile: Senegalese Workers in France.” *Race & Class. Institute of Race Relations* XVI. 2 (1974). <http://rac.sagepub.com/content/16/2/157.full.pdf>; Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*, 128-130.

²⁰⁸ “France: African Immigrants.” *Migration News* 3, no.4 (October 1996), <https://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=1051>

²⁰⁹ Fabien Jobard, “Riots in France: Political, proto-political, or anti-political turmoils?” *Riot, Unrest and Protest on the Global Stage* (2014). <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01118328/document>

²¹⁰ Guénolé chronicles the long history of urban uprisings in the two decades before 2005. He investigates the urban uprisings in Lyon during 1983, the city of Rouen and Garges-lès-Gonesse in 1994, Dammarie-les-Lys in 1997 and Toulouse in 1998. Despite the 17 year range between this incidents, the process remains the same. A violent altercation occurs between police and oftentimes “immigrant” youth, who either dies or is seriously injured. After which the suburban community follows a two-step process. The relatives of the deceased or injured youth

African populations. However, these violent and quite visible confrontations between African populations and the police were ultimately unsuccessful in changing discriminatory practices by the government.²¹¹ Instead, their actions provoked a political backlash. The government retaliated with increasingly restrictive immigration laws and residency requirements. Despite their efforts, the 1981 uprisings in France brought the festering issue of policing immigrants into the spotlight of reactionary political discourse. Later that year, the government drafted new legislation that complicated the process of regularizing working and residency permits resulting in approximately 100,000 immigrants becoming *sans-papiers*.²¹² This shift in legislation forced many migrants from the categorization of “legal” to “illegal.” Moreover, it overturned the government’s tacit position that “illegal immigration” was an indispensable part of the French economy. Instead, government rhetoric criminalized “illegality.”²¹³

The 1981 presidential election was a turning point in the negotiation of the immigrant presence in France. The “return policies” of 1975 were largely unsuccessful.²¹⁴ Commenting on

demand justice from the government often using demonstrations to gain media attention. This is usually followed by a small fraction of the community responding with violence.

²¹¹ Thomas Guénolé, "Affaire Théo: Les Jeunes De Banlieue Ne Mangent Toujours Pas Les Enfants Mais Ils Ont Faim De Justice." *Libération*. February 14, 2017. http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2017/02/14/affaire-theo-les-jeunes-de-banlieue-ne-mangent-toujours-pas-les-enfants-mais-ils-ont-faim-de-justice_1548426.

²¹² Bailey, *Immigration and Migration*, 69-70.

²¹³ Jane Freedman, "The French “Sans-Papiers” Movement: An Unfinished Struggle." *Migration and Activism in Europe Since 1945*, edited by Wendy Pojmann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 88.

²¹⁴ These policies included payment for repatriation, “closing the border,” deportation raids, weakening economy and the Peyrefitte Law (1981), which permitted random identity checks by the police to verify the legitimacy of immigrants. Many of these policies were created in reaction to African migration across European nation-state boundaries into France. During the summer of 1980, media outlets began monitoring “illegal” migration of African populations from Spain. In reaction to this wave of migrations, the French government reinforced tighter border control policing and used the popular press to announce, “all individuals presenting false papers or carrying arms will be forbidden entry onto the national territory without any possibility of future legislation.” See Anthony M. Messina, *West European Immigration and Immigrant Policy in the New Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002),

the escalating immigration concerns, Secretary of State Lionel Stoléru stated, “There is no longer a question of welcoming a single [additional] foreigner to France.”²¹⁵ Giscard d'Estaing's initial popularity waned due to his failure to “resolve” immigration. He faced a strong opponent in François Mitterrand, a socialist. While on the campaign trail, Mitterrand promised to repeal some of the restrictive immigration legislation. His public overtures suggested that there was still some contingency in the hardening of French immigration policy. In several speeches, he focused on the most crippling legislation, the 1980 Bonnet Law. Not only did it further restrict working and residency requirements but the regulation construed the entry and presence of ‘illegal’ immigrants as a “threat to public order and deportation was necessary, if found.” The Ministry of Interior deported thousands of immigrants who were purportedly a threat on the grounds of criminal convictions.²¹⁶

After his election, President Mitterrand repealed the Bonnet Law. In addition, he added a court order as a stipulation to deportation. In response to lobbying from pro-immigrant organizations, Mitterrand endorsed the legalization of undocumented immigrants already in France while upholding the suspension of labor immigration.²¹⁷ Although the legalization

20. In addition to increased policing of the border from outside penetration, within France several incidents escalated the visibility of immigrants including: rent-strikes within SONACOTRA housing, hunger strikes in protest of deportation raids and political ploys to facilitate immigrants voting rights to swing the pendulum towards socialism.

²¹⁵ Messina, *West European Immigration*, 20 and *Le Monde*, 4 November 1980.

²¹⁶ Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and Ethnicity*, 190.

²¹⁷ These stipulations were agreed upon by the Council of Ministers on July 23, 1981. See, *Migrants Nouvelles*, September 1981, 1). In order to meet the requirements for legalization, “alien” populations had to meet the following criteria, arrival to France before January 1, 1981, proof of employment based upon work contracts, proof of residency based on passport identification, utility bills, or wage documents. (Based upon an inter-ministry circulaire 11 August 1981 in *Migrants Nouvelles*, September 1981, 1) Within the text of the *circulaire* “alien” populations could apply on their own replacing the need for the employer to apply on the employee's behalf. Also, aliens whether illegal, employed or deported due to violations of immigration laws or public order could apply as

process offered by the government was set to end in a year, Sub-Saharan African immigrants led a hunger strike protesting the denial of their applications. As a result, approximately 1,000 applications were re-examined.²¹⁸ In an additional 1981 *circulaire*, the new socialist government ended the use of police deportation raids.²¹⁹ Although Mitterrand repealed the Bonnet Law and various levels of amnesty were offered to “illegal” immigrants, the government drafted new legislation that shifted deportation from an administrative to a judicial process. Thus, the shadows of the Bonnet Law remained. In addition, the new legalization program for undocumented immigrants only allowed a nine-month period as a condition of the application cut-off date. Despite public overtures that announced the retraction of unforgiving laws, Mitterrand’s leftist government maintained the status quo of restricting immigration.²²⁰ This measured response by the Left was in part a reaction to the growing traction of conservative ideologies that would soon dominate French politics for the rest of the decade.

One of the forces that was most responsible for this rightward turn particularly in regards to immigration policy was a group of small nationalist organizations that joined together to found

well as those under the age of 16, refugees and those seeking asylum were also offered an opportunity. In a modification to the August 11th *circulaire*, the October 22, 1981 *circulaire* permitted aliens with counterfeit papers to be apply. This opportunity is of particular significance for Sub-Saharan African populations that “were thought to possess counterfeit papers.” See Messina, *West European Immigration*, 26.

²¹⁸ Although the legalization process was set to end January 15, 1982, Sub-Saharan African populations led a hunger strike against the government protesting the denial of their applications. As a result, approximately 1,000 applications were re-examined by the government that year. See *Presse et Immigres en France*, October 1982.

²¹⁹ *Circulaire 6 Juillet 1981*. See, <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/content/download/36928/279258/file/20-11-2012-circulaire-ist-ost.pdf>.

²²⁰ Mitterrand passed legislation that restricted hiring processes in an attempt to crack down on employing “illegal” immigrants.

the National Front (FN) on October 5, 1972.²²¹ Led by politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, the organization built its conservative reputation by railing against immigration. The FN used immigration as a cornerstone of their critique of the Socialist French government. Their demonizing and inflammatory rhetoric around immigration attracted new members to the party who had not typically associated with right-wing politics.²²² During the first ten years of the party's existence, it struggled to gain traction at the national level. Compounding the party's low membership numbers was a string of political losses by Jean-Marie Le Pen.²²³

Despite its early failings, the 1980s brought the party's national prominence and success on the ballot. The first turning point was in 1983. In the small town of Dreux, located 73 kilometers from Paris, the FN overcame its electoral losses and captured a municipal win.²²⁴ Continuing the winning streak, Le Pen was elected to the local Parisian council.²²⁵ Once seated

²²¹ These organizations include: *Fédération d'action nationaliste et européenne* (FANE), *Organisation armée secrète* (OAS) and representatives from the *Nouvelle Droite*.

²²² During the formative years of the organization, members demanded quotas on immigration. See J. G. Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (London: Routledge, 2008), 177-185. Racially exclusionary language in reference to immigrant was used by the National Front beginning in 1978 and became increasingly important during the 1980's. See Herbert Kitschelt and Anthony J. MacGann, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 91-120.

²²³ During the 1974 presidential elections, Le Pen ran on the FN ticket and garnered less than 1% of the national vote. See, "Jean-Marie Le Pen." *BBC News*. April 23, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1943193.stm>.

²²⁴ During the 1983 municipal elections two political organizations Rally for the Republic (RPR- the center-right) and Union for the French Democracy (UDF-Center) joined together with the Front National in several towns around France. Among their electoral successes was Dreux. In early October, the National Front was polling at only 17%. As the voting season continued RPR and UDF faced a crucial decision. Concede to a win on the left to a fractured political right or consolidate to win the election. Choosing the later options, RPR and UDF joined the National Front and won with 55% of the vote. This method of consolidating fractured right-wing parties would be quite influential in the National Front's growth during the second half of the decade. See Edward G. DeClair, *Politics on the Fringe: The People, Policies, and Organization of the French National Front* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 60-63.

²²⁵ Matthieu Jeanne, "La « bataille de Paris », une bataille géopolitique," *Hérodote*, vol. 154, no. 3 (2014), 59-74.

in a political position, he began a campaign to garner more media attention in an effort to expand the membership numbers of the organization on a much larger national stage.

Le Pen increased the party's popularity through the media. Soon after his election, he protested a broadcasting boycott of his party's activities due to their polemical stances on the Mitterrand administration, immigration and nationality. In a series of letters, Le Pen critiqued governmental support of the media ban as well as challenged their position and support of free speech. One year later, the president ordered the leaders of the national television channels to give equal coverage to the FN.²²⁶ By January 1984, the party earned a slot in a monthly political poll for the first time. Quantifying political popularity, 9% of respondents answered that that they held a "positive opinion" of the FN and voiced their support of Le Pen as a politician.²²⁷ Later that month, Le Pen conducted his first prime-time television interview, which he later proclaimed, "the hour that changed everything."²²⁸ This media visibility propelled the party from relative obscurity to national recognition and was reflected in the polls later that year. The FN won 11% of the national vote and ten seats in parliament in the 1984 elections.²²⁹ Two years

²²⁶ See Jonah Birch, "The Many Lives of François Mitterrand." *Jacobin Magazine*. August 19, 2015. <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/08/francois-mitterrand-socialist-party-common-program-communist-pcf-1981-elections-austerity/>. In a 2011 interview, Le Pen recounts his exchange with the then sitting president and his request for "fair treatment" by the media. Mitterrand replies to Le Pen's letter with his own letter granting the request. See Saïd Mahrane, "Le Pen Raconte Mitterrand." *Le Point*. April 28, 2011. http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/le-pen-raconte-mitterrand-28-04-2011-1326986_20.php.

²²⁷ J. G. Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (London: Routledge, 2008), 196. Six months later, 17% of opinion poll respondents held a positive opinion of the National Front.

²²⁸ Several months later, Le Pen was featured on TF1, then Antenne 2 (a key national station) denouncing immigration. See Mahrane, "Le Pen Raconte Mitterrand," http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/le-pen-raconte-mitterrand-28-04-2011-1326986_20.php and Edward G. DeClair *Politics on the Fringe: The People, Policies, and Organization of the French National Front* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 196.

²²⁹ The National Front was able to garner support from both the left and right to strengthen the party's political power and earned a runner-up position in several towns within France, see Brechon, Pierre, and Subrata Kumar Mitra. "The National Front in France: The Emergence of an Extreme Right Protest Movement." *Comparative*

later, the party gained an even larger political and electoral following. The 1986 legislative elections resulted in the National Front winning thirty-five deputy seats and about 10% of the national vote.

The rise of the National Front as a political party rooted in an anti-immigrant sentiment coincided with a distancing of the Socialist national government from supporting migrant rights. The latter half of the 1980s signaled an increasingly staunch resistance to immigration. Sub-Saharan migrants became a particular target of the FN. Several public policies targeted France's "illegal" and seemingly "unassimilable" immigrant populations. Public desire to "purify" the country of its residents who did not fit into the mold of a uniform French identity sparked xenophobic popular opinion and legislation that fostered rhetoric unfriendly to non-European peoples.²³⁰ Within a ten-year period, the French government endowed law enforcement entities with an overwhelming amount of power to police immigrant movement. These expanded powers contributed to heightened violent interactions between the police and immigrants. Moreover, the FN shifted the legislative balance of power from the Left led by Mitterrand to the Right by 1986.

The newly elected right-wing parliament passed the Pasqua Law in 1986. Named after the Minister of Interior Charles Pasqua, it reduced the number of residence permits available to

Politics 25, no. 1 (1992): 63-82. As a result of the party's success, many Socialists felt their political power waning. This notion is supported by Mitterrand's admission that he had underestimated Le Pen and the National Front. See Angelo M. Petroni, "How Mitterrand Made Le Pen." *The Wall Street Journal*. April 26, 2002. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1019765697828462040> and Shields, 196.

²³⁰ For more on public opinion and sentiment towards immigrants during the second half of the 1980's, see Erik Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France Ideas and Policymaking since the 1960s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Hargreaves, Alec G. *Immigration, 'race' and Ethnicity, 190-201* and "Trends in International Migration." *Organisation For Economic Co-Operation and Development*, 2001. <https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/2508596.pdf>.

immigrants and gave the government power to refuse permit renewal.²³¹ Overturning Mitterrand's 1981 ordinance, the Pasqua Law reinstated the government's power to expel migrants without a court order. This legislation gave local authorities the ability to bring undocumented immigrants to the border for deportation. As a result, it not only affected the free movement of immigrant peoples between the city of Paris and the *banlieues*, but also severely limited immigrant employment opportunities due to employer's unwillingness to hire "non-nationals."²³²

In March 1986, the center-right wing organization Rally for the Republic (RPR) and the centrist organization Union for the French Democracy (UDF) proposed an amendment to the Nationality Code under the pretense that immigrants posed a threat to national identity. The proposed amendment would abolish the automatic acquisition of French nationality for foreign children born in France at eighteen years old. In protest of the legal measure, student demonstrations erupted throughout Paris on December 6, 1986. A critical turning point in the demonstrations was the death of Malik Oussekiné that evening. Oussekiné was one of 20,000 students participating in the protests against the Devaquet Law, new immigration restrictions and

²³¹ Rayna Bailey, *Immigration and Migration*, 78; Reynald Blion, "France." In *EU and U.S. approaches to the management of immigration* (Brussels: Migration Policy Group, 2003). The effects of this legislation is seen more clearly in the 1990's. Less than 100,000 people immigrated to France per year in the period from 1993 to 1999. Despite reducing the influx of immigrants to rates seen in the 1950's, an average of 12,000 clandestine immigrants arrived each year in response to this legislative shift. See James Hollifield, "France: Republicanism and the Limits of Immigration Control." In *Controlling Immigration. A Global Perspective*, edited by James A. Hollifield, Philip L. Martin and Pia M. Orrenius (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 200.

²³² Although, changing sentiments toward immigrants reduced social freedoms and economic advancement, the government crackdown on immigration also impacted their ability to find housing. Requirements often include: proof of employment and a residency permit. Migrants whose permits were soon to expire were often denied housing.

changes to the Nationality Code.²³³ During the rally, the twenty-two-year-old was beaten by law enforcement and later arrested. After being transported to the local precinct, Oussekiné died of a heart attack in police custody. Despite conflicting accounts of the events that led up to the cardiac arrest, his death reignited university student protests. Two days later, parliament retracted the Nationality Code amendment as well as the proposed Devaquet Law. In the wake of Oussekiné's death, public opinion turned against the National Front, which supported the legislation. François Mitterrand's vocal objection to the proposed modifications proved to be a catalyst in his re-election campaign.²³⁴

After Mitterrand's successful reelection in 1988, right-wing parliament politicians proposed an update to the Pasqua law. The League of Human Rights and several left-wing parliament officials immediately opposed the draft legislation. Protesting its harmful effects on immigrant families and children, the government ultimately rejected the update to the Pasqua

²³³ The proposed Devaquet Law (1986), named after former university Professor turned Minister of Higher Education Alain Devaquet, it focused on the university admission process and aimed to promote "selectivity." In addition to changing the admissions process, the law wanted to double the \$60 university registration fee. In the wake of Oussekiné's death, the government retracted the law and Devaquet resigned from office. See, "L'ex-ministre RPR Alain Devaquet Est Mort." *Libération*. January 21, 2018. http://www.liberation.fr/france/2018/01/21/l-ex-ministre-rpr-alain-devaquet-est-mort_1624099; David S. Bell, *Presidential Power in Fifth Republic France* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 180-184; Andrew Knapp and Vincent Wright, *The Government and Politics of France* (London: New York, 2006), 320-326 and Jeffrey Ulbrich, "Witnesses Say Student Died After Police Beating." *AP News*. December 06, 1986. <https://www.apnews.com/3110732d360ff9072eb78f2108ff8194>.

²³⁴ Although the French national government retracted the amendment in 1986, it was eventually passed into law in 1993. See Richard Bernstein, "Tensions Rises in Paris After the Death of a Student." *The New York Times*. December 07, 1986. <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/07/world/tension-rises-in-paris-after-the-death-of-a-student.html>; Ouafia Kheniche, "Malik Oussekiné, 30 Ans Après, Autopsie D'une Bavure." *France Inter*. December 06, 2016. <https://www.franceinter.fr/justice/malik-oussekine-30-ans-apres-autopsie-d-une-bavure>; Julian Nundy, "Student Protester Dies As Cops Clear French University." *The Chicago Tribune*. December 07, 1986. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1986-12-07/news/8604010491_1_riot-police-education-minister-rene-monory-malik-oussekine; Jeanne Puchol and Laurent-Frédéric Bollée, *Contrecoups: Malik Oussekiné* (Bruxelles: Casterman, 2016).

law. Instead on August 2, 1989, French parliament passed revised legislation.²³⁵ It mollified the harsh impact of the Pasqua laws but also established a “residence commission for foreigners.”²³⁶ By the year’s end, the Left wing was moderately successful in reversing the most egregious laws passed under the previous right-winged administration. This calculated reaction to tempering former immigration legislation while maintaining closed borders was encapsulated by Mitterrand’s statement, “the threshold of tolerance [for immigrants] has been reached.”²³⁷

This threshold of tolerance quickly evaporated. A month after Mitterrand’s triumphant declaration, a local school suspended three Muslim girls for refusing to remove their headscarves. The event sparked heightened disdain for migrants and the return of right-wing reactionary discourse. The “Foulard Affairs” also known as the “Hijab scandal” shifted public opinion toward islamophobia and rhetoric centered on the politics of difference. Debates erupted on the right and part of the left over the legality of public displays of religious symbols and Islamic students’ lack of willingness to conform to *laïcité*.²³⁸ Embedded in these public debates

²³⁵ Proposed by the left-wing Minister of Interior Pierre Joxe, the law protected residents with relatives in France from deportation, instituted stronger limits on local government deportation proceedings and reintroduced legal ways to challenge deportation decisions rendered by local government. See George Menz, *The Political Economy of Managed Migration: Nonstate Actors, Europeanization, and the Politics of Designing Migration Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

²³⁶ This legislation was created to amend laws passed in 1981 and 1984 regarding residence right of migrants and expulsion protocol that was repealed by right wing legislators.

²³⁷ Translated from Mitterrand’s remark, “*seuil de tolerance est dépasse.*” See Alan Riding, “French Right Hits a Nerve with Immigration Plan.” *The New York Times*. November 24, 1991. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/24/world/french-right-hits-a-nerve-with-immigration-plan.html> and Thomas, *Africa and France*, 10-25 for additional context.

²³⁸ The “Foulard Affair” commenced on September 18, 1989, when three female students were suspended for refusing to remove their hijabs or head scarves in class at the Gabriel Havez Middle School in Creil, France. Located 65 kilometers from Paris, this initial incident was replicated throughout France. Two months later in November 1989, the equivalent of the French Supreme Court ruled that the hijab was a form of religious expression “compatible” with the *laïcité* of public schools. Following the decision of court, the Minister of Education (Lionel Jospin) issued an official statement that outlined the school’s responsibility of accepting or refusing the wearing of the hijabs in classes on a case-by-case basis. See David Beriss, “Scarves, Schools, and Segregation: The Foulard

were gendered and racialized negative tropes about immigrants and public opposition to communitarianism.²³⁹ In an attempt to calm the sea of discontent, the government created the High Council for Integration.²⁴⁰ The council was charged with “integrating” migrants into French society. Their efforts focused on the inclusivity of the French model as well as social and cultural methods for assimilation. In a 1991 report, the Council stressed that, “the French concept of integration must obey a logic of equality and not a logic of minorities.”²⁴¹ Counter to liberal attempts to quell public resistance to religious and racial difference, conservative public officials fanned the flames of discord. Prime Minister Édith Cresson announced government-chartered flights to send undocumented immigrants back to their home country.²⁴² The Mayor of Paris

Affair." *French Politics and Society* 8, no. 1 (1990): 1-13, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42844141>; Laetitia Van Eeckhout, "Rétrocontroverse: 1989, La République Laïque Face Au Foulard Islamique." *Le Monde*. August 02, 2007. https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2007/08/02/retrocontroverse-1989-la-republique-laique-face-au-foulard-islamique_941317_3232.html; "L'affaire Du Foulard Islamique En 1989 - Ina.fr." *Antenne 2*. October 05, 1989. <https://fresques.ina.fr/jalons/fiche-media/InaEdu01136/l-affaire-du-foulard-islamique-en-1989.html>.

²³⁹ Communitarianism is a concept used to ostracize groups of people that identify both within and outside of a nuclear French national identity. According to Montague, “Discourse on communitarianism produces historical, cultural and political codes that influence how political actors behave. As such, it plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of the political activism of ‘visible minorities’. Communitarianism is often deployed to represent the demands for equality of ‘visible minorities’ as expression of disaffection, while simultaneously validating the democratic neutrality of French institutions. Thus, communitarianism has become an effective discourse to delegitimize discussion about race-based institutional inequality and minimize minority political agency.” See Dena Montague, "Communitarianism, Discourse and Political Opportunity in Republican France." *French Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (2013): 219-30.

²⁴⁰ The same month, French government officials also created the National Border Assistance Association for Foreigners (Anafé), which brings together associations and trade unions (ground staff, aircrew and police) to offer foreigners not admitted to French territory legal assistance and to ensure compliance with the guarantees provided by law. This two-edged legislation (the first intent on “integrating” immigrants) and the second focused on the assistance of migrants is emblematic of the Socialist’s government response to immigration issues in the 1980’s. In conjunction with their restrictions to immigration and the assimilation of immigrant presence within French society, the party sought to differentiate itself from the harsher policies of the right by also introducing legislation and organizations that were deemed in support of immigration.

²⁴¹ *Rapport Haut Conseil à l'intégration* (1991). <https://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/124000544/index.shtml> , 19. Miriam Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship: The Politics of Nationality Reform and Immigration in Contemporary France* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 144-145.

²⁴² Édith Cresson is the only woman to have held the office of Prime Minister of France. During an appearance on TF1, Cresson remarked that 3.5 out of 10 ‘illegal’ individuals would be expelled by charter planes only after a

Jacques Chirac denounced the “overdose” of immigrants living in France. In his 1991 speech, he referred to African and Muslim immigrants as “noisy,” smelly, and said that their presence drove French neighbors “crazy.”²⁴³ Adding to government retrenchment against immigration, former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing declared that France must fight against the “invasion” of immigrants into the country.²⁴⁴

Coinciding with the public commentary offered by left and right wing officials, the government passed another two laws that reflected the hardening anti-immigration position. On July 22, 1993, parliament passed the Méhaignerie law. An amendment to the Nationality Code, it outlined that as a condition of French nationality for children born in France to foreign parents, they had to request the right to French citizenship at eighteen years old. The law also withdrew the benefit of *jus soli* citizenship to children born in France whose parents were from the former

court decision. Her desire to charter civilian planes rather than military planes would benefit private companies paid for their deportation services. The anti-racism organization SOS Racism criticized the Prime Minister strategy for deporting immigrants. SOS Racism stated that charter planes were an “ineffective” strategy for reducing the amount of clandestine immigrants. See, “Edith Cresson Durcit Le Ton Sur L’immigration.” *Les Échos*. July 9, 1991. https://www.lesechos.fr/09/07/1991/LesEchos/15925-099-ECH_edith-cresson-durcit-le-ton-sur-l-immigration.htm; Alice Maruani and Maxime Vaudano, “Comment La Gauche Au Pouvoir a Durci Son Discours Sur L’immigration.” *Le Monde*. September 09, 2014. https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2014/09/09/comment-la-gauche-au-pouvoir-a-durci-son-discours-sur-l-immigration_4482946_4355770.html and Alan Riding, “France Unveils Strict New Rules on Immigration.” *The New York Times*. July 11, 1991. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/07/11/world/france-unveils-strict-new-rules-on-immigration.html>.

²⁴³ In a speech in Orleans, France, Chirac said there was an “overdose of foreigners in France and that ‘having Spanish, Polish and Portuguese workers in the country posed fewer problems than having Muslims and blacks that...lived within three or four wives and 20 or so children in council flats, earning three times more in social security payments than the combined wage of an average couple without working...If you add to that the noise and the smell, French workers were understandably driven mad.” See Jennifer Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 100; P. Fysh, *The Politics of Racism in France* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2016), 72-74 and “Le débat sur l’immigration Le maire de Paris: ‘Il y a overdose.’” *Le Monde*, June 21 1991. Available at <http://www.lemonde.fr>.

²⁴⁴ Riva Kastoryano, “Immigration and Identities in France: The War of Words.” *French Politics and Society* 14, no. 2 (1996): 58-66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42844548> and V. Giscard d’Estaing, “Invasion ou immigration,” *Figaro-Magazine* (September 21 1991).

colonies.²⁴⁵ The passage of this law signified the triumph of the FN in unifying the left and the right against immigration. Adding to this retreat from immigration liberalism was an update to the Pasqua law. It delineated the following changes: lengthening of the detention period, limitation of a judge's jurisdiction, the possibility for local authorities to organize deportation of individuals at the border, restriction of the categories protected against deportation, restriction of the right to live with family, and suppression of the right to social protection for any person in an “irregular” situation.²⁴⁶ These stipulations reversed formerly legal practices. The update lengthened the duration of family reunification; barred foreign students from employment in France after graduation; denied migrants the right to an automatic residency renewal; and most formidably it rejected residency requests from foreign spouses that resided in France “illegally” before marriage to a French resident. Together these brutal measures placed between 250,000 and 600,000 people into the category of “illegal immigrants.” As a show of strength, Minister of

²⁴⁵ The Méhaignerie law was a reformulation of the Nationality Code from 1986 that was retracted in the wake of Malik Oussekiné's death. Known as the Second Pasqua Law, the law took away the privilege of automatic citizenship. Instead, requests had to be approved by the French government. See, Bass, *African Immigrant Families in Another France*, 55-58 and "Loi Méhaignerie." *L'immobilier 100% Entre Particuliers*. March 14, 2011. <http://www.partenaire-europeen.fr/Actualites/Juridique/Info-Conseils/Loi-mehaignerie-20110316>.

²⁴⁶ Passed on August 24, 1993, the updated Pasqua law amended the 1945 and 1986 ordinances. The updated Pasqua Laws overturned rights that dated back to the 1789 French Revolution. The new measures included: restricting the ability of people born in France of foreign parents to claim citizenship (previously automatic); permanent residency permits were harder to gain and expanded the powers of immigration authorities to deport non-citizens. The Pasqua Laws also contained a “catch 22 legal loophole” which impacted thousands of immigrant families. “Undocumented parents of children, who are citizens, cannot be legally expelled, but are prevented by the Pasqua Laws from receiving residence papers.” These legal changes facilitated Pasqua's original desire for “zero immigration.” See Roger Cohen, "French Immigration Curbs Provoke Cabinet Rift." *The New York Times*. June 23, 1993. <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/23/world/french-immigration-curbs-provoke-cabinet-rift.html>; "Les Lois Pasqua." *Libération*. August 26, 1996. http://www.liberation.fr/evenement/1996/08/26/les-lois-pasqua_178389; Jean-Baptiste De Montvalon, "Immigration: Depuis Charles Pasqua, La Droite Défend Un Modèle Toujours plus Répressif." *Le Monde*. December 12, 2013. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2013/12/12/depuis-charles-pasqua-la-droite-defend-un-modele-toujours-plus-repressif_4333155_3224.html and Patrick Simon, Kimberly A. Hamilton Kimberly Hamilton, and Clara Veniard. "The Challenge of French Diversity." *Migration Policy Institute*. March 02, 2017. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/challenge-french-diversity>.

Interior Jean-Louis Debré noted that these measures allowed the forcible deportation of 7,352 immigrants in just six months. This represented a 25% increase from the previous year.²⁴⁷

The 1996 *Sans-Papiers* Movement

In reaction to these legal changes, two Parisian churches organized protests in 1996. On March 18th, 300 undocumented immigrants primarily from Mali and Senegal sought sanctuary at Saint Ambroise church in the 11th arrondissement of Paris. The Archbishop of Paris Cardinal Lustiger requested that police forcibly remove the 300 migrants.²⁴⁸ In an interview, Lustiger condemned their actions by calling them “manipulative” and a “political strategy.” His skepticism was further exposed by his comments that over a hundred women and children sought refuge in the church without the permission of a “political entity.”²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Virginie Guiraudon, "Immigration Policy in France." July 28, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/immigration-policy-in-france/>; "Police Remove Immigrant Protesters From Paris Church." *Los Angeles Times*. August 24, 1996. http://articles.latimes.com/1996-08-24/news/mn-37179_1_paris-church; Craig R. Whitney, "Paris Fight Over Aliens Is Waged In a Church." *The New York Times*. August 11, 1996. <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/11/world/paris-fight-over-aliens-is-waged-in-a-church.html>.

²⁴⁸ See Kay Chadwick, *Catholicism, Politics, and Society in Twentieth-century France* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 187-190; Walter Nicholls and Justus Uitermark. *Cities and Social Movements: Immigrant Rights Activism in the US, France, and the Netherlands, 1970-2015* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley Et Sons, 2017), 194-197; Dominique Simonnot, "Des Curés Au Côté Des Sans-papiers. Les Occupations à Paris Et En Banlieue Accentuent Les Dissensions Au Sein De L'Eglise." *Libération*. July 01, 1996. http://www.liberation.fr/libe-3-metro/1996/07/01/des-cures-au-cote-des-sans-papiers-les-occupations-a-paris-et-en-banlieue-accentuent-les-dissensions_177176; Craig R. Whitney, "African Immigrants Refusing to Leave France." *The New York Times*. April 04, 1996. <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/04/04/world/african-immigrants-refusing-to-leave-france.html>.

²⁴⁹ The Priest's comments and public reaction to his interview are chronicled in Simon Behrman's chapter entitled "The Sans-Papiers." See Simon Behrman, *Law and Asylum: Space, Subject, Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2018).

One of the protesters recalled the police arriving at the Saint Ambroise church on March 22nd. Dressed in riot gear, officers carried batons which they used to hit several of the men participating in a hunger strike. Chronicled in his diary, Mamady Sané detailed the chaos. “Women and children were screaming, men running to try and escape arrest, chairs flew through the air and broke against the walls of the church...Sixty two adults were arrested and the others who had escaped were surrounded by policemen. They told them that they should know blacks had no place here in France.”²⁵⁰ After their forcible removal from Saint Ambroise, many of the asylum seekers occupied a theater in the Parisian suburb of Bois de Vincennes until April. Ten days later, a collective of lawyers, academics and other mediators met with Prime Minister Alain Juppé. Regrettably, the Prime Minister rejected all of the mediators’ recommendations. Then the group moved to an abandoned warehouse until they received word from the government that only 48 individuals were to receive residency papers. Many immigrants in the group soon sought refuge at the Saint Bernard church in the 18th arrondissement of Paris in hopes of forcing a more equitable response from the government.

With the support of the parish priest Henri Coindé, the “*Sans-Papiers* of Saint Ambroise” staged a second occupation at Saint Bernard. Within six weeks, over 300 African migrants gathered again in the church. Some participated in the hunger strike and others sought protection from the police dispatched to deport them.²⁵¹ In conversation with one of the group’s leaders,

²⁵⁰ Mamady Sané, *Sorti De L'Ombre. Journal D'un Sans-papier* (Paris: Le Temps Des Cerises, 1996), 45. Excerpt translated by Jane Freedman.

²⁵¹ As word spread of their activities at the church, other immigrants began fasting at “the neo-Gothic Right Bank church located in the *Goutte d'Or* neighborhood...Ahmady Kamara, a hunger striker from Mali, symbolized the group's determination. Having returned to the church to join the 300 other illegal immigrants -- adults and children -- he swore to “go right on to the bitter end” in hopes of obtaining residence and work papers that would allow them to stay legally in a country where many have worked for years.” See Jonathan C. R., “Paris Raid Fails to End Immigrants’ Hunger Strike.” *The Washington Post*. August 13, 1996.

Coindé suggested renaming the coalition the “Saint Bernard *Sans-Papiers*.” Distancing Saint Bernard from Saint Ambroise served two purposes. The first was a political maneuver to separate the hardline response of Cardinal Lustiger from the more humanitarian engagements of Saint Bernard. The second was to jumpstart a new public relations campaign to gain more public support.²⁵²

Led by two West African immigrants, the Saint Bernard movement for undocumented immigrants received international media coverage. Madjiguène Cissé and Ababacar Diop were at the helm of the battle. Their work represented the larger struggle of those that sought refuge in the church. Ababacar Diop was born in Senegal and arrived in France clandestinely in the summer of 1988. He immediately gained an occupation as a janitor and maintained other domestic jobs while pursuing a degree in computer studies.²⁵³ After seven years working and studying in France, the prefecture of Seine-Saint-Denis denied his residence renewal application. Without working papers or a residency permit, Diop was one of the asylum seekers in the Saint Ambroise church.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1996/08/13/paris-police-raid-fails-to-end-immigrants-hunger-strike/4ce0ed0c-56cd-42e6-a45f-42cea2aa2c3d/?utm_term=.ee987b58ecea and Amadou Ndiaye, and Pierre Lepidi, "Les Sans-papiers De Saint-Bernard, Vingt Ans Après." *Le Monde*. August 23, 2016.
https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/08/22/les-sans-papiers-de-saint-bernard-vingt-ans-apres_4986040_3224.html.

²⁵² In a retrospective essay, parish priest Henri Coindé states that he never participated in negotiations between the immigrants and the government nor did he ever participate in the press conferences. This position is detailed in Henri Coindé, "Saint-bernard, 15 Ans Après." *Migrations Société* 139, no. 1 (2012): 185-200.

²⁵³ Diop's ability to gain employment despite not having working papers and a residence card is supported by a "normalized procedure" of employers hiring workers first, then attempting to seek legal "regularisation." This direct undermining of policy allowed employers to circumvent the official channels and place the onus of legalization upon the employee rendering them susceptible to higher rates of termination and replacement. See Tapinos Georges, *L'Immigration Etrangere En France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires De France, 1975), 88-91 and Hollifield and Ross, *Searching for The New France*, 128.

After the police raided the church, he found a second home at Saint Bernard, where he met Madjiguène Cissé. Born and raised in Dakar, Cissé left Senegal to receive a degree in Germanic studies at Saarbrücken University in Germany. In 1993, she moved her family to Paris to facilitate her daughter's studies in France. Although she maintained legal residency papers, Cissé served as spokeswoman replicating her earlier work as an activist during the 1968 student demonstrations in Senegal.²⁵⁴ As Cissé and Diop spoke to the media and collaborated with local NGOs, activist networks and anti-racism organizations, their cause drew a larger audience. Several other "*sans-papiers*" collectives were formed throughout Paris and in other cities around France. On July 20, a national coalition of "*Sans-Papiers Collectives*" formed. The collective utilized a variety of tactics to pressure the government including press releases, individual applications for residency supported by French nationals, demonstrations and the most importantly the press. At its peak, about 2,000 individuals came to the church daily to record their stories, offer supplies and various other donations. Both national and international press helped swing the pendulum of public support in the direction of the *sans-papiers*. Two national opinions polls noted that 46 to 53% of French people supported their campaign.²⁵⁵ Among their high-profile supporters was actress Emmanuelle Béart and Professor of Medicine and former Minister of Health Léon Schwartzberg.

²⁵⁴ Maryline Baumard, "En 2016, Le Combat Pour La Régularisation Des Sans-papiers Se Joue Sur Les Lieux De Travail." *Le Monde*. August 23, 2016. https://www.lemonde.fr/immigration-et-diversite/article/2016/08/22/en-2016-le-combat-pour-la-regularisation-se-joue-sur-les-lieux-de-travail_4986032_1654200.html; Madjiguène Cissé, *The Sans-Papiers: The New Movement of Asylum Seekers and Immigrants without Papers in France: A Woman Draws the First Lessons* (London: Crossroads Books, 1997); "Madjiguène Cissé Quitte La France." *Libération*. July 26, 2000. http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2000/07/26/madjiguene-cisse-quitte-la-france_331216.

²⁵⁵ MH Abdallah, *J'y suis! J'y reste!: Les luttes de l'immigration en France depuis les années soixante* (Paris: Éditions Reflex, 2000), 83; Behrman, *Law and Asylum*, 205; T. Blin, *Les sans-papiers de Saint-Bernard: Mouvement social et action organisé* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), 100.

On the 34th day of the occupation Ababacar Diop spoke with reporters. In the wake of a meeting between the group's lawyer, Henri Leclerc and Minister of Interior Debré, Diop responded to questions about the group's demands. He stated:

If Debré wants us to meet him to hear his usual litany, it's not worth it. But if he is willing to listen to us, listen to our proposals, listen to our arguments...we agree to go meet him. On the other hand, the hunger strikers are determined to go all the way, so that people whose situation can be regularized through the defined criteria are actually regularized. That's all we ask.²⁵⁶

The meeting between the "Saint Bernard *Sans-Papiers*" and Minister Debré never materialized. In the face of this setback, Madjiguène Cissé gathered many of the Saint Bernard women to develop a new plan. She noted, "Each time the movement ran out of steam, the women met and worked out initiatives which relaunched the struggle." During the hunger-strikes, they led a Women's March reigniting support from the press and occupied the 18th arrondissement town hall. The day after their protests at the town hall, the "Saint Bernard *Sans-Papiers*" received notification that their cases would be heard. Cissé linked their demonstrations to a Senegalese tradition of "self-organization." The Saint Bernard women were a driving force in the *sans-papiers* movement in 1996. Despite their critical contributions, these women were often marginalized by male members.

In a reflective essay, Cissé detailed the degree of sexism within the movement. She wrote,

Women have played an extremely important role in this struggle...At the beginning it seemed to be taken for granted that women would not participate in general meetings: it wasn't necessary, since the husbands were there! Not only did women not have the right to speak; they didn't even have the right to listen to what was being said at general

²⁵⁶ "Entretien Avec Ababacar Diop." *Sans Papier*. August 7, 1997. <https://www.bok.net/pajol/ababacar.html>.

meetings. Two or three women began imposing their presence at general meetings. Then they spoke. The third stage was to have women's meetings. Then the men were really puzzled; they saw us as scheming, plotting, up to no good; they used to hang around our meetings to try and find out what we were saying. In fact, these meetings gave great strength to the women, and enabled them to play an important role in the direction of the struggle. When we were in the 15th arrondissement...SOS-Racism (a national anti-racist organization) suggested that we submit our case files to the Ministry and that we go home, the men were ready to do that, because they trusted the priest. It was the women who didn't want to.²⁵⁷

Contrary to the original plan of the "Saint Bernard *Sans-Papiers*," women demanded a seat the negotiation table. After three women "imposed" their will during the meeting, Madjiguène Cissé was selected as an additional spokesperson. Originally deemed the "Women's" leader, Cissé was recognized along with Diop in official negotiation meetings. The efforts of these Black women kept the movement going for almost another two months.



Figure 9. Madjiguène Cissé (pictured on the left) and Ababacar Diop (pictured holding the microphone) at a press conference on August 21, 1996.

Despite of all their efforts, the occupation ended unceremoniously. At dawn on August 23, over 1,000 riot police broke through a "human wall" of supporters. Using axes, they hacked through the church doors and a barricade of pews. Forcibly entering the church, the police threw chairs and released tear gas. Then they "started to sort people and separate the whites from the

²⁵⁷ Madjiguène Cissé, "The Sans-Papiers: A Woman Draws the First Lessons." *Association for Progressive Communications* (1997). <http://artactivism.members.gn.apc.org/allpdfs/038-The Sans Papiers.pdf>. Cissé later explained that the women of the movement often "struggled to be heard by male delegates" and "representatives of the French associations that support the *sans-papiers*." See Jane Freedman and Carrie Tarr. *Women, Immigration and Identities in France* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

blacks. Anyone who resisted received numerous blows.”²⁵⁸ Local paramedics removed ten emaciated hunger-strikers on stretchers. They vowed to continue their protest till death. Amongst those arrested was Madjiguène Cissé. One journalist attributed this to the fact that, “Diop...is more diplomatic than the volatile Marxist Cissé.”²⁵⁹ Over 10,000 angry Parisian protesters took to the streets in opposition to the government’s removal of the Saint Bernard occupants. As a result of these protests, President Chirac faced public uproar and damaging international reports. In response to this upheaval, he assured the press that a court order released most of the arrested immigrants and that all but one of the asylum seekers received their residency papers. Several days later, Chirac stated he hoped that this show of strength by police and the government sent the message to “[undocumented migrants] that there are no more chances for you in France.”²⁶⁰

This dismal “end” to the Saint Bernard and Saint-Ambroise church protests catalyzed more demonstrations against draconian immigration laws.²⁶¹ On February 27, 1997, 100,000

²⁵⁸ Cisse, “The Sans-Papiers: A Woman Draws the First Lessons.”

²⁵⁹ Laura Marlowe, *The Irish Times*. February 20, 1997. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/by-lara-marlowe-1.44793>.

²⁶⁰ This remark coincided with a speech he gave in 1991 as the Mayor of Paris, where he stated, “there is an overdose of foreigners in France...Spanish, Polish and Portuguese workers in the country posed fewer problems than having Muslims and blacks that...lived with three or four wives and 20 or so children in public housing, earning three times more in social security payments than the combined wage of an average couple without working.” From “Le débat sur l’immigration Le maire de Paris: ‘Il y a overdose.’” *Le Monde*, June 21 1991. Available at <http://www.lemonde.fr> For his comments about “illegal aliens” see “French Police Remove Immigrants from Church.” September 1996. <https://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=1029>. For further information about reactions by the press regarding the end of the Saint Bernard occupation see Juliette Bastin, “Léon Schwartzberg.” *Jeune Afrique*. October 21, 2003. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/88234/archives-thematique/on-schwartzberg/>; Emine Fisek, *Aesthetic Citizenship: Immigration and Theater in Twenty-first-century Paris* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017); Aurélie Rossignol, “Dans Le Retro. Il Y a 20 Ans, L’expulsion Des Sans-papiers De L’église Saint-Bernard.” *Le Parisien*. August 23, 2016. <http://www.leparisien.fr/societe/dans-le-retro-il-y-a-20-ans-l-expulsion-des-sans-papiers-de-l-eglise-saint-bernard-19-08-2016-6053811.php>.

²⁶¹ On August 24, 1996, 57 Africans were deported. Including four immigrants from the Saint-Bernard protests. Other Saint-Bernard occupants received orders to leave France by September 12. The government announced, “Those sent back to Africa would receive resettlement aid, and that 30 to 40 of those in the church would receive

Parisians protested a proposed bill that required individuals hosting foreign visitors to report to the prefecture on the departure date of their visitors' visa. This legal maneuver was an attempt to round-up "illegal migrants" that had over-stayed their residency permit. After gathering thousands of signatures protesting this measure, the French government responded with an amendment to the law.²⁶² Authorizing the confiscation of foreigners' passports in "irregular situations," the collection of fingerprints of foreigners who applied for a residence permit and the restriction of judicial powers in matters of detention, this law was a strong reproach to the inroads created by the *sans-papiers* activism.

As public protests escalated in 1997 after the legislative elections, new Minister of the Interior Jean-Pierre Chevènement presented a regularization process for undocumented migrants. This measure only benefited approximately 80,000 applicants. The restrained response did not repeal the harsh constraints of the previous laws, but it did offer new provisions for immigrants. It introduced a procedure of permanent regularization (although only eleven cases were approved

residence permits." See "French Police Remove Immigrants from Church." September 1996.
<https://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=1029>.

²⁶² On April 24, 1997, the Debré law was passed (two months before legislative elections) named after Minister of Interior Jean Louis Debré. As a response to closing "legal loopholes" left open by 1993 legislation, the Debré law intended to close any remaining options to regularize migrants. "France now holds a record for legislative change in the area of immigration. Major reforms were passed in 1980, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1993, 1997, and most recently in 1998." From Virginie Guiraudon, "Immigration Policy in France." July 28, 2016.
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/immigration-policy-in-france/>. For further detail on these changes see Philippe Bourbeau, *Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order* (London: Routledge, 2013), 138; Shelese Emmons, "Le Debre Bill: Immigration Legislation or a National "Front"?" *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 17th ser., 4, no. 1 (1997): 357-66.
<https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1122&context=ijgls>; Nicole Gauthier, "Deux Dispositions Sur L'immigration Recalées." *Libération*. April 24, 1997.
http://www.liberation.fr/evenement/1997/04/24/deux-dispositions-sur-l-immigration-recalees_201841; "Loi N° 97-396 Du 24 Avril 1997 Portant Diverses Dispositions Relatives à L'immigration. Loi Dite Loi Debré." *LegiFrance: Le Service Public De La Diffusion Du Droit*.
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000564968&dateTexte=20180528>.

under “private and family life” and “medical reasons”), it legalized territorial asylum, and required a reason to be offered when certain visas were refused by the government, it also reinstated residence commissions and increased the maximum duration of detention from ten to twelve days.²⁶³ After almost twenty years of immigration reform, the Chevènement law represented a critical turning point in French legal history.

One of the last laws to revise protections offered by the original 1945 ordinance opening France to immigration, the Chevènement law marked the achievement of a “zero immigration policy.” A reversal of the 1945 ordinance that opened France to immigrants, the 1997 legislation marked the end of an era. More importantly, the legislation turned government attention from the language of policing its outside borders to the “threat within.” Increasingly, government officials focused on second-generation youth and implemented various methods for integration. This anti-immigrant climate affected many Black youth born to immigrant parents. Contemporary French scholars often note that policy focused on increased policing of immigrant neighborhoods and the assimilation of second-generation youth through the French education system. Primary

²⁶³ On May 11, 1998, the Chevènement law was passed, despite being objected by factions on the right and left. Although seemingly progressive, it did not retract any of the previous immigration constraints outlined by French law. The Chevènement law continued previous practices by the French government of deporting *sans-papiers* by using charter planes. Air France and Air Afrique pilots protested “systematically” accepting passengers for deportation (specifically to Mali) after Chevènement criticized churches for aiding illegal immigrants. See Béatrice Bantman, “Les Avancées De La Loi Chevènement Rognées Par Une Circulaire.” *Liberation*. July 29, 1998. http://www.liberation.fr/france/1998/07/29/les-avancees-de-la-loi-chevenement-rognees-par-une-circulaire_242519; Philippe Bernard and Anne Rohou, “Protestations contre le durcissement du projet Chevènement sur l’immigration,” *Le Monde*. (14 Mars 1998), 3; “Loi No 98-349 Du 11 Mai 1998 Relative à L’entrée Et Au Séjour Des étrangers En France Et Au Droit D’asile.” *Legifrance - Le Service Public De L’accès Au Droit*. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000191302&categorieLien=id>; J. Winders, *Paris Africain*, 116-121.

education served as a fundamental part of France's model for integrating the children of immigrants into French society.²⁶⁴

In a series of interviews, several French children born to African immigrants reflect on their childhood. In their comments, they discussed the impact of an anti-immigrant sociopolitical climate and how schools restricted their expression of a racial and ethnic identity. Reflecting on her childhood, Gaelle, a woman of Congolese descent in her late 20s, stated:

I'm a part of the second generation of the diaspora in France...I feel like I grew up like any other French person just with immigrant parents...They never really insisted that I have this African legacy. Their goal was for me to fit in and get good grades. My dad was very uncomfortable in France. He tried his best to fit in...Growing up, I always felt like France did not want you to be too connected to Africa, in the way you look dress, or even smell. When you go to school, you have to look French. Detached from anything from Africa.²⁶⁵

Her experiences as a child where complete detachment from Africa meant assimilation into French society were a result of her father's experiences. His inability to gain acceptance in France resulted in raising a daughter where acceptance equated to not speaking their indigenous language of Lingala nor visiting their country of origin in the Congo. Although Gaelle ultimately did well in school and earned the grades to go to college, she felt a key piece of her identity was missing. Separation from the language, food, customs and history of the Congo impacted both her familial relations and her self-esteem.

Another young woman named Fanta, of Senegalese descent in her mid-20s, echoed this sentiment. She stated, "I grew up in a mostly white environment. Most of my friends were white

²⁶⁴ Hollifield and Ross, *Searching for the New France*, 134.

²⁶⁵ Gaelle (a woman of Congolese descent in her late 20's), in discussion with the author. April 11, 2017.

girls. They never really seemed to accept me completely. I didn't grow up around people who looked like me. I couldn't quite fit in because of it...my self-esteem was really impacted by this."²⁶⁶ After completing high school, Fanta moved to the United States to complete her education at Madison College in Wisconsin. While there she found a small community of Black young women who helped her express her frustrations with assimilation in France and supported her process of embracing her identity as a woman who identifies as both African and French.

Laurent, a mid-30s male of Senegalese descent, also expressed the significance of a dual identity. He stated, "I'm French but my parents are African...I know there are people who don't want me to be here, but I'm still gonna be here. I'm not going anywhere. France is my home too, I don't really know Africa."²⁶⁷ Growing up in a family that embraced its African roots, he recognizes his Senegalese origins. His parents visit Senegal often and aim to return to their "home" upon retirement. Born and raised in France, Laurent identifies Paris as his home and does not want to ever live in Africa. This desire to be absorbed by France while also grappling with an African identity and culture is part of a larger narrative of negotiating space and place within society. Despite encountering frequent incidents with racism, Laurent has no interest in leaving the country. This recognition of his "Frenchness" despite rejection from the state and society is contrasted by Fanta who said, "As I grew up, I became increasingly frustrated with how republican French ideals do not include non-white people. No matter how hard we try.

²⁶⁶ Fanta (a woman of Senegalese descent in her mid-20's,) in discussion with the author. April 16, 2017.

²⁶⁷ Laurent, in discussion with the author. October 4, 2016.

When I go to another country, I'm French. When I go to Africa...they tell me I'm French. But when I'm here [in France], I can't be French."²⁶⁸

These sentiments of frustration, dual identity and a connection to their African roots would find an international audience in 1998. As France prepared to host the World Cup, its national team would become a symbol of hope for many second-generation youth. France's multi-ethnic national team had roots in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. For many, the twenty-two player squad represented the possibility that France could embrace racial diversity and immigration.

***“Black, Blanc, Beur”* France's 1998 World Cup Team & the Myth of Racial Harmony**

On March 10, 1996, the qualification process for the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) World Cup began.²⁶⁹ 174 national teams competed for 30 tournament slots. FIFA reserved two spaces: one for Brazil, the defending champions, and another for France, the host country. In ten cities across the nation, stadiums gathered spectators from around the world.²⁷⁰ As France prepared for the arrival of hundreds of thousands of

²⁶⁸ Fanta, in discussion with the author. April 16, 2017.

²⁶⁹ Founded in 1930, FIFA awards its coveted World Cup trophy every four years. Eight years later, France hosted the World Cup games in 1938. Sixty years later, the world championship games returned to the hexagon for the second time.

²⁷⁰ Cities that host the World Cup matches are determined by the size of the stadium. All stadiums could hold a capacity of over 30,000 people. Locations included: Saint-Denis-Stade de France (suburb of Paris), Marseille- Stade Vélodrome, Paris-Parc des Princes, Lyon-Stade de Gerland, Lens- Stade Félix-Bollaert, Nantes-Stade de la Beaujoire, Toulouse-Stadium de Toulouse, Saint-Étienne-Stade Geoffroy-Guichard, Bordeaux-Parc Lescure, Montpellier-Stade de la Mosson. Of all the stadiums selected to host the games, Stade de France located in Saint-Denis was the largest. With a capacity of 80,000, the stadium was commissioned for the World Cup games. Then Mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac brokered an agreement with acting Prime Minister Édouard Balladur for construction of the

international fans, the *sélectionneur* carefully selected the members of the 1998 French soccer team.²⁷¹ Out of the twenty-two players comprising the squad, eight players were non-white: Lilian Thuram, Marcel Desailly, Christian Karembeu, Zinedine Zidane, Bernard Lama, Patrick Vieira, Thierry Henry and Bernard Diomede.²⁷²

This multiethnic team was much more representative of the diversity within France than previous teams. Based on the 1990 census, 4.2 million people within France were born outside of the country amounting to 7.4% of the total population.²⁷³ This “rainbow team” came to represent the hope of diversity in France. Nicknamed “*Black, Blanc, Beur*” to replicate the tricolor French flag, the team was a particular target of the FN.²⁷⁴ In remarks offered in 1996, Jean-Marie Le

stadium for the sum of 2.67 billion francs. See Hugh Dauncey and Geoff Hare. *France and the 1998 World Cup: The National Impact of a World Sporting Event* (Taylor and Francis, 2014), 90-110.

²⁷¹ The *sélectionneur* is the head coach of the national team

²⁷² Lilian Thuram was born in Guadeloupe and immigrated to France in 1981. Marcel Desailly was born in Ghana and immigrated to France in 1972 at the age of four. Christian Karembeu was born in New Caledonia and immigrated to France at the age of seventeen. Zinedine Zidane was born in Marseille, France to Algerian immigrants in 1972. Bernard Lama was born in French Guiana and immigrated to France in 1981. Patrick Vieira was born in Senegal and immigrated to France in 1984. Thierry Henry was born in Les Ulis (a Parisian suburb) to parents from Guadeloupe and Martinique. Bernard Diomede was born in France to parents from Guadeloupe.

²⁷³ However, this estimate may undercount the actual migrant population. The 1990 census was the last one conducted before the World Cup, see "France - General Population Census of 1990 - IPUMS Subset." *INSEE* (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques) <http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/2146>. This demographic shift in the foreign population is a marked shift from statistics gathered in 1975 (when immigration was further restricted). At the time, Europeans accounted for over 60% of the foreigners living in France. By 1990, Europeans accounted for 40% of the foreign population. Whereas, populations from the Maghreb account for 39% and populations from Sub-Saharan Africa account for 6% in 1990. See "How Racist Is France?" *The Economist*. July 16, 1998. <https://www.economist.com/europe/1998/07/16/how-racist-is-france>.

²⁷⁴ “*Black, Blanc, Beur*” was supposed to champion racial diversity in France. Interestingly, Black is the only English word in this phrase and is used to describe African diasporic populations.

Pen stated, "It's a bit artificial to bring players from abroad and call it the French team."²⁷⁵ Of course all the players were French citizens, but Le Pen hoped to capitalize on notions of exclusively white Frenchness. His comment was quickly rebutted in the popular press and by the players. Bernard Lama responded, "Our team gives you a sense of the sociocultural mix that is France today."²⁷⁶ Le Pen continued his tirade against the players by protesting against those that did not sing the national anthem, "*La Marseillaise*." He retorted, "We put an Algerian to please the Arabs, a Kanak who does not even want to sing the *Marseillaise* and Blacks to satisfy the West Indians. All of this, has nothing to do with a team from France!"²⁷⁷ Yet, the multicultural team did represent France, as both a symbol of its colonial history and the postcolonial legacy of migration of these populations to the metropole. Contrary to Le Pen's comments, many non-white people living in France saw the possibility of achieving racial equality epitomized by the team.

Over the course of the month, France's "rainbow" team marched its way to the FIFA World Cup championship. On July 12, 1998, France faced the defending champions. In front of more than 75,000 fans, Zinedine Zidane scored two goals before half-time. French goalie Fabien Barthez prevented Brazil from scoring a single goal, and in the final minute Emmanuel Petit scored another goal sealing Brazil's defeat 3-0. That evening 1.5 million people descended upon

²⁷⁵ Christopher Clarey, "World Cup '98; France Hoping for Title At End of the Rainbow." *The New York Times*. July 07, 1998. <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/07/07/sports/world-cup-98-france-hoping-for-title-at-end-of-the-rainbow.html>.

²⁷⁶ Clarey, "World Cup '98," *The New York Times*. 1998.

²⁷⁷ Kanak (is a person from New Caladonia). See Delphine Bancaud, "1998-2018, Deux Victoires Des Bleus... Et Toujours Les Mêmes Réactions Racistes?" *20 Minutes*. July 19, 2018. <https://www.20minutes.fr/societe/2309783-20180718-video-1998-2018-deux-victoires-bleus-toujours-memes-reactions-racistes>. Le Pen failed to discuss the white French players like Christophe Dugarry that did not know all of the words to the national anthem. See Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 104.

the streets of the Champs-Élysées.²⁷⁸ For many Black youth, the 1998 World Cup win was the first time French people celebrated their visible presence. This national euphoria was bittersweet for Afropeans who both joined in revelry but also marked disappointment that “it took a World Cup victory for the white elite to find out that...minorities existed and that we were actual French citizens.”²⁷⁹ The face of France’s World Cup team was Zinedine Zidane, who scored two goals that night after receiving a red card earlier in the play-offs in a match against Saudi Arabia.²⁸⁰ His desire for redemption propelled France toward its first World Cup win. That night crazed fans clamored “Zidane for President.”²⁸¹ Their cries echoed loudly in the night air. In his remarks following the historic win, French President Jacques Chirac declared, “This is a France that wins and is, for once, united in victory.” In the popular press, *Le Monde* described the team as a “symbol of the diversity and of the unity of the country.”²⁸² Even Le Pen backpedaled his

²⁷⁸ "Fête Sur Les Champs-Élysées Après La Victoire De La France En Coupe Du Monde De Football - Ina.fr." *INA*. November 08, 2016. <https://fresques.ina.fr/jalons/fiche-media/InaEdu01144/fete-sur-les-champs-elysees-apres-la-victoire-de-la-france-en-coupe-du-monde-de-football.html>.

²⁷⁹ Rokhaya Diallo, “Opinion | Don't Let France's World Cup Victory Erase the Issues Affecting Black French People.” *The Washington Post*. July 16, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/07/16/dont-let-frances-world-cup-victory-erase-the-issues-affecting-black-french-people/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.3af08ddf703e.

²⁸⁰ Bonnie DeSimone, "FRANCE 4, SAUDI ARABIA 0." *Chicago Tribune*. June 19, 1998. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1998-06-19-9806190041-story.html>; "Zidane Sur Son Rouge En 98: «Ce Geste, Quand J'écrase Le Joueur, Je Ne Suis Pas Fier»." *Le Figaro*. October 6, 2018. <http://sport24.lefigaro.fr/football/coupe-du-monde/russie-2018/actualites/deschamps-apres-france-arabie-saoudite-en-98-zizou-excuse-moi-j-ai-fait-une-connerie-912877>.

²⁸¹ The euphoric cries for “Zidane for President” were both symbolic of the possibility for a sports win to translate into a political victory. See Julien Leclercq, Christian Schmitt, Fabrizio Tribuzio-Bugatti, Benjamin Fayet, Rémi Loriov, Guillaume Duhamel, Christophe Berurier, and Charles Guiral. "12 Juillet 98: Quand Zinédine Zidane Devient Président." *Revue Consacrée à La Littérature, La Philosophie Et La Politique*. December 17, 2013. <http://lenouveaucenacle.fr/12-juillet-98-quand-zidane-devient-president>. Their jubilation also marks a pointed turn from when fans lambasted his behavior in the previous match, where he earned a red card. See Julien Laurens, "Allez Les Bleus! The Story of France's 1998 World Cup Triumph." *ESPN*. June 08, 2018. <http://www.espn.com/soccer/club/france/478/blog/post/3495197/the-story-of-france-1998-world-cup-triumph>.

²⁸² For context surrounding Chirac’s quote, see Lincoln Allison, *The Global Politics of Sport: The Role of Global Institutions in Sport* (London: Routledge, 2006), 134. For more about *Le Monde*’s media coverage see Tom Adams,

previous polemic comments and praised the team, “This is the victory of the France team, but I claim it also like the victory of the National Front...The FN has always recognized that French citizens can be different races and different religions as long as they share the love of their country and the will to serve it.”²⁸³

"Ronaldo's Darkest Day." *ESPN*. February 10, 2011. <http://en.espn.co.uk/football/sport/story/73108.html>. Just one year after the 1998 World Cup, the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights charged with examining the impact of racism in France added a new question to its annual poll. Were "too many foreign players in the French football team?" 36% of participants responded affirmatively. For more information, see, "2000 - RAPPORT ANNUEL - Commission Nationale Consultative Des Droits De L'Homme (CNCDH)." *Ligue Des Droits De L'Homme*. May 29, 2001. <https://www.ldh-france.org/2000-rapport-annuel-commission-nationale-consultative-des-droits-de-lhomme-cncdh/>. In 2001, a match at Stade de France between France and Algeria, the first of its kind since Algeria gained its independence in 1962 turned sour. Spectators booed the singing of the “La Marseillaise.” Within 17 minutes left on the clock, fans stormed onto the field disrupting the match, while France was leading 4-1. Riot police were deployed to stop the mainly youth dominated crowd from throwing items onto the field and disrupting the game. As a result, the match was called off. For more press coverage see Gilles Verdez, "France-Algérie: Pourquoi Le Match a Dégénéré." *Le Parisien*. October 08, 2001. <http://www.leparisien.fr/sports/france-algerie-pourquoi-le-match-a-degenere-08-10-2001-2002494338.php>; Salah Guemriche, "Le Match Truqué De La « Françalgérie »." *Le Monde*. July 01, 2014. https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2014/06/30/le-match-truque-de-la-francalgerie_4448083_3232.html; Brigitte Vital-Durand, "France-Algérie: La 76e Minute Au Tribunal." *Libération*. February 12, 2002. http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2002/02/12/france-algerie-la-76e-minute-au-tribunal_393446. Former World Cup player turned activist, Lillian Thuram expressed his disappointment in the behavior of young black and Arab spectators. See "Fans Force Abandonment of Watershed France v. Algeria Match." *The Guardian*. October 08, 2001. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2001/oct/08/newsstory.sport16>. The denouement of the “rainbow” team’s spirit was encapsulated in 2009. In the qualifying matches for the World Cup, more than 12,000 Algerian fans descended upon the Champs Elysées to celebrate Algeria’s first re-entry as a qualified team since 1986. Shouting “Vive l’Algérie,” the celebratory crowd soon faced the rancor of the police as altercations between the Algerian fans and the police unfurled. Similar occurrences happened in Lyon and Marseille. The face of the “rainbow team” Zinedine Zidane described this moment as “the worst” in his football career. This sour experience rehashed old wounds from a colonial past, see Andrew Hussey, "Why French Algerians' Football Celebrations Turned into a Battle." *The Guardian*. November 22, 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/22/france-algeria-paris-riots-football> and Andrew Hussey, "Interview: Zinedine Zidane." *The Guardian*. April 03, 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2004/apr/04/sport.features>.

²⁸³ Renaud Dely, "Le Pen: «la Coupe Du Monde, Est Un Détail De L'histoire». Nouvelle Diatribe Provocatrice Du Leader Du FN." *Libération*. July 13, 1998. http://www.liberation.fr/france/1998/07/13/le-pen-la-coupe-du-monde-est-un-detail-de-l-histoire-nouvelle-diatribe-provocatrice-du-leader-du-fn_243689.



Figure 10. The 1998 French World Cup team pictured after their historic win.

This celebratory euphoria was short-lived. Within four years the spirit of the “*Black, Blanc, Beur*” fizzled. In 2002, as the French soccer team prepared to defend their world title, the French presidential elections were in full swing. Jean-Marie Le Pen garnered 17% of the national vote and was set to face the incumbent President Jacques Chirac. If the French team was supposed to be representative of the triumph of diversity and racial equality in France, this legacy was in jeopardy. Players from the 1998 World Cup Team were called upon to squelch Le Pen’s momentum. Marcel Desailly, captain of national team and of Ghanaian origins, published a statement denouncing Le Pen, “Like the vast majority of French [people], I am shocked...I just hope that the French come to their senses and vote against him.”²⁸⁴ Echoing his teammates’ sentiments, Bernard Lama explained, “There is a lot of discontent and people living in misery and Le Pen has been able to exploit all the social evils...The values we stood for in 1998 have been blown apart.”²⁸⁵ In the spirit of solidarity, the players threatened to boycott the 2002 World

²⁸⁴ The success of the football team has garnered political traction as the players used their notoriety and symbolism to speak to French voters. Desailly’s teammate Robert Pires echoed his concern, “As players we have the responsibility to show people that they must react to this threat quickly. I urge everyone to vote for Jacques Chirac.” For more of the players reactions see, “Pires Warns of Boycott over Le Pen.” *CNN*. May 3, 2002. <http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/worldcup/05/03/pires.lepen/index.html>.

²⁸⁵ “French Spirit of 1998 Turns Sour.” *CNN*. April 26, 2002. <http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/worldcup/04/26/france.lepen/>.

Cup games if Le Pen was elected. Explaining both the frustration of the players and the growing sense of disillusionment for the non-white citizens in France, Mouloud Aounit, president of anti-racism group MRAP (Movement Against Racism, Anti-Semitism and for Peace) stated, “The politicians thought they had solved all the problems through football...In fact the effect lasted about as long as the fireworks.”²⁸⁶

The use of soccer as a model for racial integration and harmony failed to live up to its predicted utility within French society. Serge July, the editor of *Libération*, explained, “A World Cup victory does not change social reality...but it can change the image the French have of themselves.”²⁸⁷ This duality was reflected in the final outcome of the Presidential race. Chirac won the 2002 election in a landslide garnering 82% of the popular vote.²⁸⁸ Chirac’s approval

²⁸⁶ This game of “political football” ended in French loss after 1998, when Zidane failed to symbolically live up to France’s creation of a mythological nation devoid of racial inequality or prejudice. Former French President François Hollande offered a precursory warning to politicians betting on soccer to solve political and social ills. Reflecting on the 1998 World Cup win, he stated, “We wanted to draw the conclusion that this victory would change French society. It didn’t change it. It’s up to politicians to change it.” See Angelique Chrisafis, "Political Football: Macron Banking on France's World Cup Success." *The Guardian*. July 10, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/10/political-football-macron-banking-on-frances-world-cup-success>.

²⁸⁷ For more on July’s quote see, "How Racist Is France?" *The Economist*. July 16, 1998. <https://www.economist.com/europe/1998/07/16/how-racist-is-france> and for the context of 1998 see, Patrick Clastres and Paul Dietschy. *Sport, Culture Et Société En France: Du XIXe Siècle à Nos Jours* (Paris: Hachette Supérieur, 2006).

²⁸⁸ Chirac’s decisive win garnered 82.2% of the popular vote compared to Le Pen’s 17.8%. This signaled a decline for the National’s Front’s political dominance until the rise of his daughter, Marine Le Pen in the 2017 Presidential election against Emmanuel Macron. See, Ministère De L’Intérieur, “Résultats De L’élection Présidentielle 2002.” *Ministère De L’Intérieur*. 2002. [https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/electresult_presidentielle_2002/\(path\)/presidentielle_2002/index.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/electresult_presidentielle_2002/(path)/presidentielle_2002/index.html). Despite, Le Pen’s painful loss an official study revealed that “four out of ten people admit to being bluntly “racist” or “fairly racist.” Moreover, “28% of those who say they are “racist” or “fairly racist” vote for left-wing parties...nearly six out of ten say there are “too many Arabs” in France...and over a quarter say there are “too many blacks.” For more information from this study and other polls conducted on race in France after the 1998 World Cup Win see, "How Racist Is France?" *The Economist*. July 16, 1998. <https://www.economist.com/europe/1998/07/16/how-racist-is-france>.

ratings soared by 18 points in the wake of the team's victory.²⁸⁹ The "World Cup Effect" helped elevate Chirac's previously dismal standings in reaction to a stagnant national economy, housing deficits and rising unemployment rates in 1998. The success of the "diverse" soccer team carried political gravitas which Chirac benefited from and resulted in a decisive win over Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2002.

Later that year, France entered the 2002 World Cup tournament. Many of the players from the 1998 World Cup team returned for a chance at earning a second title. Their journey began at the Seoul World Cup stadium with 62,561 fans in attendance.²⁹⁰ On May 31, 2002, Senegal defeated France in the first round of the tournament. French media claimed the match to be a "short but damaging loss...in a stadium in Seoul, deafened by the sound of African drums."²⁹¹ French magazine *Le Point* offered the following commentary, "Senegal humiliates France... [France] is considered the number one favorite. But the Blues were knocked out by

²⁸⁹ Hugh Dauncey and Geoff Hare, *France and the 1998 World Cup: The National Impact of a World Sporting Event* (Taylor and Francis, 2014); "France's Macron Can Thank His Lucky Stars, Again, after World Cup Triumph." *France 24*. July 16, 2018. <http://www.france24.com/en/20180716-france-world-cup-macron-russia-brigitte-football-triumph-politics-croatia>; Michel Rose, "Macron Can Bless His Lucky Stars, Again, as 'Les Bleus' Win World Cup." *Reuters*. July 16, 2018. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-soccer-worldcup-final-macron/macron-can-bless-his-lucky-stars-again-as-les-bleus-win-world-cup-idUKKBN1K50ZD>.

²⁹⁰Michael Hurley, *Great World Cup Moments* (Oxford: Heinemann Library, 2011), 17.

²⁹¹ "La France S'incline Face Au Sénégal." *L'Obs*. May 31, 2002. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/sport/20020531.OBS6110/la-france-s-incline-face-au-senegal.html>. Senegal's victory over France etched a piece of history as the nation became the second African team to beat a World Champion team in an opening match in FIFA History. (The first African nation was Cameroon defeating Argentina in 1990 after winning the world cup in 1986.) Senegal was also the only African team to win a victory in its first match. For more on Senegal's list on "first's" during the 2002 World Cup see "[Petite Histoire Du Mondial] En 2002, La Chute D'un Champion Face à Un Débutant." *Africa News*. June 18, 2018. <http://fr.africanews.com/2018/06/19/petite-histoire-du-mondial-en-2002-la-chute-d-un-champion-face-a-un-debutant/>.

Senegal - who played their first match in World Cup history...France is eliminated without a single goal scored. Never has a title holder so badly defended his trophy.”²⁹²

Most of the Senegalese players representing the national team maintained professional contracts with various teams in France.²⁹³ A retrospective article in *Le Monde* reflected on the match’s significance. Ferdinand Coly, a player on the Senegalese team expressed his mental state in that moment, “We were motivated as ever. Between Senegal and France, there is a strong relationship, a common history. We respected these players a lot.”²⁹⁴ In contrast to a Senegalese team that experienced pre-game jitters and excitement, Khalilou Fadiga remembered a French team that was “very sure of herself, bordering on arrogance.” He stated, “I remember that Roger Lemerre [the French coach] did not seem to know us very well, while almost all of our players were on teams in France....In short, it had stung us!”²⁹⁵ Using this hurt to propel their energy,

²⁹² Alexandre Borde, "La Coupe Du Monde à Travers L’histoire: Corée Du Sud-Japon 2002." *Le Point*. June 09, 2014. http://www.lepoint.fr/coupe-du-monde/histoire/la-coupe-du-monde-a-travers-l-histoire-coree-du-sud-japon-2002-09-06-2014-1833909_2168.php.

²⁹³ For the Senegalese team roster and accompanying professional team affiliation see “Au Sénégal, Le Cœur Du Sénégal. “Mondial 2002: Parcours Exemplaire Pour Les Lions." *Au Sénégal*. June 22, 2002. <http://www.au-senegal.com/mondial-2002-parcours-exemplaire-pour-les-lions,376.html>. Aliou Cissé was a member of the 2002 national team and the coach for the Senegalese 2017 FIFA World Cup team.

²⁹⁴ Alexis Billebault, "Le Jour Où Le Lion Sénégalais a Croqué Le Coq Gaulois Au Mondial De 2002." *Le Monde*. June 19, 2018. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/06/19/le-jour-ou-le-lion-senegalais-a-croque-le-coq-gaulois-au-mondial-de-2002_5317361_3212.html and "Quand Le Sénégal Fit Chavirer La Planète Foot." *Slate Afrique*. May 31, 2012. <http://www.slateafrique.com/88183/quand-senegal-fit-chavirer-la-planete-foot-lions-teranga>.

²⁹⁵ Billebault, "Le Jour Où Le Lion Sénégalais a Croqué Le Coq Gaulois," *Le Monde*. June 19, 2018. See also, Alexis Billebault, "Sénégal-France: Le 31 Mai 2002, Le Jour Où Les Lions De La Teranga Ont Terrassé Les Bleus." *Jeune Afrique*. June 18, 2018. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/579179/societe/senegal-france-le-31-mai-2002-le-jour-ou-les-lions-de-la-teranga-ont-terrasse-les-bleus/>. Khalilou Fadiga, a key player for the 2002 Senegalese national team, was born in Senegal and moved to France when was six years old. After a short tenure at Paris Saint-Germain, he signed with a team in Belgium. Although, he had a Belgian passport through marriage, Fadiga opted to play for Senegal in the World Cup. See Alexis Billebault, "Sénégal: On a Retrouvé... Khalilou Fadiga, Un Des Lions Du Mondial 2002." *Jeune Afrique*. July 23, 2018. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/604627/societe/senegal-on-a-retrouve-khalilou-fadiga-un-des-lions-du-mondial-2002/>.

Senegal ejected the defending champions in a 1-0 victory. Upon the team's return to Senegal, the crowd roared, "We devoured the Gallic Rooster!" Their efforts resulted in a stunning defeat that shook France to its core.

2002 was a critical year for white French political retrenchment. Beginning with the World Cup team's defeat at the hands of its former colony, notions of French superiority were threatened to the detriment of non-white populations. Scholarship and the press had heralded the 1998 World Cup as the achievement of France's experiment with diversity. However, this position swiftly eroded. Within four years, a new political reality emerged. National Presidential and legislative elections resulted in a series of policies that doubled-down on reducing non-white populations. In his May 5th re-election speech, Jacques Chirac announced, "that the nation should reunite— that politics should change."²⁹⁶ Yet, discord reigned. In the 2002 legislative election, the Right wing earned 394 seats and controlled the national parliament. Resolute in their determination to end the "problem" of *sans-papiers*, Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy passed a *circulaire* demanding police forces to double the amount of *sans-papier* expulsions and chartered flights to oust them from France.²⁹⁷ Under his direction, the French government furthered restricted entry and residency permits and targeted the children of *sans-papiers* for deportation. The spirit of 1998 was gone and new tensions pushed the nation toward insurrection.

²⁹⁶ "Jacques Chirac Wins by Default." *The Economist*. May 09, 2002.
<https://www.economist.com/europe/2002/05/09/jacques-chirac-wins-by-default>.

²⁹⁷ Jane Freedman, "The French 'Sans-Papiers' Movement," 86.

2005

As the World Cup effect waned and Senegal reveled in defeating France on the World Cup stage, the myth of French racial harmony disintegrated. The final critical turning point in destroying this illusion was the year 2005. At the start of the year, a Malian man named Abou Bakari Tandia died in police custody. Held in a local precinct in the Parisian suburb of Courbevoie, Tandia was arrested on December 5, 2004. After being stopped in a routine identity check by police, he was detained for not possessing residency papers. Despite living in France for thirteen years, he had not finalized his residency and employment paperwork. After being transported to the precinct, he mysteriously fell into a coma and was transported to a local hospital. A little over a month later, he died on January 24, 2005.

In an official account, officers stated that Tandia fell into a coma after continuously banging his head on the cell bars. Neither the autopsy nor the medical reports of the two hospitals where he was treated cite injuries to the head.²⁹⁸ Instead, the official autopsy attributes his death to visceral decompensation or multiple organ failure. Armed with this evidence, his family demanded an official investigation into his death. In March, the family opened a case against the officers who arrested him. During the trial, the prosecution admitted that the surveillance camera of his cell was not working. By the trial's conclusion, the court found all five officers not guilty. In his explanation the judge said, "There is nothing to hold police officers accountable in the process that led to the death of the victim." The judge based his ruling on "contradictory" medical evidence. The officers were acquitted, despite one of the officer's

²⁹⁸ Laurent Borredon, "Violences Policières : La Justice Prononce Trois Non-lieux Successifs." *Le Monde*. April 06, 2013. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2013/03/28/violences-policieres-la-justice-prononce-trois-non-lieux-successifs_3149679_3224.html.

admission to strangling Tandia to “control” him.²⁹⁹ Seven months later, another seemingly innocuous run-in with the police by African-descendent youth catapulted France into international media scrutiny and planted the seeds of a millennial suburban revolution.

On October 27, 2005 fifteen-year-old Bouna Traoré and seventeen-year-olds Zyed Benna and Muhittin Altun joined a group of six other boys to play soccer after school in the Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois. After a few hours of spirited matches, the boys disbanded to head back to their *cité* for the night.³⁰⁰ As they passed a construction site, a group of police officers responding to a robbery report at that location raced toward them. Attempting to avoid routine police harassment in the form of a *contrôle d'identité*, the boys scattered in various directions.

Traoré, Benna and Altun sprinted toward an adjoining electrical substation to hide from the police pursuit, but upon hearing the officers’ approaching footsteps, the boys scaled the chain-link fence surrounding the power facility’s transformer. As they gripped the metal, 10,000 volts of electrical force sent shock waves through their bodies. The charge hurled Altun into the air and outside of the substation. Severely burned, he was rushed to the hospital. Still inside the substation laid the electrocuted bodies of Bouna Traoré and Zyed Benna.³⁰¹ That night word

²⁹⁹ His death classified under “mysterious causes” occurred in January 2005. For more information regarding the events surrounding The Tandia Affair see “Garde à Vue Tragique à Courbevoie: La Police Désavouée.” *Le Parisien*. March 11, 2010. <http://www.leparisien.fr/hauts-de-seine-92/garde-a-vue-tragique-a-courbevoie-la-police-desavouee-11-03-2010-843900.php> ; “Non-lieu Dans L'affaire Abou Bakari Tandia.” *Le Parisien*. September 28, 2012. <http://www.leparisien.fr/hauts-de-seine-92/non-lieu-dans-l-affaire-abou-bakari-tandia-28-09-2012-2185871.php> and “Violences Policières en France: Abou Bakari Tandia.” *Amnesty International*. September 2009. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR210132009FRENCH.PDF>.

³⁰⁰ *Cité HLM*: suburban housing project.

³⁰¹ There are conflicting accounts on the actual events of the police chase. For more narration on the incidents occurring on October 27, 2005, see Thomas Crampton, “Behind the Furor, the Last Moments of Two Youths,” *The New York Times*, published on November 7, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/07/world/europe/behind-the-furor-the-last-moments-of-two-youths.html?_r=1; Michel Delberghe, “Clichy-sous-Bous, radiographie d’une ville pauvre,” *Le Monde*, published on November 5, 2005,

spread through text message, online chatroom and the reverberating screams of Traoré's Malian-born parents and Benna's Tunisian-born parents. Illuminating the dark sky, North and Sub-Saharan African youth descended from their decaying housing projects to set the streets of Clichy-sous-Bois ablaze.

Overturning police cars and lighting them on fire, enraged youth threw stones and bottles at the growing crowd of officers. An empty school was engulfed in flames as they marched toward the town hall. Preventing the youth from reaching the building were fifty police officers armed with plastic bullet pistols.³⁰² While the tense stand-off unfolded, uprisings erupted in other *banlieues* of outer Paris including Montfermeil, Dijon, Val-d'Oise, Seine-et-Marne and various provincial cities. They too felt the frustration and all too familiar injustice of police harassment, social exclusion and economic disparity. That night their fury metamorphosed into flames. Television screens and social media worldwide carried the images of burning buildings and violent clashes between the officers and the largely teenaged youths who poured out of the *cités* and into the streets. For the first time since the Algerian War, France declared a state of emergency on November 8, 2005 after two weeks of continuous uproar. This moment of civil

http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2005/11/05/clichy-sous-bois-radiographie-d-une-ville-pauvre_706880_3224.html; Didier Lapeyronnie, "Primitive Rebellion in the French *banlieues*: On the Fall 2005 Riots," in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora*, 21-47; "French police cleared in teen deaths that sparked riots," *France 24*. May 19, 2015, <http://www.france24.com/en/20150518-france-police-teenagers-electrocuted-court-death>; Marwan Mohammed and Laurent Mucchielli, "La police dans les quartiers populaires: un vrai problème," *Mouvements* 44 (March-April 2006):58-66; Olivier Roy, "The Nature Of The French Riots," *Social Science Research Council*. November 18, 2005, <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Roy/>.

³⁰² For more information about the use of Flash-Ball pistols by the French police during the 2005 uprisings see Laurent Bonelli, "The trouble with the *banlieues*," *Le Monde Diplomatique*. December 2005, <https://mondediplo.com/2005/12/05unrest>; and Laurent Mucchielli, "Autumn 2005: A Review of the Most Important Riot in the History of French Contemporary Society" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35, no. 5 (2009): 733-35.

unrest brought international attention to the largely invisible crisis of policing immigrant populations within the *banlieues* that had grown and festered for the last thirty years.³⁰³

Le Rap- Generational Influences and Gender in Hip Hop

In the wake of the 2005 urban uprisings, parliament member François Grosdidier requested that the Ministry of Justice take action against rappers such as Fabe, Salif, Monsieur R, 113 and the group Lunatic for “inciting hatred against certain races and the republic.” With the support of almost two hundred other members of parliament, Grosdidier proposed legislation that would prosecute rappers whose lyrics were deemed “discriminatory, violent, hate-filled or anti-white.” The law would fine rappers up to \$58,000 or up to one year in prison.³⁰⁴ This was part of a public narrative that placed the blame for the events of 2005 on the influence of Hip Hop. The musical genre remains a target of governmental scrutiny. Yet, Hip Hop also served as a continuous cultural response by Black French communities to the hypocrisy of the French state.

³⁰³ The international attention brought to the *banlieue* in 2005 fostered a growing body of scholarship that examined these uprisings within transnational frameworks and attempted to connect them to the mounting tide of urban conflict with police forces across the globe. French journalist Bernard Cassen’s description of the urban unrest as “The “French Katrina” made use of the word “riot” to offer a violent binary between “the “French” and “culturally different” immigrants in the *banlieue*. Leading Francophone literary scholar, Dominic Thomas in *Africa and France* challenges both Cassen’s use of the term “riot” and his analytic framework of opposing racial and cultural binaries between the French state and African migrants that engendered a wave of combative and defensive forms of state intervention, 62. Thomas notes the linguistic baggage of calling the uprisings “riots” and has actively resisted this term. Furthermore, he has re-interpreted Cassen’s use of the term “French Katrina” to draw a parallel between the natural disaster of Hurricane Katrina in the United States and the socioeconomic, cultural and political disaster of the France’s own making in reaction to the 2005 uprisings.

³⁰⁴ See, "N 2957 - Proposition De Loi De M. François Grosdidier Visant Renforcer Le Controle Des Provocations La Discrimination, La Haine Ou La Violence." *Assemblée nationale*. March 14, 2006. <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/propositions/pion2957.asp> for more on the proposed law. Ultimately, the law did not pass. See, "Grosdidier S'en Prend au Rap 'anti-blanc'." *L'Obs*. April 28, 2006. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/politique/20060428.OBS5849/grosdidier-s-en-prend-au-rap-anti-blanc.html&prev=search>.

Embodied in its lyrics and visual art, conscious Hip Hop voiced the concerns and visions of second-generation Black migrants.

Since 2005, a subset of Hip Hop scholars focused on French rap as a commercial phenomenon. Others examined the transnational connections between France and America and the ways in which the first borrows heavily from the stylistic influences of the latter. Most recently, scholarly attention has turned toward emphasizing the connections between France and Africa.³⁰⁵ Analysis of the lyrical content, instrumentation and album covers demonstrated the depth of rappers' connection to their African roots. Ranging from the use of indigenous words in Bambara, Lingala and Wolof to sampling the work of key African artists such as Fela Kuti, the presence of Africa in French Hip Hop is ubiquitous. In advocating for Black French rappers that accentuated their connection to Africa, Musicologist Veronique Helenon contends that “songs entirely dedicated to this theme are rarely among the most promoted by mainstream radio stations.”³⁰⁶ In stark contrast to Helenon’s assertion, this analysis intervenes that rappers tackling issues of visibility, identity and racism and discrimination did reach mainstream society. This movement is seen most clearly by the career of MC Solaar. This section contends that Hip Hop facilitated a new evolution within Black French identity pioneered by second generation Black French migrants. Rappers’ lyrics and thematic content continually challenged negative narratives

³⁰⁵ Veronique Helenon, "Africa on Their Mind: Rap, Blackness, and Citizenship in France" in *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Basu, Dipannita, and Sidney J. Lemelle (Pluto Press: 2006), 151-67.

³⁰⁶ While there is some validity to this claim, it would be factually incorrect to say that songs dedicated to the theme of Africa are not promoted by radio. DKR (an abbreviation for Dakar) is a homage to the capital of Senegal and the homeland of French rapper, Booba’s father. This song debuted in the number #1 slot in France and stayed on the charts for 29 weeks. See Helenon, "Africa on Their Mind" in 151 and <https://lescharts.com/showitem.asp?interpret=Booba&titel=DKR&cat=s> for chart information on “DKR”.

about African communities generated by the French government and created a space to reject white French perceptions of superiority.

MC Solaar's rise to becoming France's first international Hip Hop star was paved by a congruence of media (print, radio and TV) as well as a community of African diasporic populations. Paris functioned as a port of entry and exit for Hip Hop: a crossroads between America, Europe and Africa. An American invention, the story of Hip Hop began in the Bronx in 1973. On a warm August day, Kool Herc was in charge of music for his sister's back to school party. Using two turntables and two vinyls, Herc pioneered the method of scratching and extending the beat beyond the original song's length. Hip Hop's migration from New York to Paris began almost ten years later in 1982 with the arrival of the New York City Rap Tour. Sponsored by French station Radio 1, the tour was produced by Jean Karakos and Bernard Zekri.³⁰⁷

On Saturday November 27, 1982, the New York City Rap tour arrived in France. Hip Hop artists performed in Paris at the Hippodrome de Pantin. Among the acts that night: Afrika Bambaataa served as one of deejays, the Infinity Rappers were the emcees and the Rock Steady Crew break danced.³⁰⁸ Adding to the spread of Hip Hop in France was the radio. Two hosts are credited with French infatuation with rap: DJ Sidney and DJ Dee Nasty. Later in 1982, Sidney

³⁰⁷ Jean Karkos was the head of the Celluloid label in France and Bernard Zekri was the New York correspondent for French newspaper, *Actuel*. For more on the tour see, Eric S. Charry, *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 4-7.

³⁰⁸ Other performers included: Grandmixer D.S.T. as a secondary deejay, the Double Dutch Girls, and several graffiti artists: Futura 2000, Phase 2, Ramelzee and Dondi. The tour and performance at the Bataclan was chronicled in the popular press by Jean-Pierre Thibaudat in *Liberation* magazine, "Une Semaine en Rap: Afrika Bambaataa, Roi Zoulou du Bronx." *Liberation*. October 26, 1982, 20-21 and on television. Mr. Freeze from the Rock Steady Crew and other performers were featured on the show Megahertz, a musical variety show hosted by Alain Maneval.

began his career in media as a host for Radio France (on Radio 7).³⁰⁹ His show aired weekly and could only be heard in Paris. Listeners recorded his shows and sold the tapes to Hip Hop enthusiasts living various Parisian *banlieues*.

Sidney's successful radio show paved the way for him to host a television show. H.I.P. H.O.P. was a weekly televised show dedicated to Hip Hop music and culture. The first broadcast aired on Sunday, January 14, 1984 on TF1.³¹⁰ Although the show only lasted 43 weeks, it was crucial in spreading the influence and sounds of Hip Hop.³¹¹ Mainly a dance show, focusing on breakdancing and several aspects of freestyling, it was a platform for Hip Hop artists to perform as well. Furthermore, the television show was the first hosted by a Black person in France.³¹² Reflecting on the show's influence on local youth, DJ Babaflex (who was a teen at the time and is now a prominent Parisian deejay) states, "We had the first Hip Hop TV show in the world, even before America... Much earlier than YO MTV Rap! That's what introduced a lot of us to

³⁰⁹ In 1982, Sidney invited Afrika Bambaataa in his radio show during the New York City Rap Tour. Throughout the two-hour show, break-dancers taught participants how to break dance and graffiti artists created new pieces. Bambaataa appearance on Sidney's radio show was crucial to establishing Sidney's reputation and offering him authenticity. Just Bambaataa's "presence...He didn't really need to do anything more. And he helped give the show authenticity, like Futura 200. Futura 2000 would come and go these big graff[itti] pieces." Sidney recounts the significance of Afrika Bambaataa in James G. Spady, H. Samy Alim, and Samir Meghelli, *Tha Global Cipa: Hip Hop Culture and Consciousness* (Black History Museum Press, 2006), 287.

³¹⁰ In 1981, he hosted a radio daily program from 22h00 to midnight on Radio 7. His was one of the first daily shows dedicated to hip-hop in France alongside the show Lionel D (who became Dee Nasty several years later) on Radio Nova. Program director Marie-France Brière became a fan of Sidney's show and suggested that he be the host of the television show which would become H.I.P. H.O.P. See Eric S. Charry, *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 5.

³¹¹ Artists featured on the show included: Sugarhill Gang, Kurtis Blow, Afrika Bambaataa, The Rock Steady Crew and Art of Noise. After the show's conclusion, Hip Hop would migrate from the metropole to the periphery and would be embraced by the suburbs.

³¹² Farida Chadri, "Oise: Sydney, L'incorrigible Défenseur De La Culture Hip-hop Est Sur Radio Mercure." *Le Parisien*. March 24, 2018. <http://www.leparisien.fr/oise-60/oise-sydney-l-incorrigible-defenseur-de-la-culture-hip-hop-est-sur-radio-mercure-24-03-2018-7626786.php>.

the culture of Hip Hop. We were proud to be the first.”³¹³ Among the young viewers was a boy named Claude M’Barali, he would become MC Solaar.

Born on March 5, 1969 in Dakar, Senegal, M’Barali and his family moved to the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis six months later. Over the years, M’Barali lived in several suburbs including Maisons-Alfort, Villeneuve-Saint-Georges and Évry. At the age of twelve, he was sent to live with his uncle in Cairo for nine months. Over time, M’Barali was introduced to the music and ideology of Afrika Bambaataa. These principles served as a foundational part of his future lyricism.³¹⁴ Inspired by Zulu Nation’s call to “rap in [y]our native tongue and reflect daily realities,” M’Barali took on the persona of MC Solaar.³¹⁵ Bambaataa introduced French *banlieue* youth to rapping and breakdancing as a tool of liberation to combat the socioeconomic ills of living in the *banlieue* often deemed the French equivalent of the American ghetto. Although the influence of Zulu Nation was small and contained to a few *banlieue* communities, there were

³¹³ DJ Babaflex (mid 40’s of Togolese and Algerian descent) in discussion with author. March, 29, 2017.

³¹⁴ "Q & A with MC Solaar." *CNN*. February 13, 2006. <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/TRAVEL/02/03/cairo.qa/>. In the interview, Solaar credits Zulu Nation with the start of his career. He states, “It all started with the Zulu Nation. Afrika Bambaataa came to France and it felt like we had a new family. We shared something together. That was the beginning. We tried to be the best at rapping, sometimes painting, sometimes dancing, sometimes turntabling. And I chose rapping. I wanted to make music in which I was able to talk about life. I am very happy because I wanted to talk, and I am talking.”

³¹⁵ Laurent Fintoni, "90s French Rap Essentials." *Red Bull Music Academy*. September 15, 2016. <http://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2016/09/essential-french-rap>.

some rappers like Solaar who embraced this message.³¹⁶ In the 2001 song, “*Lève-toi Et Rap,*” MC Solaar chronicles his migration from Senegal to France.³¹⁷ He raps,

Born in Senegal, my two parents came from Chad
Son of Sahel I had the aspirations of King Faad³¹⁸
But I came here to a foyer in Saint Denis
With my brothers and sisters, we moved to Évry³¹⁹
My mother cleans hospitals
She knows that knowledge will be my only ally³²⁰

One of the central themes within the song is his identity as an immigrant. He describes himself as a beneficiary of his mother’s hard work and her sacrifices to give him a better life. Instilling within him a desire to be better educated and the hope of achieving the “French dream,” it was a notion carried by many African migrants in their journey to France.

³¹⁶ Although the French chapter of Zulu Nation declined in prominence beginning in 1987, it is credited as a faction that brought both the art form of rap and the breakdancing as form of expression to France. This movement is detailed in *Black, Blanc, Beur: Rap Music and Hip-hop Culture in the Francophone World*, edited by Durand, Alain-Philippe. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005. Particularly in André J. M. Prévos’ chapter entitled “Two Decades of Rap in France: Emergence, Developments, Prospects,” 1-22.

³¹⁷ From the album, *Cinquième as*. Warner Music, 2001, CD. In Chapter One, the early novels of Camara Laye, Dadie, etc. are examples of early migration narratives. This section presents the song as a new iteration of a migration narrative set to music.

³¹⁸ This lyric is a reference to the Sahel the region between the Saharan desert to the north and the savannah in the North (locating him as a son of Africa). King Fahd was the ruler and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia until his death in 2005 (Fahd is used as a metaphor for greatness).

³¹⁹ Évry is a suburb located about fifteen miles south of Paris.

³²⁰ His mother encouraged him to take his education seriously in order to leave the banlieue and rise above suburban poverty. Throughout the song, MC Solaar references the challenges he faces since his family moved to France. He discusses gang violence and street fights. Later in the song, he likens himself to Gandhi with the phrase: *I’m puny like Gandhi and only kill in kilowatts*. This is a reference to his “fight” against racism, economic inequality without the use of weapons to resolve the battle. Thus, the only weapon he needs is his mind (embodied in his use of the word “knowledge”).

A talented storyteller, MC Solaar narrates the experiences of being an immigrant in Paris.

These experiences are chronicled in the second verse of the song.

Back then skinheads openly roamed in Paris
If you were an immigrant, better not call for help³²¹
But instead make sure to keep the same course
Maybe because one day a guy told me “Go on, stand up and rap”

Upon M’Barali’s return from Cairo, he earned his *baccalauréat* (equivalent to a high school diploma) and went on to study languages and philosophy at Jussieu University. Simultaneously with his educational endeavors, MC Solaar pursued a career as a rapper.³²² Releasing his debut album in 1991, *Qui Sème le Vent Récolte le Tempo* became the first rap album to earn platinum status selling over 500,000 copies in France. The album’s title “He who sows the wind reaps the tempo” is a pun on the Biblical passage, “he who sows the wind reaps the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7). In addition to the chart-topping and light-hearted songs *Bouge de là* and *Caroline*, Solaar also released tracks that spoke to the experiences of Black French populations in the suburbs.

Solaar released his album the same year that the Mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, decried Black people living in the suburbs as loud, smelly and driving their neighbors mad.³²³ Solaar

³²¹ Referring to “back then,” MC Solaar recalls the period in the 80’s when a fight led several African gangs to face off with members of the skinhead movement. Further in the song, he references this again, “Getting me to join a gang? Yo, you crazy or what?” After witnessing this violence, he does not want to be victim or perpetrator of violence. His reference to “help” is a double entendre. Solaar raps it was not necessary to shout “for help.” So he tells listeners that given the atmosphere, they should not ask for help around you, but “help” can also be understood. The lyric has a deeper meaning in reference to being an immigrant. Typically, youth were warned to avoid association with foreign origins and aspire to remain discreet.

³²² Claude’s rap name “MC Solaar” came from combining his graffiti tags “SOAR” and “SOLAAR”

³²³ In a speech in Orleans, France, Chirac said there was an “overdose of foreigners in France and that ‘having Spanish, Polish and Portuguese workers in the country posed fewer problems than having Muslims and blacks that...lived within three or four wives and 20 or so children in council flats, earning three times more in social

contends with the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of his neighborhood, “I come from the south of the capital of the city called Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, northern district ... Hardcore.”³²⁴ He juxtaposes the “hardcore” conditions of the suburbs with aspirations for success. Villeneuve-Saint-Georges is also the hometown of several soccer players and rappers. His triumph as a, “pro, prophet...Professor, poet, prodigy,” is further pronounced in the song “Armand is dead.”³²⁵ In this reversal of fortune, the suburbs are also a place where ruin is just as prevalent as success. Armand is an everyday guy from the “hood” that once had it all: a job, a wife and family. Solaar chronicles his tale,

Armand was having a good time
Until he had an accident at work, and got some compensation
He found another job, then is fired
Invited to his wife’s wedding
Armand lost custody of his children in court
It’s too late to be interested in his sad fate
Armand is dead³²⁶

security payments than the combined wage of an average couple without working...If you add to that the *noise* and the *smell*, French workers were understandably driven *mad*.” (Emphasis added by author). See Jennifer Fredette, *Constructing Muslims in France: Discourse, Public Identity, and the Politics of Citizenship* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 100; P. Fysh, *The Politics of Racism in France* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 72-74 and “Le débat sur l’immigration Le maire de Paris: ‘Il y a overdose.’” *Le Monde*, June 21 1991. Available at <http://www.lemonde.fr>.

³²⁴ MC Solaar. *Quartier Nord*. Polydor, 1991, CD. Casey in her song entitled, “*Banlieue Nord*”, also expresses these experiences of living in the northern suburbs. She raps, “Northern suburbs remain first in being hardcore/First in the producing the strongest rap/First in police and their reinforcement/The northern suburbs put the whole world on his passport.” Casey. *Banlieue Nord*. Dooeen Damage, 2006, CD.

³²⁵ “Armand is dead” used samples from Marvin Gaye’s “Inner City Blues (Makes Me Wanna Holler).” From his revolutionary album, *What’s Going On*, “Inner City Blues,” Marvin Gaye details life in the American ghetto, the socioeconomic realities of the Black people living within these urban settings and its impact on their emotional and mental health. These themes are extrapolated for a French context within Solaar’s song.

³²⁶ MC Solaar. *Armand Est Mort*. Polydor, 1991, CD.

After losing his job due to an accident at work, Armand finds a new job and is quickly fired presumably due to the injuries he sustained from his previous job.³²⁷ When he runs out of money, he is “abandoned by his wife and dog Albert.” She later remarries and he loses custody of his children. Broken by the hardships of life, Armand ends up in a psychiatric asylum where he is a tool of medical experimentation. The doctors perform a lobotomy that ultimately fails to cure his “mental illness.” By the song’s conclusion, Armand is homeless and commits suicide. The tale of Armand is a story of an ordinary man who lost it all and is consumed by misfortune. Solaar upbraids the audience for not caring as they witnessed Armand’s fall from grace. Their apathy resulted in his death so they can feel no sense of remorse or sadness. This heartbreaking narrative details the vulnerability of Black men in the French migrant labor ecosystem where their labor is expendable and a single injury could ultimately result in premature death.

In a follow-up album recorded in 1996, *Paradisique* turns Solaar’s attention from socioeconomic exploitation to political hypocrisy. In his rebuttal of right-wing political rhetoric that the suburbs are dirty, dangerous and unwelcoming, he extends an invitation, “Come to the hood to find heaven.”³²⁸ Using a series of metaphors, he analyzes the French political system and its duality in the treatment of Black peoples living in the suburbs commenting on police

³²⁷ The French government kept relatively ambiguous statistics on the nationality of foreign workers that suffered accidents at work. However, over a five-year period from 1971-1976, over one million accidents occurred at the workplace each year. The percentage of foreign victim’s averaged 21-22% each year and these numbers do not include clandestine workers of which Sub-Saharan migrants increasingly fell into this category. Nor does this report consider accidents that were not reported due to employing non-regularized or “illegal” immigrants. See the following reports for working conditions of foreigners, M. Gentili, “Aspects épidémiologiques des migrants en France,” *Bulletin d’Institut National de la Santé et le Recherche Médicale*, No. 26, 1971 and Caisse Nationale d’Assurance Maladie des Travailleurs Salariés and a report concerning Sub-Saharan migrants, Christian Poiret, “L’immigration familiale d’ Afrique Noire et Region Ile de France: Famille et Habitat au Coeur des mutations,” *Association Vivre-La-Ville Ingenierie Urbaine et Sociale*, December 1994.

³²⁸ MC Solaar. *Paradisique*. Polydor, 1997, CD.

brutality, crime and unemployment. In one verse, he emphasizes the duplicity of French politicians. On one hand, elected officials like former Parisian mayor Jacques Chirac criticize these neighborhoods as urban cesspools while simultaneously campaigning in them. He raps:

The mayor markets a few catchphrases in the 'hood
And then parents go and give him their vote
He makes neat speeches and offers happiness like a Reciprok video³²⁹
Throwing his hands up and prancing around to get elected
To each his own heaven

In this searing critique, Solaar chastises the mayor's Janus-faced behavior and the first-generation of parents who believe his circus act. He resigns himself to the fact that everyone has their own interpretation of "heaven." Moreover, he is openly critical of both the political system and members of the first-generation that sought acceptance by the system. Instead, Solaar has his own vision, "my heaven is seeing kids grow up, and sheltering them from the rain...to turn hell into heaven."

This growing disjuncture between the first and second generation is also expressed by the rapper Hamed Daye. Born in the 12th arrondissement to Malian parents, Daye moved to the suburbs of Val-d'Oise at 11 years old. Reflecting on his father's journey from Mali to Paris in the 1990's, he recounts his father's hellish experience living in "ramshackle immigrant housing projects, with one shower per floor and over-crowded rooms." While Hamed credits his father's persistence, he chose not to re-live these experiences. He states, "My father's generation would rather submit while wheeling and dealing on the side. I call it a moral imbalance. It's all these frustrations that made us so arrogant. Our generation doesn't want to shut up and we demand

³²⁹ *Reciprok* is a French hip-hop group from the 1990's.

equality of treatment.”³³⁰ As this first generation of male rappers became international rap icons, they used their lyrics to demand justice. A second generation of rappers led by women also commanded attention in their fight against racism and sexism in France.

As a musical genre, Hip Hop is often criticized as a bastion of misogyny.³³¹ In the new millennium, Black French women emcees challenged the sexist lyrics and gendered roles within Hip Hop culture. One of the female rappers pushing back against this categorization is Bams.³³² Criticizing the commercialization of Hip Hop in France, Bams states, “Rap is a musical movement [just] like jazz or rock and [it’s] varied. It’s just that the industry and the press likes people, particularly black or brown people, who fit the format.” In an interview discussing sexism within the music industry, Bams clarifies, “Rap’s no more sexist than rock, where women have well-defined roles too... Women in rock are always either fragile and in need of protection or wearing ripped clothes and sexual objects of desire.” For her, the difference between white female rock stars and Black female rappers is their commercial success when they do not conform to standard tropes. She laments, “What I do is moderately successful, but I am too adult and too intelligent for the industry.”³³³ Unlike Black French male rappers that achieved mainstream success on the airwaves and international acclaim, very few Black French women

³³⁰ See Helenon, "Africa on Their Mind", 156 and an interview by *L’Affiche*, No. 89 (February 2001).

³³¹ Unlike many other Black French commercial rappers, MC Solaar recognizes that much of Hip Hop industry is “sexist.” See Phil Daoust, "Rapper MC Solaar Talks to Phil Daoust." *The Guardian*. May 03, 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2004/may/03/popandrock>.

³³² Dupont Pascal, "Les Filles S'emparent Du Rap." *L’Express*. November 26, 1998. https://www.lexpress.fr/informations/les-filles-s-emparent-du-rap_631318.html.

³³³ Jason Burke, "Rap Music Blamed in Paris Riots." *The Guardian*. February 19, 2006. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2006/feb/19/urban>.

rappers duplicate their counterpart's commercial success. This is in part due to their challenge of gendered stereotypes.

Known as a free-style rapper, Bams grew up in the Parisian suburbs. She credits her introduction to rap to her roots in Cameroon. Her rapper name comes from *Bamileke*, an ethnic group located in the Northwest region of Cameroon. While in Cameroon, members of the village “practice *bensikin*, a traditional song. People swing from one foot to the other, then, in turn, enter the circle and improvise a stanza. It’s like their rap.”³³⁴ Employing the techniques learned in Cameroon, she found a community of fellow female rappers including: Sté Strausz, K-Reen, Princess Aniès, Bee Djy, Casey, Diams and Viv. Embracing their African roots and challenging the “all-boys club” of Hip Hop culture, the popular press deemed their songs “black manifestos... [delivered] with force and conviction.”³³⁵ Bams links her embrace of African ancestry, desire to rap and opposition to sexist rhetoric in her song, “Si Je Rap, ” (Yes I rap)

I'm the rap Nikita...³³⁶
I rap the same way you eat
But I do not forget the things I'd like to see change
And yes I rap for my family in Cameroon
I keep in mind the injustices I want to see avenged
I'm starving, I dream of a better world
Where my parents' distress, passion, courage will give me honor
Will get me out of this stench of infernal morality that saturates my mood

³³⁴ Pascal, "Les Filles S'emparent Du Rap." *L'Express*. November 26, 1998.

³³⁵ Pascal, "Les Filles S'emparent Du Rap." *L'Express*. November 26, 1998.

³³⁶ Nikita is a reference to a French film by Luc Besson. Starring Anne Parillaud, Nikita is a convicted felon that accepts as new identity as a secret police assassin. The film was repurposed for an American audience with the title of *Lucy*," see Drew Taylor, "From 'La Femme Nikita' to 'Lucy': Director Luc Besson Talks The Strong Women In 6 Of His Key Films." *IndieWire*. July 22, 2014. <https://www.indiewire.com/2014/07/from-la-femme-nikita-to-lucy-director-luc-besson-talks-the-strong-women-in-6-of-his-key-films-274257/>. Thus, Bams likens herself to a rapper assassin.

Likening her rapping skills to that of a trained assassin, Bam pairs ethnic pride with avenging injustice. Recognizing the experiences of her parents, she refuses to let their sacrifices go unnoticed. The song empowers people to “move, think, [and] change.” While calling attention to issues within the Black community, she also challenges male rappers that “rap for glory, show, women, power and weed.” Viewing music as a tool of liberation and uplift, she contends that rappers discussing such frivolous topics should be, “prosecuted for malice.” For her, the “dangers” of police brutality, crime, drugs, and poverty are too great to not use one’s platform to address these social ills.³³⁷ While expressing her disdain for a lack of action on the part of Black French male rappers and society, she also opposes political and economic systems which oppress African migrants. French linguist André Prévos argues that Black French female rappers like Bams, “saw themselves...as natural commentators and observers of a seldom seen and largely ignored world where poverty, violence, and despair are prevalent...as voices of a criticism of French society at large and of the establishment, as well as of its normal forces which led to the personal and social situations they had to face.”³³⁸ Facing these various forces, Black French women Hip Hop artists link systemic racial oppression with gendered domination.

In her song entitled, “A Woman’s Pain,” Bams narrates the experiences of women since the Biblical fall of Adam and Eve. A poignant feminist manifesto, she cites Adam’s blame of Eve for eating the apple as the beginning of a long history in which men abuse women. Bams raps, “Nothing changes, history just repeats itself.” This cycle has continued to the present. Women are subject to, “depression, disgrace... rape, aggression,” at the hands of men. She raps,

³³⁷ Bams, *Si Je Rap*. Tréma, 1999, CD.

³³⁸ André J. M. Prévos, "The Evolution of French Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture in the 1980s and 1990s." *American Association of Teachers of French* 69, no. 5 (April 1996): 713-25. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/397134>.

“My only compensation is that I was born a woman and you will bury me as a wife.”³³⁹ These lyrics reflect a resistance to heteronormative constraints normalized in society. Coinciding with the political activism of Madjiguène Cissé and her involvement with the *sans-papier* movement, Black women’s musical and socio-political voices complicate norms that emphasize their racial identity over gender. Their emphasis on womanhood and Blackness represent a new iteration of Black French migrant identity that links intersectionality with social protest.³⁴⁰ These intergenerational efforts by Black women contend with systems of structural and interpersonal oppression. Consequently, their vocal reproach of institutional and communal oppressive systems of power reveal that gender is at the heart of various experiences of Black empowerment and disempowerment in recent French history. Most importantly, their early strivings form the basis of a new wave of sociopolitical activism led by Black French women in the post-2005 era.

Outside of the United States, France serves as the largest worldwide market for Hip Hop.³⁴¹ This cultural art form produced rap stars of African descent that gained substantial monetary and cultural influence in France. Their economic and social clout in the Black community is only rivaled by France’s soccer stars, many of them also born and raised in the Parisian suburbs. For many Black youths the road out of the economically-disadvantaged suburbs leads to two main paths: soccer or music. In the wake of 2005, a new generation of entrepreneurs are expanding this trail to economic freedom.

³³⁹ Bams. *Douleur De Femme*. Tréma, 1999, CD.

³⁴⁰ French rapper Casey further challenges this narrative by discussing communal resistance to lesbianism in her 2006 album, *Tragédie d'une trajectoire* and follow-up 2009 album, *Ennemi de l'ordre/Hostile au stylo*.

³⁴¹ Marcyliena Morgan and Dionne Bennett, "Hip-Hop & the Global Imprint of a Black Cultural Form." *Daedalus*140, no. 2 (2011): 184-185.

Chapter Three: *A Niche of their Own: Afro-French Employment and Entrepreneurship*

On the tenth anniversary of the 2005 uprisings, scholars and reporters canvassed the Parisian suburbs of Seine-Saint-Denis and Clichy-sous-Bois searching for signs of progress. In an interview, Mikael—the son of a Congolese immigrant and a white French woman—reflected on what the events signified to him. At the time, Mikael was the same age as Bouna Traoré and lived in a *banlieue* neighboring Clichy-sous-Bois. The day after Traoré died, Mikael experienced his first *contrôle d'identité* on his walk home from school. Police forced Mikael to the local station for further questioning and detained him for a day and a half, informing his parents that he had been arrested for burning cars in the neighborhood as part of the protests. Mikael still maintains his innocence. Unlike Traoré and Benna, who died trying to avoid a *contrôle* — Mikael survived this encounter with the police but he notes that police continue to target young Black and Arab males. The overwhelming attitude Mikael feels is one of sameness. “It’s crazy,” he states, “because nothing has changed.”³⁴²

In a series of interviews conducted by reporters, they asked participants to reflect on their memories of the 2005 uprisings. Mady Traoré laments, “It was hot, so hot.” Recalling images from the age of fourteen, he states, “Everywhere, stuff was burning - cars, vans, buildings. That’s what I think of when I think of the riots. I think of the heat.” In contrast with Mikael, Mady asserts that progress has been made since the urban uprisings that destroyed a significant portion of his neighborhood. Currently twenty-four years old, Traoré works as an information clerk for *Société nationale des chemins de fer français* (SNCF), the French state-

³⁴² Mikael, in discussion with the author. October 28, 2015.

owned railway. Resolute in his progress, he states, “if you really want to get on, then you can get on - and I’m proud of the work I do.”³⁴³ Nadira Achab was thirteen in 2005, she remembers, “watching from the window, seeing buses burning, cars burning, everyone worried that their cars would be torched...I remember the police, the climate of fear and not being allowed to go outside.”³⁴⁴ Ten years later, she is another *banlieusard* success story.³⁴⁵ At the age of twenty-three, she is a business school student and co-founder of the association *Our Estate Has Talent*, which encourages local youth to continue post-secondary education. She states the mission of the organization is to “break the culture of failure.”³⁴⁶

The term “*banlieusard*,” is often used pejoratively. It was repurposed as a sign of pride and inspiration for African peoples within Paris by the rapper Kery James in the 2008 song “*Banlieusards*.”³⁴⁷ The song’s music video features cameos from 1998 World Cup soccer player,

³⁴³Liam Halligan, "The heat rises in France's banlieues." *The Telegraph*. November 23, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11248098/The-heat-rises-in-Frances-banlieues.html>.

³⁴⁴ Angelique Chrisafis, "'Nothing's changed': 10 years after French riots, banlieues remain in crisis." *The Guardian*. October 22, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/nothings-changed-10-years-after-french-riots-banlieues-remain-in-crisis>.

³⁴⁵ The term, “*Banlieusards*” is a slang term for someone from the suburbs often connoting their lower socioeconomic status. Canonized by Kery James, who has often been criticized by the popular press for advocating “suburban victimization” sings a new tune in this music video. He raps, “It’s time for the 2nd France to wake up.” He instructs listeners and *banlieue* occupants to “learn, to understand, to undertake, to progress and to fight.” See Jason Moreau, "Banlieusards" de Kery James crée la polémique: une récupération politique pitoyable." *Le Plus*. September 9, 2013. <http://leplus.nouvelobs.com/contribution/934647-banlieusards-de-kery-james-cree-la-polemique-une-recuperation-politique-pitoyable.html>.

³⁴⁶ Chrisafis, "'Nothing's changed'" *The Guardian*. October 22, 2015.

³⁴⁷ This shift in terminology is described by Sociolinguist, Christian Topalov. He notes, “A third type of response to a pejorative exonym was its adoption by those it stigmatized, transforming the stigma into a banner, as happened with the French word *banlieue*...The word was perceived as pejorative by some so much so that in 1899 the elected officials and prominent citizens from the district west of Paris wrote in a local newspaper; ‘Let us be bold *banlieusards*, since *banlieusards* is what they call us’...Nevertheless in twentieth century, with the considerable extension of the suburbs and their swelling population, the word *banlieusards*, generally kept its negative connotation...It then disappeared altogether with the emergence of the ‘*problème des banlieues* [suburban

Lilian Thuram; clothing designer and business man Mohammed Dia; print and runway model Adama Diallo; award-winning actor Omar Sy; and TV personality Claudia Tagbo. All of these individuals grew up in Parisian *banlieues* and achieved mainstream and international success. Seen holding picture frames with their occupations written below, James uses their stories to send a message to youth growing up in the suburbs. He raps,

‘Cause til this day, there’s two Frances who can deny that
And I’m from the second France,
The one with violence, instability, potential terrorists, helpless, on welfare
That’s what they expect from us, but I got other plans
May they remember this, I ain’t a victim, I’m a soldier
Look at me, I’m black and I’m proud
I manipulate the language of Moliere, mastering its letters
French because France colonized my ancestors
But my mind is free and Africa owes them no debt³⁴⁸

The geographic separation between metropolitan Paris and the suburbs, the division between these “two Frances,” has sociopolitical and economic ramifications. James attacks popular stereotypes of the suburbs as violent, dangerous, a breeding ground for terrorists, filled with shiftless immigrants and dependent on the French system for their livelihood. In the face of these stereotypes and expectations for their failure, James disavows this narrative of victimization. Instead, he takes pride in his blackness, his mastery of the French language and his ability to transcend the shackles of colonization. He too is a story of progress despite popular narratives of regression. Throughout the song, James reflects on his ability to overcome the difficulties commonly associated with life in ghettoized spaces. In the next verse, he outlines a

problems],’ which no longer referred to exhausted employees but to the unemployed ‘youth of the *quartiers* [poor neighborhoods].” See Christian Topalov, “The Naming Process.” In *What’s in a Name?: Talking about Urban Peripheries*, edited by Richard Harris and Charlotte Vorms (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 49-50.

³⁴⁸ Kery James, “Banlieusards.” In *À L’ombre Du Show Business*. Warner Music France, 2008, CD.

political, social and economic system that remains the same in France. However, he suggests that the solution to overcoming this system can found within the ghetto itself. His vision of cooperative economics is further explained in the following verse:

We are condemned to succeed
To break through barriers, build careers
See what our parents have accomplished
What they suffered for our access to education
Where would one be without their sacrifices?
Of course, their work has merit
How much I admire our fathers
Laborers but proud
If we ruin everything where is the respect?
If we fail where is the progress?
Every immigrant's son is on a mission
Every poor man's son must have ambition³⁴⁹

Reversing the narrative of suburban failure, James alludes to their condemnation to succeed. By offering examples of success in various careers ranging from writers, architects, film directors, actors, athletes, entrepreneurs, activists, artists and teachers, the music video portrays that success is not limited to a specific occupation. The rapper reminds youth of their parents' sacrifices to give them a better life and that they should keep this narrative of progress moving forward. Thus, Hip Hop became not only a mechanism for cultural uplift but it also serves as a forum to expound upon the virtues of entrepreneurial and financial success for Black French populations.

In recognition of African migrant contributions to both the economy and French society, this chapter explores a new wave of Afropean entrepreneurship and economic self-empowerment

³⁴⁹ Kery James, "Banlieusards." In *À Lombre Du Show Business*. Warner Music France, 2008, CD.

that subsequently took shape after the urban uprisings in 2005. Offering a counter-narrative to the socioeconomic marginalization of African migrants, this section marks the shift from a first generation “worker” identity to attempts at increasing the middle/upper class as Black French populations became more established and economically mobile. Entrepreneurial efforts before 2005 were characterized by a combination of street vendors and established businesses within predominantly immigrant neighborhoods that served local residents.³⁵⁰ In the new millennium, there is a shift in these business efforts to expand their spheres of influence. Exploring the lives of men and women who came to France to receive a degree and second-generation adults who subsequently graduated from French universities, these stories are central to expanding the narrative of opportunity and change for Black migrants beyond the *banlieue* uprisings of 2005. This chapter examines the establishment of businesses that bridge the gap between Afropean lives in France and a commitment to improving conditions in individual African nation-states. Using oral histories with various entrepreneurs in Paris, the following narrative surveys community attempts to circumvent French employment discrimination by creating their own

³⁵⁰ These businesses include, “larger grocery stores, many smaller specialty groceries, bakeries, butchers, fruit and vegetable stores, fast-food-type restaurants, brasseries, little tobacco shops, pharmacies, small electronics stores (many of which specialize in cell phones), hotels, book and stationery stores, travel agencies, apartment agencies, cafes, and even a theater.” See David H. Kaplan and Charlotte Recoquillon, “Multiethnic Economic Activity Along Three Immigrant Corridors in Paris.” *The Professional Geographer* 68, no. 1 (2015): 82-91. For more information on the nature of African immigrant businesses established before 2005, see Tüzin Baycan-Levent and Peter Nijkamp, “Characteristics of Migrant Entrepreneurship in Europe.” *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 21, no. 4 (2009): 375-97; Alain Battégay, “L’actualité De Limmigration Dans Les Villes Françaises: La Question Des Territoires Ethniques.” *Revue Européenne Des Migrations Internationales* 8, no. 2 (1992): 83-100; S.Bouly de Lesdain, “Château Rouge, Une Centralité Africaine à Paris.” *Ethnologie Française* 29 (1999): 86–99; Serge Feld, “Labor Force Trends and Immigration in Europe.” *International Migration Review* 39, no. 3 (2005): 637-62; Jean-Claude and Khelifa Messamah Toubon, *Centralité Immigrée: Le Quartier De La Goutte D’or: Dynamiques D’un Espace Pluri-ethnique: Succession, Compétition, Cohabitation* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1990); Luca Pattaroni, Vincent Kaufmann, and Marie-Paule Thomas, “The Dynamics of Multifaceted Gentrification: A Comparative Analysis of the Trajectories of Six Neighbourhoods in the Île-de-France Region.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36, no. 6 (2011): 1223-241.

businesses and employing other people of African descent.³⁵¹ Organized in three sections, this chapter grapples first with the historiographical origins of French economic decline. This segment analyzes the period after 1980 to contextualize shifts in the economy before and after the 2005 uprisings. The second section chronicles and analyzes the efforts of Black French entrepreneurs and their vision of economic uplift through the use of oral histories. Emerging from these narratives is a deeper sense of the institutional forces that complicate Black French entrepreneurship and participation in the economic market while also outlining how a younger generation of Black French individuals seize economic success as a form of political advocacy and belonging. The chapter concludes with a consideration of both the opportunities and limitations of Black Capitalism as a model for success.

As entrepreneurs endeavored to create a space of their own to service Black communities and participate in the French economy, their increasing visibility challenges the contours of spatial marginalization. By analyzing several examples of economic empowerment that emerged after the 2005 rupture point, these stories reveal not only the ways in which narratives of economic disempowerment shaped popular attitudes toward the uprisings; but also the role of

³⁵¹ Several studies have examined the contours of employment discrimination in France on the basis of race, ethnicity, family origin and religion. For example, “[there is] evidence of white employers who openly admit that skin color is an important criterion in their hiring decisions,” S. Karthick Ramakrishnan and Irene Bloemraad, *Civic Hopes and Political Realities Community Organizations and Political Engagement Among Immigrants in the United States and Abroad* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2011), 157; “Lutte Contre Les Discriminations à L’embauche Et Dans L’emploi.” *SOS Racisme*. May 19, 2015. <https://sos-racisme.org/communiquede-presse/discriminations-a-lembauche-et-dans-lemploi/>; “France Launches Poster Campaign against Workplace Racism.” *France 24*. April 26, 2016. <https://www.france24.com/en/20160426-posters-highlight-discrimination-racism-recruitment-france>; Marie-Anne Valfort, “Discriminations Religieuses à L’embauche: Une Réalité.” *Institut Montaigne*. October 2015. <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/publications/discriminations-religieuses-lembauche-une-realite>; “Le Coût économique Des Discriminations.” *France Stratégie*. September 20, 2016. <https://www.strategie.gouv.fr/publications/cout-economique-discriminations>.

Black Parisian communities in remedying the circumstances that led to uprisings through new efforts in economic cooperation and entrepreneurship.

This analysis offers a reinterpretation of economic marginalization as the primary explanation for urban uprisings. The blue-collar labor migration that characterized the earliest waves of Sub-Saharan immigration to France evolved in the new millennium in order to contend with the modern market economy. These developments in the form of access to the internet, increased social capital and professionalization offer a parallel story to the dominant narrative of economic stagnation and retrenchment. By examining a variety of entrepreneurial efforts, this chapter foregrounds the agency of Black communities and complicates the dominant interpretation of historians and the press regarding the economic legacy of the 2005 urban uprisings. Afro-French entrepreneurial efforts shed light on one of the critical ways that migrants and citizens interact with the French state.

The 2005 uprisings called attention to the fact that systemic changes needed to be made at the political, social and economic level in France. Pundits and policymakers outlined various reasons for this explosion of fury. However, they focused very closely on the depressed French economy. This chapter does not deny the grave material conditions that exist within the outermost arrondissements and the *banlieues*.³⁵² Instead, it contextualizes these material conditions within a longer economic history of swelling social service costs and a shrinking

³⁵²Gurvan Kristanadjaja, "Paris: manifestation tendue après la mort d'un homme d'origine chinoise tué par la police." *Libération*, March 28, 2018. http://www.liberation.fr/france/2017/03/28/paris-manifestation-tendue-apres-la-mort-d-un-homme-d-origine-chinoise-tue-par-la-police_1558795; "Marche pour la paix dans le XIXe arrondissement." *Le Figaro*, November 24, 2017. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2017/11/24/97001-20171124FILWWW00125-marche-pour-la-paix-dans-le-19eme-arrondissement-le-25-novembre.php>; Ivan Rioufol, "Immigration: Macron dans ses contradictions." *Le Figaro*, December 18, 2017. <http://blog.lefigaro.fr/rioufol/2017/12/immigration-macron-dans-ses-co.html>.

workforce. Central to these arguments were the ramifications of failing state initiatives to integrate the Black population within the socioeconomic context of France. This negligence caused the marginalization of non-white peoples, planting the seeds of both economic and social discontentment. Accordingly, African migrants responded to this rejection by the state with communal empowerment efforts and innovative entrepreneurial ventures. From the ashes of violence and economic implosion, a growing group of men and women are using the resources available to carve a niche of their own. In a variety of industries and servicing a large cross-section of Parisians citizens, Afro-French entrepreneurs are working within and outside of the dismal economic climate of France.

The Origins of Urban Crisis: The Demise of the French Economy

The evolution of the French economy after 1980 and especially after 2005 remains a subject for debate among historians as well as constant quarrels between social scientists and economic scholars. Two critical interpretations populate these discussions. The first contends that the decline of the French economy persisted long after the 1973 oil crisis and destabilized the labor market, which led to persistent high unemployment.³⁵³ The second, grapples with France's acceptance of globalization and its resistance to adapting economic, political and

³⁵³ Philippe Askenazy, *The Blind Decades: Employment and Growth in France, 1974-2014* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015); Patrick Weil, *La République Et Sa Diversité: Immigration, Intégration, Discrimination* (Paris: Éditions Du Seuil, 2005); Yvan Gastaut, "Français Et Immigrés à L'épreuve De La Crise (1973-1995)." *Vingtième Siècle. Revue D'histoire* 84, no. 4 (2004): 107-118; Olivier J. Blanchard and Lawrence H. Summers, "Hysteresis and the European Unemployment Problem," in *NBER Macroeconomics Annual*, Stanley Fischer, ed. Vol 1, Fall 1986 (Cambridge: MIT Press), 15-78; Jérôme Gautié and Eve Caroli, *Low-wage Work in France* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008).

cultural practices that challenge conceptions of statist universalism.³⁵⁴ In the most recent literature, scholars use France as a case study to examine capitalism under the countervailing pressures of social and political conflict.³⁵⁵ Published one year before the 2005 uprisings, historian Tim Smith offered an alternative position. He argued that the French state's unwillingness to implement more inclusive fiscal policies were ultimately to blame for economic dislocation, particularly among non-white youth.³⁵⁶

In 2005, the explosion of popular discontent propelled discussions about the economic state of the country. Indeed it became the subject of exigent national and international study. Scholars and popular commentators isolated two main causes for these events: a legacy of discontentment over the process of colonization and the ongoing marginalization that came from

³⁵⁴Philip H. Gordon and Sophie Meunier, *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2001); Richard F. Kuisel, *The French Way: How France Embraced and Rejected American Values and Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Hubert Védrine and Dominique Moïsi, *France in an Age of Globalization* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001); Pierre-Noel Giraud and Alain Renaudin, "France Deals with Globalization." *Global Policy Forum*. January 2012. <https://www.globalpolicy.org/globalization/globalization-of-the-economy-2-1/general-analysis-on-globalization-of-the-economy/51222-france-deals-with-globalization-.html>; Jonah D. Levy, "The Return of the State? France's Response to the Financial and Economic Crisis." *Comparative European Politics* 15, no. 4 (2017): 604-27.

³⁵⁵ Bruno Amable, *Structural Crisis and Institutional Change in Modern Capitalism: French Capitalism in Transition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Romain Duval and Andrea Bassanini, "Employment Patterns in OECD Countries." *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, 2006. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/employment-patterns-in-oecd-countries_702031136412; Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *The Crisis of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2013); Stéphane Hessel, *Time for Outrage: Indignez-Vous!* (New York, NY: Twelve, 2011).

³⁵⁶ Smith intervenes that many of France's socio-economic problems are the direct result of social, fiscal, taxation and economic policies that protect the upper-half of the income ladder at the expense of youth, women, immigrants and the unemployed. He contends that the majority of "social spending" serves to strengthen existing inequalities instead of reducing them. These inequalities include: an aging population, the rise of the working poor, a socioeconomically marginalized immigrant population, generational poverty, growing social spending deficit and increasing levels of taxation. When France shifted towards a corporatist welfare state that was pro-family, anti-immigration and rooted in the right-not-to-work by the early 2000's, it stopped absorbing its immigrant population into the workforce as it did from 1920-1968. His analysis suggests that the urban uprisings of 2005 were deeply connected to the France's stagnant economy, educational inequalities and discriminatory hiring. See Smith, *France in Crisis*.

internal colonization within France. As the events unfolded, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) organized an international forum for scholars to examine the uprisings' genesis. In order to offer their expert opinions in "real-time," the Council encouraged scholars to participate in a web forum. The majority of the essays published by the SSRC were written after the French government declared a state of emergency on November 8, 2005. Thus, their work symbolizes a sense of urgency on the part of scholars but also a widening sea of disagreement with the French government's response to these incidents. By chronicling the failures of policymakers and politicians in addressing these "root causes," scholars challenged France's commitment to progress.

The SSRC Forum reviewed the French government's response to the 2005 uprisings. Categorizing its actions as "swift" and "predictable," they focused on the activities of Minister of Interior Nicolas Sarkozy. After Sarkozy declared a "zero tolerance" policy towards urban violence, the civil unrest continued. Over the course of several weeks more than 2,900 individuals were arrested, 126 police and firefighters were injured, almost 9,000 cars were set aflame and dozens of public buildings were damaged amounting to almost 200 million euros in damage.³⁵⁷ Sarkozy increased military powers by deploying "law and order" rhetoric. In order to support his extensive use of police force, he vilified the *banlieue* as a hotbed of illegal immigration, Muslim extremism and polygamy. Countering this official narrative, scholars used their work as a corrective measure to offer a more accurate portrayal of the undercurrents culminating in urban uprising. Historians, economists, psychologists and other social scientists redirected attention from the government's focus on social deviance to offering concrete

³⁵⁷ Peter Sahlins, "Civil Unrest in the French Suburbs, November 2005." *Social Science Research Council*. October 24, 2006. <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/>.

examples of social and economic exclusion, racial discrimination and lackluster responses by the government on these issues.³⁵⁸

These scholarly examinations of urban unrest among Black and Arab youths were juxtaposed with white French expressions of discontent over the sordid state of the economy. Two months after the deaths of Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré, another set of protests began in Paris and various provincial cities. In January 2006, a new law entitled the First Employment Contract sparked a wave of massive demonstrations.³⁵⁹ Proposing lower wages and redrafting legislation to erode certain labor rights, French workers deemed this law a threat to their civil liberties. Over a million predominantly white French individuals participated in these protests including two mass marches on March 7th and March 19th.³⁶⁰ In addition to these “peaceful protests” there was also “extensive and violent rioting by youths, strikes and occupations of French universities, and levels of violence that at moments recalled the suburban unrest several months earlier.”³⁶¹ The Sarkozy administration repealed the law in response to this public

³⁵⁸ Accordingly French historian Peter Sahlins asserts, “These web essays help us to understand not only the social issues underlying the civil unrest in the suburbs in November 2005, but also the inaction of the government since.” See Sahlins, “Civil Unrest in the French Suburbs, November 2005.” *Social Science Research Council*.

³⁵⁹ For the text of the proposal see, “Document Mis En Distribution Le 16 Janvier 2006 N° 2787.” *Assemblée Nationale*. January 16, 2006. <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/projets/pl2787.asp>.

³⁶⁰ For more detail on these protests see Valérie Gas, “Contrat Première Embauche: Le Gouvernement Joue Le Calendrier.” *RFI*. January 25, 2006. http://www1.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/073/article_41383.asp; Sam Jones, “Police Fire Rubber Bullets at Crowds as Paris Labour Law Protest Turns into Riot.” *The Guardian*. March 17, 2006. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/mar/17/france.samjones>; Elaine Sciolino, “French Protests Over Youth Labor Law Spread to 150 Cities and Towns.” *The New York Times*. March 19, 2006. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/19/world/europe/french-protests-over-youth-labor-law-spread-to-150-cities-and.html>; “La Mobilisation Contre Le CPE Atteint Une Ampleur Inégalée.” *Le Monde*. March 27, 2006. https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2006/03/27/la-mobilisation-contre-le-cpe-atteint-une-ampleur-inegalée_755248_3210.html.

³⁶¹ Sahlins, “Civil Unrest in the French Suburbs,” <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/>.

oucry.³⁶² In stark contrast to its response to the employment law protests of 2006, the French government, failed to address “the ever growing crisis of social exclusion and racism affecting the French suburbs. No parliamentary commission has been convened to understand the [2005] riots, and no major governmental policies have been proposed in response to the social problems revealed by the riots.”³⁶³

This failure to address the social and economic inequalities impacting non-white residents of France was further emphasized by scholars who stressed that participants in the 2005 urban uprisings were not *sans-papiers*; instead, they were second-generation immigrant youth and their actions were a result of exclusion from republican rights guaranteed by the government. Inherently, an inadequate system was at the center of their discourse. Economist Bernard Salanié identified “one of the root causes of the [urban uprisings] as...the obscene low employment rate [40%] of the young in France, and especially of low-skilled young men.”³⁶⁴ These scholarly

³⁶² For additional information in the legislative proposal and eventual repeal of the law, see, "Analyse Du Scrutin N° 934 - Séance Du 21 Février 2006." *Assemblée Nationale*. February 21, 2006. <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/scrutins/jo0934.asp>; "Loi N° 2006-396 Du 31 Mars 2006 Pour L'égalité Des Chances." *Légifrance, Le Service Public De L'accès Au Droit*. March 30, 2006; "France to Mark Scrapping of Law." *CNN*. April 11, 2006. http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/04/11/france.labor.law/index.html?section=cnn_topstories; Gregory DeFreitas, *Young Workers in the Global Economy: Job Challenges in North America, Europe and Japan* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009), 1-25. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT00000268539&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>;

³⁶³ Sahlins, "Civil Unrest in the French Suburbs," <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/>.

³⁶⁴ Bernard Salanié, "The Riots in France: An Economist's View." *Social Science Research Council*, June 11, 2006. <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Salanie/>; Alec Hargreaves, "An Emperor with No Clothes?" *Social Science Research Council*, November 28, 2006. <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Hargreaves/>; Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, Reflection "A "À Chaud" on the French Suburban Crisis." *Social Science Research Council*, November 28, 2005. http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Wihtol_de_Wenden/; Mongiss Abdallah, "La France: Love it or Leave it," *Index on Censorship* 35, no. 3 (August 2006), 54-62; Violaine Carrère, "Quelles politiques pour quelle integration?" *Plein droit* 72, no 2, (March 2007), <http://www.gisti.org/spip.php?article885>; Nicolas Sarkozy, "Discours d'investiture," published on May 16, 2007, <http://www.elysee.fr/la-presidence/discours-d-investiture-de-nicolas-sarkozy/>; "Banlieues: qui a dit...? *Le Monde Diplomatique*, published on November 23, 2005, <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/carnet/2005-11-23-Qui-a-dit>; Luc Bonner and Catherine Simon, "Clichy-sous-Bois cristallise les tensions politiques et sociales," *Le Monde*, published on November 1, 2005,

interventions were echoed in the popular press. Television station *France 24* noted the “chronic poverty and rampant unemployment” of non-white French populations in Paris living in the outer *banlieues* made them ripe for an uprising.³⁶⁵ Despite the fact that these suburbs have been the priority of national policy since 1996, government initiatives were largely unsuccessful in redressing economic and spatial inequality. Categorized under three different “sensitive urban zones” headings: *zone urbaine sensible* (ZUS), *zones de redynamisation urbaine* (ZRU) and *zones franches urbaines* (ZFU) – suburban neighborhoods are classified by a number of social and financial factors including foreign status, education, family size and wage status.³⁶⁶ Moreover, these zones contain the highest populations of non-white peoples within the Parisian metropolitan area. In the last census before 2005, unemployment rates within ZUS

http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2005/11/01/clichy-sous-bois-cristallise-les-tensions-politiques-et-sociales_705364_3224.html.

³⁶⁵ Gaëlle Le Roux, “Five Years after Riots, Paris Suburb Is a Neglected Powder Keg.” *France 24*, France 24, 27 Oct. 2010, www.france24.com/en/20101027-2005-riots-paris-suburbs-neglected-powder-keg-clichy-sous-bois-france.

³⁶⁶ Created in 1958, urban priority zones (ZUP) created three categories for urban renewal sites. See, “Décret N°58-1464 Du 31 Décembre 1958 Relatif Aux Zones à Urbaniser Par Priorité.” Légifrance, Le Service Public De L'accès Au Droit. https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jo_pdf.do?numJO=0&dateJO=19590104&numTexte=&pageDebut=00269&pageFin. Originally meant to target Algerian workers that maybe have been sympathetic to the National Liberation Front (FLN), this urban renewal focused on re-organizing immigrants living in suburban public housing. Especially after 1973, these zones are concentrated areas of economic immobility. See Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004, 92-109. In 1993, ZUPs recorded an average 30% percent youth unemployment rate, in some areas this figure swelled to 85%. See Zakya Daoud, *Le chômage? In Banlieues...intégration ou explosion?* Edited by Catherine Wihtol de Wenden and Zakya Daoud. Special edition of *Panoramiques II* (12) 1993: 72-80; Roland Rathelot and Patrick Sillard, “Zones Franches Urbaines: Quels Effets Sur L’emploi Salarié Et Les Créations Détablissements?” *Economie Et Statistique* 415, no. 1 (2008): 81-96; Laurent Gobillon, Thierry Magnac, and Haris Selod, “L’effet Des Zones Franches Urbaines Sur Le Retour à L’Emploi.” *Centre Pour La Recherche économique Et Ses Applications* (CEPREMAP). October 2012. <http://www.cepremap.fr/depot/docweb/docweb1209.pdf>. These absurdly high figures propelled legal action by the national government in the form of *The Loi n° 95-115 du 4 février 1995 d’orientation pour l’aménagement et le développement du territoire*, which focused on ZUPs, see (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000005617704&dateTexte=19961114>); Also defined more succinctly conducted by the INSEE (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*) in the article “Sensitive Urban Zone/ZUS,” <https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/definition/c1679>.

neighborhoods were at 25% in comparison to a national average of 10%. Youth unemployment rates were at 40% versus a national average of 20-27%.³⁶⁷ Of the 750 ZUS areas, 27% percent lived in the “Paris conglomeration” composed of several suburban areas, most of which were impacted by the 2005 uprisings.³⁶⁸

In the ten years following these events, French presidents Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, and François Hollande all offered various stimulus packages to offset growing unemployment rates that began with the economic downturn in 1974.³⁶⁹ Two years after the urban uprisings, Sarkozy created the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National identity, and Co-development (2007-2010), this committee of policymakers focused on a series of bilateral reforms that studied population movements between Africa and Europe.³⁷⁰ The economic policy that emerged impacted both French and African international relations. A deeper consideration

³⁶⁷ Statistical figures are based on the 1999 national census conducted by the INSEE (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*) <http://www.recensement.insee.fr/RP99>. These numbers were also cited in Bernard Salanié’s article, “The Riots in France: An Economist’s View.”

³⁶⁸ Jean-Paul Fitoussi, Éloi Laurent, and Joël Maurice, “Ségrégation urbaine et intégration sociale.” *Conseil d’Analyse Économique* III, no. 01 (Janvier 2004): 1-328. <http://www.cae-eco.fr/IMG/pdf/045.pdf>.

³⁶⁹ More notably in 2012, President Hollande announced the creation of 33,000 state-subsidized jobs for youths with “little or no qualification, tailored largely to *disadvantaged areas*.” Another 100,000 posts will be financed for young people with vocational diplomas. For further information see Bruce Crumley, “The Problem of Clichy: After 2005 Riots, France’s Suburbs Are Still Miserable.” *Time Magazine*. December 07, 2012. <http://world.time.com/2012/12/07/the-problem-of-clichy-after-2005-riots-frances-suburbs-are-still-miserable/>.

³⁷⁰ Patrick Simon, “French National Identity and Integration: Who Belongs to the National Community?” May 2012. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>; Angelique Chrisafis, “Nicolas Sarkozy Says Sorry for National Identity Ministry.” *The Guardian*. November 17, 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/17/nicolas-sarkozy-immigration-apology>; David Khoudour-Castéras, “Neither Migration nor Development: The Contradictions of French Co-development Policy.” *The University of Maryland Center for International Policy Exchanges*. December 2009. http://umdcipe.org/conferences/Maastricht/conf_papers/Papers/Neither_Migration_nor_Development.pdf; Ozden Ocak, “Theorizing France’s Ministry of Immigration: Borders, Population and National Identity in Postcolonial Europe.” *George Mason University*, 2015. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1726031276?accountid=14214>.

of this economic relationship between France and several postcolonial African nations informs: the treatment of African immigrants, Black French citizens presumed to be migrants in France, and also the continuation of colonial economic policies in the postcolonial period. Dubbed *la Françafrique*, French economist François-Xavier Verschave explained, “the French thought that they were in the process of decolonization when in fact de Gaulle was doing all he could...to extend colonialism into the neocolonial period.”³⁷¹

This economic link between Africa and France is supported by a historical relationship that began in the colonial period but continued well into the twenty-first century. The historical, political and economic ties that connect Africa and France are repurposed by both Afro-French populations and the French state. In their process of self-identification, Black populations refuse to separate their socio-political, cultural and economic association with both locations. This linkage between Africa and France is also reformulated by French political strategists that target Black peoples as the locus of its migration anxieties and policymaking. In his explanation of mounting tensions in France, Sarkozy stated, “Immigration has become a central issue in relations between France and Africa; it is thus worth repeating that domestic *and* foreign policy cannot be decoupled when considering this question. French support has been concentrated on the idea of *Eurafrica*...”³⁷²

³⁷¹ François-Xavier Verschave and Philippe Hauser, *Au mépris des peuples: Le néocolonialisme franco-africain, entretien avec Philippe Hauser* (Paris: Editions la Fabrique, 2004), 7. Verschave’s creation of the term *Francafrique* was an exercise in irony and wordplay. Finding its origins in the term *France-Afrique* used by former Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny to describe the positive relationship between newly independent African countries and the France in the years following decolonization, Verschave repurposes Boigny’s words to express the exploitative relationship between France and African countries in the postcolonial period. See François-Xavier Verschave, “L’Afrique soumise à la raison des affaires.” *Survie*. January 19, 2001. <https://survie.org/themes/francafrique/article/l-afrique-soumise-a-la-raison-des>.

³⁷² (Emphasis added by author) Henri Guaino, “L’homme africain et l’histoire, par Henri Guaino E.” *Le Monde*. July 26, 2008. <http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2008/07/26/henri-guaino-toute-l-afrique-n-a-pas-rejete-le->

These sentiments were supported by a 2010 study in which “only 38% of the French population said that immigration is an opportunity in France, and their perceptions of immigrants’ impact on culture, labor markets and crime has been more negative.”³⁷³ Despite this overwhelming negative perception of African immigrants in France, the state is intricately linked to economic infrastructures in contemporary Francophone Africa.³⁷⁴ Scholarly study and the popular press have rightly highlighted the exploitive nature of *Françafrique* interactions. Their work details the nature of French profiteering, the unscrupulous extraction of African resources and the widespread corruption of African figureheads, who are protected from criminal charges by the French state.³⁷⁵ The reality is that “Africa [its resources, people and culture] continues to

[discours-de-dakar_1077506_3232.html](https://discours-de-dakar.1077506.3232.html). Translated by Dominic Thomas in *Africa and France*, 102-103. Thomas explains that this “particular vision of Eurafrika, [is] one in which ‘two Africas’ emerge: ‘one that would be ‘useful’ to Europe,’ offering a ‘kind of shield that would protect it from the assault of clandestine migrants,’ and the other, with a vocation to because its periphery, ‘useless’ became ‘problematic,’ and sheltering, according to the President, ‘too much famine and too much misery.” See also, Isidore Ndaywel È Nziem, “L’union pour la Méditerranée: un projet pour diviser l’afrique et tourner le dos à la Francophonie,” in *Petit précis de remise à niveau sur l’histoire africaine à l’usage du président Sarkozy*, ed. Adame Ba Konaré (Paris: La Découverte, 2009); 273-275.

³⁷³“Transatlantic Trends (Immigration).” *German Marshall Fund of the United States*. 2010. http://trends.gmfus.org/files/archived/immigration/doc/TTI2010_English_Top.pdf, 1-79.

³⁷⁴ Thomas, *Africa and France*, 100-103. Sarkozy’s understanding of the historical relationship between Africa and France was explained in his 2007 speech in Senegal. See, “France – Sénégal: extraits du discours de Dakar prononcé par Nicolas Sarkozy en 2007.” *Jeune Afrique*, October 12, 2012.

³⁷⁵ Redirecting attention from the consideration of *Françafrique*’s impact on the international scale to examining the local actions and businesses of Afro-French actors inserts a renewed focus on their agency. Their individual and collective businesses also have an impact on both France and Africa. Afropean entrepreneurial activity has yet to reach the mainstream media and scholarly coverage that *Françafrique* has garnered. For scholarly works on the nature and impact of *Françafrique* relations see Mongo Beti, *La France contre l’Afrique: Retour au Cameroun* (Paris: La découverte, 2006); Victor T. Le Vine, *Politics in Francophone Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007); Anne-Cécile Robert, “La FrançAfrique, le plus long scandale de la République.” *Le Monde Diplomatique*. May 1998, <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1998/05/ROBERT/3749>. For popular press and film treatments of *Francafrigue* see Pascal Airault and Jean-Pierre Bat. *Françafrique. Opérations secrètes et affaires d’État* (Paris: Tallandier, 2016); Philippe Bernard, “*Françafrique: Les relations incestueuses entre la France et l’Afrique noire PLANÈTE 20.40 | DOCUMENTAIRE*.” *Le Monde*, February 9, 2012, Le Monde Télévision, *Françafrique, 50 années sous le sceau du secret*. Directed by Patrick Benquet. France: Compagnie des phares et balises, 2010. DVD; Michael

sustain France as a national state as well as its capacity, within new global and European configurations, to maintain its status as a world power.”³⁷⁶ The simultaneous dependency on African nation-state natural resources and the rejection of African peoples within France by national leaders demonstrates the imbalanced nature of these power relations.

In response to these dual forces of oppression in Africa and France, a growing wave of Black French entrepreneurs use their businesses to return revenue back to Africa. Many of the businesses established by Afropeans maintain socio-economic and cultural ties to Africa in the face of the *Françafrique* system that continues to drain resources from the continent. A growing number of these businesses bring funds, employment opportunities and media attention to the creativity, experiences and historical legacies of African populations. This method of economic uplift draws attention to *Françafrique*'s neocolonial impact on Africa as a system that perpetuates cycles of poverty which in turn propels clandestine immigration to France in search of employment opportunity.³⁷⁷ Black French entrepreneurs call attention to their transnational activities through the creations of businesses that view Afropean identity as foundational to their business model and situated within a longer history of African contributions to both France and their native nation-states. This position is in stark contrast to Sarkozy's understanding of African diasporic history and the conceptualization of Sub-Saharan identity. In a speech delivered at University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, he stated

Pauron, "Françafrique... Encore?" *Jeune Afrique*, May 21, 2016.
<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/325549/culture/francafrique-encore/>.

³⁷⁶ Thomas, *Africa and France*, 90. France's role in Africa is also explored in Jean-Pierre Dozon's monograph, *Frères et sujets: La France et l'Afrique en perspective* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003).

³⁷⁷ Anne Frintz, "La jeunesse burkinabé bouscule la « Françafrique »; Extrême pauvreté." *Le Monde Diplomatique*. December 2014.

“I came to tell you that this African part and European part of yourselves form your torn identity...The tragedy of Africa is that the African has not fully entered into history. The African peasant, who for thousands of years have lived according to the seasons, whose life ideal was to be in harmony with nature, only knew the eternal renewal of time, punctuated by the endless repetition of the same gestures and the same words. In this imaginary world where everything starts over and over again there is no place for human adventure or for the idea of progress.”³⁷⁸

Joining the scholars, activists and journalists who have emphasized the inanity and gross minimization of Sarkozy’s understanding of African contributions to history, the following oral histories challenge the conceptualization of Africans as “peasants” and offer an analysis of Afro-French businesses. These narratives examine how Black men and women bridge the gap between Africa and France economically, socially, politically and culturally.³⁷⁹ In the wake of 2005, Black French communities began to interact with the economy differently. This shift coincided with significant technological change, increased access to the internet, e-commerce and the rise of the “gig economy.” As these developments took root, first and second generation Black French populations participated in these new trends. However, second and third generation Afro-French residents have been particularly engaged in these developments as a means of pushing forward a mission of Black Capitalist economic advancement.

³⁷⁸ This quote was extracted from French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s “Address at the University Cheikh Anta Diop” on July 26, 2007. <https://www.africaresource.com/essays-a-reviews/essays-a-discussions/437-the-unofficial-english-translation-of-sarkozys-speech?showall=&start=2>.

³⁷⁹ Adame Ba. Konaré, *Petit précis de remise à niveau sur l'histoire africaine à l'usage du président Sarkozy* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009) ; Laurence De Cock, Fanny Madeline, Nicolas Offenstadt, and Sophie Wahnich, eds. *Comment Nicolas Sarkozy écrit l'histoire de France* (Marseille: Agone, 2008); Jean-Luc Raharimana, Boubabar Boris Diop, Kangni Alem, Patrice Nganang, and Makhily Gassama, "Lettre ouverte à Nicolas Sarkozy." *Libération*, August 10, 2007. http://www.liberation.fr/tribune/2007/08/10/lettre-ouverte-a-nicolas-sarkozy_99657.

Oral histories complicate and contextualize the meta-narrative of economic stagnation in the wake of 2005. Indeed, these stories offer a vision of Black Capitalism as a means of economic success. These accounts provide a window into a community mentalité that the archives fail to capture. The interviews used in the following section highlight both the triumphs and challenges of navigating a struggling French economy. These stories reveal a collective history of migration, attempts at integration and frequent isolation within the workplace. The transformative experience of becoming an entrepreneur is an attempt to reclaim an element of self-determination often sequestered within the traditional French workspace and create more space for other Afropeans. Along the way, these men and women established businesses that reconnected them to their African roots. Many narrators cite replicating business models and drawing inspiration from African American entrepreneurs. Devoid of any Black French billionaires, there are several Afro-French millionaires including Élie Yaffa, Malamine Kone, Badiri Diakite and Kylian Mbappé.³⁸⁰ Undeterred by the dearth of Afro-French billionaires and multi-millionaires, interviewees acknowledge that growing numbers of individuals are opting out of joining *Entreprises CAC 40* (the equivalent to the American Fortune 500 companies) and are instead creating their own businesses.

³⁸⁰ Part of the explanation for the lack of the Black French millionaires and billionaires in France is the taxation system. Over the years, millionaires have been fleeing the country to escape the high taxes. See Robert Frank, "For Millionaire Immigrants, a Global Welcome Mat." *The New York Times*, February 25, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/25/your-money/wealth-immigration-millionaires-australia-canada.html>; Ivana Kottasova, "10,000 millionaires left France last year." *CNNMoney*. April 1, 2016. <http://money.cnn.com/2016/04/01/news/millionaires-fleeing-france/index.html>; James Pethokoukis, "Rich people are fleeing France." *American Enterprise Institute*. April 4, 2016. <http://www.aei.org/publication/rich-people-are-fleeing-france/>.

These oral histories represent narratives of hopeful upward economic mobility and community activism as well as counter-narratives of marginalization and intra-communal competition. Commentators contend that their individual advances do not offset collective Black French struggles with political and socio-economic gains. However, these stories document the uneven but rapidly expanding pace of economic growth amongst Afro-French entrepreneurs. Their collective actions can be grouped within five themes: experiences of socio-economic limitation; transnational movement; a connection to Africa through inheritance, politics and identity; a duty and responsibility to their individual families and larger ethnic community; and the use of the digital and print media to raise the visibility of their economic profiles.

Kahi Lumumba



Figure 11. Kahi Lumumba photographed for a 2017 article in *Jeune Afrique*.

Conceived in the shadows of familial exile, Kahi Lumumba is an heir to the African Revolutionary Struggle. He is the grandson of the martyred Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected prime minister of an independent Congo. Although he never met him, Kahi states that his grandfather represents “[a] kind of personal magic potion in which I draw values of courage and passion, as well as an unwavering faith in the strength of the African continent.”³⁸¹ Born in 1984, he was raised in Belgium. He finished his high school education in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. In 2002, Lumumba moved to France to begin college. After completing his university education, he relocated to London for two years. During this time, he worked for

³⁸¹ Kahi Lumumba, "Patrice Lumumba fascine le XXI^e siècle." *Huffington Post*. January 17, 2014. <http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/kahi-lumumba/anniversaire-patrice-lumumba-congo>.

General Electric, the IT department of the Postal Bank and *Gaz de France* (GDF). The latter position allowed him to foster business relations between London and Paris.

Despite the comfortable earnings, Lumumba felt “out of place” in the workplace.³⁸² Lacking a direct connection and impact on the African communities in London and Paris, he felt isolated in the Parisian business district known as *La Défense*.³⁸³ He states, “I knew I loved creating things but when you are at university you always dream to work for a big group.”³⁸⁴ Despite achieving his dream to work for larger corporations, he admits that soon he became unmotivated. Lumumba reflects on these experiences by saying, “I knew I needed to be passionate about something on a daily basis to do my work well.” After working for these various companies, he realized that he wanted to be an entrepreneur.³⁸⁵

In 2012, Kahi Lumumba created his company named Totem. A nod to its symbolism in African culture as emblematic of an animal or spirit being, this sacred object, the “Totem” began as “a webzine...so that young Africans could reclaim their own story.”³⁸⁶ Dedicated to

³⁸² Trésor Kibangula, "Innovation 2.0: Kahi Lumumba, influenceur panafricain." *Jeune Afrique*, August 10, 2017.

³⁸³ Kibangula, "Innovation 2.0: Kahi Lumumba."

³⁸⁴ Kahi Lumumba, in discussion with the author. April 4, 2017. This sentiment is echoed in study conducted by KPMG (one of the “big four” auditing companies), which states, “France has long been known for the high standards of our education system. However, this drive for excellence had an unexpected consequence that previously hindered early growth of entrepreneurialism: students learned through experience that there was no room for failure – especially not for those who wanted secure a good job or go on to an elite business school. The resulting risk-adverse mindset was largely incompatible with startup activity.” See François Bloch, "Rise of Entrepreneurship in France." *KPMG*. February 23, 2016. <https://home.kpmg.com/xx/en/home/insights/2016/02/rise-of-entrepreneurship-in-france.html>.

³⁸⁵ Kahi Lumumba, in discussion with the author. April 4, 2017.

³⁸⁶ John N. Oriji, "Transformations in Igbo Cosmology during Slavery: A Study of the Geneses of Place-Names, Totems & Taboos (Transformations Dans La Cosmologie Igbo Pendant L'esclavage: Une étude Des Genèses Des Noms De Lieu, Des Totems Et Tabous)." *Cahiers D'Études Africaines* 49, no. 196 (2009): 953-67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40380044>; Nadia Rabbaa, "Diaspora - Kahi Lumumba: sa voix veut porter le revival

promoting African creativity on a digital platform, the company expanded its website by adding history, lifestyle and conceptions of modernity content. Reflective of its demographic, Totem's daily articles range from how to create a start-up to Beyoncé's African influences. The business model promotes pairing African or Afropean digital influencers with major brands.³⁸⁷ Drawing from its large network of digital influencers, Totem assists both the influencer and the company create original content for the internet and various other digital platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat. Although the company is based in France, it has offices in Ivory Coast, Congo, Benin and Senegal.

Since the company's creation five years ago, African aesthetics have become *en vogue*. Multi-billion dollar media and technology industries have increasingly discovered a new home in Africa. Seeking to tap into new markets across the continent, international companies have turned a frenzied gaze toward an African *el dorado*.³⁸⁸ Despite the hundreds of companies that have flocked to take a stake in Africa, Kahi is not worried about the fate of his company. He states, "The multiplication of media focused on Africa does not bother me, on the contrary, it is a

africain." *Le Point Afrique*. July 28, 2015. http://afrique.lepoint.fr/culture/diaspora-kahi-lumumba-sa-voix-veut-porter-le-revival-africain-28-07-2015-1953001_2256.php.

³⁸⁷ These brands include: Dove, Air France, Canal+ Afrique, Axe, Heineken, ECAir, ViaMondo, AfriknFusion, Société Générale, CFAO, Orange Money Diaspora and Accor Hotels.

³⁸⁸ For a detailed description of media and technological efforts in Africa see Larisa Epatko, "How the emerging tech hubs of Africa are getting connected to Silicon Valley." *PBS*. December 21, 2017. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/nonprofit-touts-the-emerging-tech-hubs-of-africa-and-their-inventors>; Matteo Maillard, "Mamadou Dramé, pionnier des nouvelles technologies « Made in Africa »." *Le Monde Afrique*. March 9, 2016. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/03/09/mamadou-drame-pionnier-des-nouvelles-technologies-made-in-africa_4879321_3212.html; "Technology may help compensate for Africa's lack of manufacturing." *The Economist*. November 09, 2017. <https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21731040-industry-starting-scratch-technology-may-help-compensate-africas-lack>.

good thing for all Africans hungry for information." ³⁸⁹ This competition has propelled his new business strategy. Creating a niche of his own, Lumumba blends a series of platforms for information dissemination including a magazine format, a blog and a web-TV series called "African Geek" that tackles African clichés. ³⁹⁰ Using these short films, he hopes to spread a "positive image of the continent" to help his target audience of Afrobeats be proud of their layered identities and facilitate connections between the continent of Africa and countries where members of the African diaspora currently reside.

This ambition to revolutionize the communications industry in Africa can be seen most clearly in Lumumba's newest venture called ADICOM Days (Africa Digital Communication). In March 2017, he gathered 400 of the most recognizable African influencers in Paris for the first time. Over two days, thirty speakers discussed social media trends, brand content and marketing strategies. The conference culminated in the presentation of ADICOM Awards, which recognized individuals and brands for their creativity, talent and innovation in African digital communication. ³⁹¹ On the last day, he unveiled TINA, a digital marketing influence platform for

³⁸⁹ Kahi's rise has been chronicled by *Forbes Afrique*, *Africa 24*, and *TV5 Monde*. See Nadia Rabbaa, "Diaspora - Kahi Lumumba: sa voix veut porter le revival africain." *Le Point Afrique*. July 28, 2015. http://afrique.lepoint.fr/culture/diaspora-kahi-lumumba-sa-voix-veut-porter-le-revival-africain-28-07-2015-1953001_2256.php. For media citations see: *Africa24. L'invite du jour avec Kahi Lumumba, expert en nouvelles technologies*. YouTube. August 26, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkfpENQP5w>; Viviane Forson, "Totem World, premier "pure player" de l'actualite afro-caribéenne." *Forbes Afrique*, March 2015, 24-26; *TV5 Monde. L'Afrique en marche avec Dycosh*. YouTube. November 01, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEINEGt0Urg>.

³⁹⁰ Nadia Rabbaa, "Diaspora - Kahi Lumumba: sa voix veut porter le revival africain."

³⁹¹ "ADICOM Days, le rendez-vous digital." *My Afro Week*. March 2017. <https://myafroweek.com/evenement/adicom-days-rendez-digital-afrique/>. For more information on the ADICOM Days see Trésor Kibangula, "#AdicomDays2017: les influenceurs africains à l'honneur à Paris, « Jeune Afrique » primé – JeuneAfrique.com." *Jeune Afrique*. March 03, 2017. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/408743/societe/adicomdays2017-influenceurs-africains-a-lhonneur-a-paris-jeune-afrique-prime/> and Kahi Lumumba, "Il est grand temps de miser sur la créativité des influenceurs africains."

Africa. The first of its kind, TINA connects companies and advertisement agencies with more than 600 African influencers across the continent directly on the site.³⁹² The success of ADICOM Days and his various business ventures propelled Lumumba to move to Abidjan and host the second edition of the conference there in 2018.

During his final months in Paris, Kahi insisted that this move was not permanent instead, moving to Africa would help him continue to expand his business on the continent but also “keep a foot in France.”³⁹³ He cites two reasons for this type of transnational movement: the first is a business point of view, “we cannot ignore that the largest companies we work with have their headquarters in France. So, if you want to conduct business and broker new deals, you need to negotiate them in Paris even if the project will happen in Africa.” The second reason is connected to his perception of African development. He contends that his travels to France, the United States, and Brazil provide him with the inspiration to come back to Africa with new ideas and an expanded vision of African diasporic communities. He uses the following metaphor to explain the future of his company, “If we were to say the world is a restaurant, then you have to sit down at this global table and talk with the others. That’s the way I see it. That’s why it’s

Stratégies. November 6, 2016. <http://www.strategies.fr/blogs-opinions/idees-tribunes/1050358W/il-est-grand-temps-de-miser-sur-la-creativite-des-influenceurs-africains.html>.

³⁹² Intent on promoting African creativity internationally, Lumumba has experimented with various platforms to help non-African companies use and promote African voices, faces and personalities in their advertising content. This venture is essential to changing the ways in mainstream Western companies promote their products and how they interact with African populations. Moving past historically stereotypical or colonial campaigns (see Uncle Ben, Banania, and Woolite), Totem allows for influencers and companies to work together to create content that is reflective of modern and borderless Africa.

³⁹³ Kahi Lumumba, in discussion with the author. April 4, 2017.

important to stay open-minded, travel, connect with others and bring that knowledge back to Africa.³⁹⁴

Although Totem's mission to help all the "creatives" in Africa monetize their gift is far from complete, Kahi Lumumba's confidence is unwavering. He asserts that the growth of Afro-French entrepreneurs in Paris is a positive development. The existence of business men and women in different industries including fashion, food, and media is suggestive of a socio-economic evolution for the Black community. He states, "I think the next generation is even more optimistic than the one before. They are benefiting from the work of their parents who came from Africa to France to create a better life for themselves and their family. They worked hard to put us in schools, invest in our projects and promote our companies."³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ Kahi Lumumba, in discussion with the author. April 4, 2017.

³⁹⁵ Kahi Lumumba, in discussion with the author. April 4, 2017.

Oumou Diasse



Figure 12. Oumou Diasse (pictured in her official Conseillère municipale de Créteil photo).

In 1958, Oumou Diasse was born in Senegal during the waning years of French colonization. Her birth two years before the “Year of Africa” made her a *jus soli* French citizen.³⁹⁶ Arriving in Paris at the age of eighteen, Diasse was the first woman in her family to attend university. Reflecting on this moment with pride she states,

³⁹⁶ The “Year of Africa” has been historically recognized as a central rupture point in colonial history. This year marked the independence of seventeen nations and catalyzed the decolonization of several more African countries in the years to come. The process of decolonization is understood as the longer process of a power transfer or as the more immediate outcome of independence. For historical treatments on this period, see Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Constance Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 1965); Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis, *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfers of Power, 1960-1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of the Colonial Empires* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 2008). The term *jus soli* refers to the right to citizenship based on birth in the nation or territory occupied by the nation.

In my family, girls did not go to school. For many years my father did not know I was going to school... When my father would come, my mother would give an excuse for why I was not home...By the time I got accepted to the University of Paris, I still did not tell my father that I was going to school. The day I was leaving for France, I read the letter to my father and he was proud. With this, I opened a door for my little sister to go to school, even though my older sister didn't go. But the sister after me had the opportunity to go to school, it was a new beginning.³⁹⁷

Leaving behind two sons with her mother, Diasse went to Paris in 1976 with dreams of becoming the first African woman pilot. She arrived with no family or friends to support the transition from Senegal. She worked two jobs in an effort to save enough money to bring her children to France. Once Diasse completed her education, she united with her children after almost six years of separation. Finding adequate housing for her family proved to be increasingly difficult in Paris. When her applications for housing were refused, Diasse moved to the Parisian suburb of Créteil for a new beginning. She wrote to the Mayor and asked for a meeting to discuss some of her concerns.

In the two weeks before the meeting, Oumou canvassed the local University campus asking black students what they needed most in the city. The majority of students voted in favor of a hair salon. Armed with this knowledge, she met with Mayor Laurent Cathala in 1983. With his help, she moved to an apartment large enough for her children and was given an empty space to begin her salon.

So now I had a place, but I'm not a hair stylist. I didn't have much money for this project. I went to the bank for help and they said, I had no business plan and no start-up money, so there was not much they would offer me. But with the little I had and the help of the Mayor, I started. Black Hair stylists and vendors that heard about my project all came. Thirty-four

³⁹⁷ Oumou Diasse, in discussion with the author. February 27, 2017.

years, I'm still here. I opened the first black hair salon in Créteil and people still are coming. With that I began my life as a businesswoman.

Ten years after the launching of her hair salon, Diasse thought it was time to expand. Initially, she considered moving to England but finally settled on relocating to the United States. In 1996, she arrived in Harlem. After spending to two weeks visiting salons along 125th Street, she realized that she did not want to move to the United States. Upon return to France, Diasse informed her business partner that she wanted to change directions. Although, she loved managing hair salons, there was something else she wanted to do.

Over the years, I've learned that you must develop your self-esteem. Which is why I have this hair salon. I love seeing the women leave my place feeling beautiful and saying, 'Wow I feel great'. I've seen young people born and raised in my salon. When they have some problems with their parents, they come to me at the hair salon. If a couple gets into an argument, the woman comes to the hair salon for advice. If I cook, everyone eats here. It really is the house of the neighborhood. Everyone comes and it's a big family and that's how it stays. But after many years and different experiences, I realized I am more of humanitarian than a business woman. My greatest pleasure in life is to make others happy. I always wanted to help...³⁹⁸

In 2007, Diasse founded the NGO, *Miss Oumy À Coeur Solidarité Internationale* (M.O.A.C.O.S.I.). Naming the organization after her "heart" for international solidarity, Diasse manages projects both in France and Africa. From her base in Créteil, the organization runs four programs within the city: a summer program, a woman's network, a food bank, and a computer literacy program. Concurrent with these local programs, M.O.A.C.O.S.I. also manages the same four programs in Senegal. In addition to her humanitarian work, Diasse still owns her hair salon.

³⁹⁸ Oumou Diasse, in discussion with the author. February 27, 2017.

For her efforts, both within the Parisian suburbs of Créteil and work abroad, Diasse was elected to the municipal council in 2015.³⁹⁹ As a city councilor, she serves as a member of the Education, Youth, Culture, and Sports Committee. One of fifty-three members, she is also instrumental in the elections for the mayor of Créteil every six years as a member of the Socialist Party.⁴⁰⁰

Ten years after its inception, her summer program for children and families drew 3,000 people for a day of fun in the sun at the local Parc des Bordes. Activities included a barbeque, music, live performances, water games, mini-golf, cultural events, and a soccer tournament, all free of charge.⁴⁰¹ In an interview with local newspaper, *Le Parisien*, Diasse stated, “This day permits those who cannot afford to go on holidays to escape for bit. A shared moment, young, old, black, white, Senegalese, Comorians, Hindus, Jews, Christians and Muslims, the objective is to gather and mix everyone for a moment of sharing and tolerance.”⁴⁰² Many of the families that come to the yearly summer program are recipients of the food bank drive that distributes baskets

³⁹⁹ Mairie De Créteil, "Composition des commissions permanentes." *Ville de Créteil*. March 7, 2017. <http://www.ville-creteil.fr/composition-des-commissions-permanentes>.

⁴⁰⁰ “The municipal council is elected by direct universal suffrage by the voters registered on the electoral lists of the municipality. The council then elects the mayor every six years, by secret ballot and by an absolute majority. Through its deliberations, the municipal council regulates the affairs of the municipality and gives its opinion whenever it is required by the laws and regulations.” For more information on the committee composition and responsibilities see, Mairie De Créteil, *Conseil municipal*. March 7, 2017. <http://www.ville-creteil.fr/conseil-municipal>.

⁴⁰¹ Mairie De Créteil, "Journée de vacances." August 30, 2017. <http://www.ville-creteil.fr/journee-de-vacances>.

⁴⁰² Corinne N’eves, "À Chennevières, une journée de fête offerte a 3 000 personnes." *Le Parisien*, August 23, 2017. <https://www.pressreader.com/france/le-parisien-paris/20150823/281732678231766>.

on a weekly basis at *Maison de solidarité* and they send their children to the organization's computer literacy program that is open six days a week.⁴⁰³

Diasse's newest venture seeks to bring Africa and France together in a joint humanitarian effort. With a group of sixteen people comprised of volunteers and "at-risk youth" from the city, the team repaired the Diamniadio School located on the Saloum islands in Senegal.⁴⁰⁴ During the month, the group rebuilt the school that holds classes for school-aged children and a nightly women's literacy class. This project also allowed local Parisian youth to get involved in humanitarian actions alongside volunteers of the NGO. Some of the youth she recruits are unemployed or have dropped out of school. During the stay in Senegal, she arranges activities such as sports tournaments, meetings, meals and local excursions that allow them to make transnational connections. She states, "The type of experience allows them to meet other young people from different cultures, to make them reflect on their current situation and to develop their self-esteem. These children often return to France on the road to recovery."⁴⁰⁵

She speaks frankly of the challenges that face her while maintaining a business and a non-profit organization. The initial rehabilitation of the Diamniadio school occurred over a two-year period from 2013 to 2015 and an additional year of fundraising to secure the necessary 10,000 €. After four years, Diasse completed the project in 2017. In addition to re-building

⁴⁰³ "Miss Oumy à Coeur ouvert permet de nourrir 6 personnes pour 10 € à Créteil." *France Bleu*. October 18, 2017. <https://www.francebleu.fr/emissions/le-top-positif/107-1/le-top-positif-31>.

⁴⁰⁴"Miss Oumy parlera de ses projets au Sénégal." *Le Parisien*, November 25, 2017. <https://www.pressreader.com/france/le-parisien-val-de-marne/20171125/282583083319875>.

⁴⁰⁵ Agnès Vives, "Créteil: Miss Oumy cherche encore des fonds pour son projet au Sénégal." *Le Parisien*. November 15, 2016. <http://www.leparisien.fr/creteil-94000/creteil-miss-oumy-cherche-encore-des-fonds-pour-son-projet-au-senegal-15-11-2016-6331827.php>.

schools, she is also committed to helping women from the local community combat poverty and discrimination. Each year, she returns to Senegal to host conferences that help women find solutions to the devastating impact of climate change. These conferences allow women to develop small businesses and act as support groups for other women who are often abandoned by husbands while they search for work and are left alone to care for their children and elderly parents.⁴⁰⁶ Deeply connected to her work in Africa and in France, Diasse serves her community in many capacities (businesswoman, politician, and humanitarian). When reflecting on her dreams for the future, she returns to the reason why she moved to France.

I wanted to be pilot. I wanted to be the first African woman to fly planes but instead I got a metaphorical airplane. I thought I was going to be a pilot for big airline company, but my airplane is what I'm doing now. Everyone I help comes on my plane. What I am doing now is helping people to travel. Without education, you cannot accomplish much. I am helping build schools, I am helping empower and nurture women. I take young people from Paris to Africa. I did become a pilot.

Although her career as a businesswoman and “mother of the community” is far from complete, she concludes that “money doesn’t drive me. Humans do. I love humans especially the young and I want to help.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶When asked to explain the absence of men within the home in Senegal, Diasse is insistent that absentee fatherhood is a consequence of climate change and is not due to a familial breakdown instead she states, “our young men are at risk of being smuggled into Europe [for work] and many are losing their lives. These things are having a strong impact on women’s lives because their husbands are leaving them alone and going to the cities to seek employment.” See Mildred Barasa, “Reportage sur l’Afrique à la COP21 #3: Les femmes ou le groupe le plus vulnérable.” *Fondation de l’Ecologie Politique*. December 08, 2015. <http://www.fondationecolo.org/blog/Reportage-sur-l-Afrique-a-la-COP21-3-Les-femmes-ou-le-groupe-le-plus-vulnérable>.

⁴⁰⁷Oumou Diasse, in discussion with the author. February 27, 2017.

Kady Mash



Figure 13. Kady Mash pictured in his custom tie and suit jacket.

Kady Mash was seven years old when he arrived in Paris. Born the son of a political activist, his family came to France under political asylum. Their escape from persecution in the Democratic Republic of Congo was met with hope for a better life in Paris. Fleeing the totalitarian regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko, the Mash family was unsure if they would ever return home.⁴⁰⁸ Proud of his Congolese roots, Kady became a naturalized French citizen ten years ago. He states,

⁴⁰⁸In 1960, Mubotu Sese Seko staged a coup d'état with Belgian support against the sitting Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. After Lumumba was assassinated, Seko became the head of the Congolese military before a second coup that facilitated his rise to presidency in 1965. Serving as the president for thirty-two years, Seko was sanctioned by the United Nations for human rights violations and frequently used the military to silence any opposition from citizens. See Daron Acemoglu James Robinson, and Thierry Verdier, "Kleptocracy and Divide-and-Rule: A Model of Personal Rule." *Journal of the European Economic Association* (2–3) (2003): 162-92; "Enfants de Mobutu." *Jeune Afrique*, September 10, 2007. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/118913/archives-thematique/enfants-de-mobutu/>; Jeanne M. Haskin, *The tragic state of the Congo: from decolonization to dictatorship*. New York: Algora, 2005; Who Killed Lumumba? : Audio Transcript. 2000. *BBC*, London. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/audio_video/programmes/correspondent/transcripts/974745.txt.

I am French. I studied in France. I worked in France. I grew up in Paris and in the suburbs of Seine-Saint-Denis. I am Congolese but French at the same time. It's like '*le cul est entre deux chaises*.'⁴⁰⁹ I am French because I was naturalized but then in France, people consider me African because of the color of my skin. Okay, you are French, but then they ask, 'What are your origins?' Here in France, you could be French but they say, 'You come from someplace else, those are your origins.' I never went back to Congo. It is impossible for me to separate the two [Africa and France]. France gave me everything. But I am African, I cannot hide that, but at the same time I am French."⁴¹⁰

Three years ago, Kady quit his job as a promoter/event organizer for parties and concerts to start his business. Naming the company *Mwanamaille* Clothing, this moniker reasserts his African and French identities. The name *Mwanamaille* is a mixture of Lingala (a provincial Bantu language spoken throughout the northwestern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and French. In Lingala, "*mwana*" means child. The French word "*maille*" has multiple meanings: money, the stitching of fabric or to link. Fond of word play, Kady wanted his business to have multiple interpretations but a simple concept, "*Mwanamaille* could mean a child of business, a child of the cloth or a child linked to both Africa and France. It's a movement."⁴¹¹ The start of his company began as a movement propelled by other Afro-French people. During his time as an event organizer, he became popular for wearing ties that were made of traditional

⁴⁰⁹ The literal translation of '*il est assis le cul entre deux chaises*,' means to be caught between two chairs. However, in this reference Kady is explaining that he feels caught in between two identities and often confronts the socio-cultural burdens of navigating this dual identity that are often perceived to be separate by others. However, he identifies as both African and French.

⁴¹⁰ Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. March 30, 2017.

⁴¹¹ "Interview Mwanamaille Clothing: «Je suis congolais, j'ai toujours aimé m'habiller»." *African Moove*. August 04, 2015. <http://www.africanmoove.com/afrotendance/interview-mwanamaille-clothing-je-suis-congolais-jai-toujours-aime-mhabiller/> and Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. March 30, 2017.

wax tissue. His growing notoriety for his seemingly never-ending assortment of wax ties helped as customers and clients began to place orders for replicas of the ties he wore to various events.

His flair for fashion finds its origins in the Congolese-derived *Sappeur* Culture. This social and cultural phenomenon began in Kinshasa and Brazzaville during the colonial period. Congolese men repurposed the hand-me-downs of colonial administrators to make them their own. As anti-colonial sentiments began to build in the 1950's, *sappeurs* were represented by both the working class and the upper-class intelligentsia. Canonized in music by Congolese singer and musician Papa Wemba, *sappeurs* used fashion to spurn former French colonial notions of inferiority in their choice of dress. Altering and layering French designer brands with bright colors, patterns and fabrics, *sappeurs* celebrate their political freedom and individuality through their clothing.⁴¹² Despite being inspired by the bold fashion choices of *Sappeur* culture, Kady believes this style of dress has its limits and the international acclaim brought to *La Sape* has made it “cliché” and overstated. He uses his clothing line as a return to “simple elegance.” Mixing classic French clothes and streetwear with touches of African wax fabric is his solution. This Afro-French style grew out of childhood experiences. He reflects, “My mother was a seamstress. She made our clothes. When I arrived in France from Kinshasa...I wanted to

⁴¹² For more information about *La Sape* or *Sappeur Culture* (Society for Ambieners and Persons of Elegance) see Françoise Alexander, "Sapeurs sachant saper." *Le Monde*. May 13, 2016. http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/05/12/sapeurs-sachant-saper_4918367_3232.html; Charles Didier Gondola, "La sape exposed! high fashion among lower-class Congolese youth: from colonial modernity to global cosmopolitanism." In *Contemporary African fashion*, edited by Kristine Loughran and Suzanne Gott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 156-173 and 225-226; Laureline Savoye, "La sape ivoirienne: un art de vivre en couleurs." *Le Monde Afrique*. February 09, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/video/2017/02/09/la-sape-ivoirienne-un-art-de-vivre-en-couleurs_5077095_3212.html; Dominic Richard David Thomas, "Fashion Matters: La Sape and Vestimentary Codes in Transnational Contexts and Urban Diasporas." *Johns Hopkins University Press* 118, no. 4 (September 2003): 947-73.

integrate quickly and look European. Growing up, I was ashamed of wearing wax. Now that I'm older I have realized the beauty in wax tissue."⁴¹³

The beauty of wax tissue and African aesthetics is not only shared by Kady Mash but also several haute couture fashion houses.⁴¹⁴ Within the past ten years all of these fashion labels have used African prints in their work often without offering recognition or monetary compensation to the original African designers.⁴¹⁵ The transition of African fashion to the mainstream has had both a negative and positive impact on Mash's business. He states, "You can see it in the big stores that are all using African prints."⁴¹⁶ This intra-industrial competition has largely impacted his pricing. Mash explains, "I make t-shirts for 35 euro. Some people say, 'Oh that's expensive, I'll go shop somewhere else.' But I charge that much because I can ensure the quality." Beyond

⁴¹³ "Interview Mwanamaille Clothing: «Je suis congolais, j'ai toujours aimé m'habiller»." *African Moove*.

⁴¹⁴ The following fashion houses have used African prints in their Spring or Fall collections: Marc Jacobs, Louis Vuitton, Céline, Valentino, Stella McCartney, Burberry, and Matthew Williamson.

⁴¹⁵ For more information on haute couture houses and their use of African traditional prints and designs, see Marysa Greenawalt, "Behind the Photos: Steve McCurry's Ad Campaign for Valentino." *Time*. February 16, 2016. <http://time.com/4224900/steve-mccurry-valentino-ad-campaign/>; Hewete Haileselassie, "Anger over African designs." *The Independent*. December 09, 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/anger-over-african-designs-763901.html>; Susanna Heller, "A designer who put white models in African-print dresses is being accused of cultural appropriation." *Business Insider*. October 05, 2017. <http://www.businessinsider.com/stella-mccartney-accused-cultural-appropriation-2017-10>; Mayeni Jones, "When does cultural borrowing turn into cultural appropriation?" *BBC News*. September 28, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41430748>; Simone S. Oliver, "Designers Take a Fresh Look at Africa." *The New York Times*. December 07, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/08/fashion/africas-new-fashion-influence.html>; Eric. Wilson, "Marc Jacobs on Hip Hop and Charges of Cultural Appropriation: 'Maybe I've Been Insensitive'." *InStyle*. August 07, 2017. <http://www.instyle.com/fashion/marc-jacobs-hip-hop-icons>.

⁴¹⁶ Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. March 30, 2017. Clothing stores such as H&M, Zara, TopShop, Urban Outfitters and Forever 21 manufacturing African print t-shirts, bags, jackets, ties and sweatshirts at both spectrums of the cost scale. For more information see Samuel Marc, "Nouvelles tendances: Les 4 conseils Sape de Dycosh – EXCLU." *OutreMers360*. June 20, 2015. <http://www.outremersbeyou.com/nouvelles-tendances-dycosh-mode-afro-urbaine-conseils-sape-equilibre-exclu/> and Mfonobong Nsehe, "Meet The Woman Disrupting The African Fashion Industry With Technology." *Forbes*. June 22, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mfonobongnsehe/2017/06/22/meet-the-woman-disrupting-the-african-fashion-industry-with-technology/>.

the overhead costs of buying the fabric and paying a tailor to customize a t-shirt, Mash often has difficulty funding the expansion of his company. He states

The taxation system here [in France] is very complicated and prohibits people from maintaining their businesses. There is so much talent in France, but the system is hard to navigate. The taxes are high and the banks make it difficult to get a loan. It is very hard. The system must change because it's too hard. It's sad because France is losing its talent because the system is very complicated and too expensive. For the instant, I work with an association that helps me with my taxes.⁴¹⁷

Despite the challenges of making quality clothes affordable as a small business owner, Kady believes there is room for everyone. Much of his success is derived from his work as a former event organizer. Using his contacts from the entertainment business, he has dressed some of France's most popular entertainers including: Maître Gims, Youssoupha and BANA C4. The visibility of his clothing in music videos, magazine covers and press releases has bolstered his business. This symbiotic relationship between music and fashion is summarized by Kady in this statement, "I made my clothing for a long time but not many people noticed. But when Youssoupha wears it, everyone notices and wants to get clothing like his that I made. In their music videos, these rappers [Maître Gims, Youssoupha and BANA C4] want to be well-dressed. The reality is that they need me and I need them."⁴¹⁸

His growing success caused him to seriously consider becoming a full-time business owner. In addition to running his own business since 2012, he works a full-time job. His current position as a boutique manager helps supplement his income. Employed by an auxiliary car

⁴¹⁷ Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. March 30, 2017.

⁴¹⁸ Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. March 30, 2017.

service similar to Uber or Lyft, Kady sizes and dresses all the chauffeurs that work for the car service. He uses managing the boutique showroom as an opportunity to showcase his own work and advertise his collection of suits, ties and jackets to the clients. Inspired by his current boss and small business owner, who is a Haitian immigrant, Kady acknowledges that being employed by a Black male entrepreneur has caused him to pursue his own brand more intently.

My dream is to simply make sure my company is known throughout the world. My dream is that my brand will be known in Africa, France and the United States. My dream is to focus completely on my company, to make clothing full-time, to do fashion shows and travel. For the past two years, I have focused very seriously on my brand. The future is bright. My business is something God-given, I did not study for this. I started my business with ties. People saw them and liked them so I started making more. Now I make t-shirts, suits, and clothing for women, men and children. I have three lines. Now I want to travel to Africa. The people there inspire me, I want to bring that back to France. I see what's in style there and I customize it with a touch of Africa. I use wax fabric in everything I create.⁴¹⁹

Making his dreams a reality, he teamed with the Afro-French designer Lys-Alexandra in 2013 to found a quarterly event called *La Braderie des Créateurs*.⁴²⁰ Hosted on a Parisian cruise ship along the Seine, Kady re-connected with his former employer and owner of the *L'Alizée* cruise ship to rent the boat. At each event, upwards of twenty Afropean designers sell their products and organize a fashion show. Once boasting free entry, these events are now ticketed and catered. Four years later, Kady is most proud of the fact that his clothing is worn by “all—Black, White, Asian and Arab.” He credits the event in helping him develop a slogan that represents his

⁴¹⁹ Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. March 30, 2017.

⁴²⁰ Noella, "Le Pagne et Ly: le parcours d'une femme entrepreneure." *NOFI*. February 24, 2016. <https://nofi.fr/2016/02/portrait-le-pagne-et-lys-le-parcours-dune-femme-entrepreneure/27216>.

collections as “an ethnic world tour of fabric in the service of elegance and originality.”⁴²¹

Empowered by the fact that he does not have to choose a specific clientele, Kady smiles and says, “It’s a little selfish but I really created everything in my image. I’m Congolese, I like to dress and be presentable. Now everyone else will do the same in France and soon throughout the world.”⁴²²

⁴²¹ Mwanamaille Clothing. 2013. http://www.mwanamailleclothing.com/#Accueil_Home.A.

⁴²² Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. March 30, 2017 and "Interview Mwanamaille Clothing: «Je suis congolais, j'ai toujours aimé m'habiller»." African Moove.

Patricia Lubelo



Figure 14. Patricia Lubelo pictured gathering materials for one of her events.

Patricia Lubelo was born in 1988 in the 19th *arrondissement* of Paris. She was raised by her Angolan mother and Congolese father. In hopes of becoming an actress, Patricia studied *Art du spectacle* at *Université Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle* and graduated in 2009. After completing her college studies, she worked at France Television as an audio-visual production assistant. In addition to this work, she also played for the all-women's football team *Flash féminin de La Courneuve*.⁴²³ When her fiancé proposed in 2013, Patricia's life and career path was destined to change.

Lubelo learned many lessons in the two years it took to plan her wedding. She states,

When I got married, I realized how expensive it was to decorate. The hall, the place settings, the cake, the party favors, the church, all of it had to be decorated. I had so many

⁴²³ "Année: 2015." *Flash de La Courneuve*. December 7, 2015. <http://www.flashfootball.org/2015/>; "FÉMININES." *Flash de La Courneuve*. 2014. <http://www.flashfootball.org/equipes/feminines/>.

ideas and the decorators I met with were so expensive. So, I did everything myself. I bought all of the decorations and prepared everything myself and I kept everything. Then when my friends and family had an event, they called me to decorate for them. Every time I did an event, I got great reviews and compliments. People would say, “Wow, this is beautiful and everything I wanted.”⁴²⁴

After almost three years of decorating family events that included baby showers, baptisms, weddings and birthdays parties for free, Patricia decided it was time to open her decorating business. In May 2016, Patricia created *O’ Décor Events*. Wanting her company to reflect her “next-level” ideas and concepts, *O’ Décor* is derived from the word *hauteur*, meaning elevated height or loftiness. Her business strategy is built on offering prices lower than other stores or decorators by working within fixed budgets.

Although Patricia is the head of the company, her small business is upheld by familial support.⁴²⁵ Patricia emphasizes that her business would not function without her family. She states,

My family is very supportive. If I’m not available for an appointment. I call my mother and say, ‘Mom, I have a client who is coming to pick up this, this and this.’ My mother gathers the materials for me, makes the transaction with the client and takes care of the money for me. For now, I store things at my house and my mother’s house but in the future I will have to purchase a small storage space to hold my materials.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ Patricia Lubelo, in discussion with the author. April 7, 2017.

⁴²⁵ When she first began, she did not have a driver’s license. Her brother or husband would drive her to events and various locations to purchase materials. A year later, she obtained her driver’s license and now conducts most of the day-to-day errands on her own. For larger events, her brother or husband drive the truck carrying the heavier decorations and furniture. Instead of purchasing a storage locker, Patricia stores most of the company materials in her mother’s apartment. The remainder of the items are kept in her home. In addition, Patricia’s brother is the company photographer. He is in charge of taking photos and creating video montages of all company events for the official website.

⁴²⁶ Patricia Lubelo, in discussion with the author. April 7, 2017.

Patricia enjoys being in a woman-dominated industry. She believes her gendered interactions have both advantages and disadvantages. In three years of business, most of her interactions are with women. Often clients will attempt to negotiate the price lower and use tropes of sisterhood as the basis of negotiation. She responds to these challenges by saying,

I analyze the prices offered by other places before setting my price. My clients know that I am cheapest that's why they contact me. But they always try to negotiate. For them, it's just an estimate. For me that is my final bill, I never go lower than my set price...Ninety percent of my business is with women, because they are the ones organizing the event. Mothers throwing birthday parties for their children will say "I don't have much money, I only have "this amount." I say, 'If you find someone cheaper, call me and we can work something out.' And they never do. I refuse to negotiate, there is no pity, there can be no emotions in business. I did many events for free in the past but not anymore. If I let my emotions get the best of me, my business is over. I will not progress. I set my price and they are not negotiable.⁴²⁷

Since creating her business, Patricia's biggest struggle is attracting new clients. Experimenting with word of mouth references, fliers and advertisements in local newspapers, she has found success in using social media to gain new clients. Lubelo created Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat profiles for her business. Over the years she learned various strategies to maximize her audience reach. In a business, where "people want to see everything," Patricia uses these various platforms so that, "people can follow me directly to see my presentations and can verify my work."⁴²⁸ She explains,

⁴²⁷ Patricia Lubelo, in discussion with the author. April 7, 2017.

⁴²⁸ Patricia has learned, "You can't just create a page. You have to present it a certain way. You have to use strategies, for example, there is a window of time when it's best to post for the maximum amount of people to see your post." Patricia Lubelo, in discussion with the author. April 7, 2017. For a more detailed explanation of the best hours to post on social media, see the study done by Google and *Forbes Magazine*, Cheryl Conner, "For Brands And

I have a website too. I have learned after doing my research that with all of these social media platforms, you do not attract the same audience. Different people use different applications. There are people who use Snapchat and not Facebook and vice versa. The same is true with Facebook and Instagram. For bigger institutions and businesses, they prefer to see my website. Me being on all these social media platforms has really helped grow my client base. My business is still very small so I have to do everything. I am the head decorator, the buyer, and I am in charge of social media. I try to set myself apart from my competition. I see what others are doing, they just post a picture. I don't do that. Me, I think about what I'm going to post. I take time to come up with captions and different names for my post. Thanks to my brother, I can also include pictures and video montages.⁴²⁹

Due to her growing social media following, Patricia attracted two of her largest clients to date.

The first was a collaborative event organized by *Africa Montmartre*. Hosted by a collective of Afropean women, they hired Patricia to decorate their 2016 edition of "When Africa meets Montmartre."⁴³⁰ Referred to the collective by the event's caterer, Patricia was responsible for creating an African aesthetic theme. She used decorations from various locations in Africa to help bring Africa to Paris. Attracting hundreds of women over the thirteen-day period, Patricia's talents did not go unnoticed. Later that year, she decorated her largest wedding ever. A Congolese couple asked her to decorate a venue for 350 people. Drawing inspiration from her

PR: When Is The Best Time To Post On Social Media?" *Forbes*. November 09, 2015. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cherylsnappconner/2015/11/08/for-brands-and-pr-when-is-the-best-time-to-post-on-social-media/#521efa437c9f> and Rose Leadem, "These Are the Best Times to Post on Social Media." *Entrepreneur*. October 05, 2016. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/283304> .

⁴²⁹ Patricia Lubelo, in discussion with the author. April 7, 2017.

⁴³⁰ Marie-Catherine De La Roche, "Une Saison africaine." *Madame Figaro*, July 5, 2016, 140-41; "Montmartre à l'heure des créations africaines." *Le Point Afrique*. June 29, 2016. http://afrique.lepoint.fr/life-style/africamontmartre-toutes-les-inspirations-africaines-sont-a-montmartre-29-06-2016-2050541_2259.php; "«Un peu d'Afrique à Montmartre»: la culture «afro» s'expose à Paris." *Radio France Internationale*. June 26, 2016. <http://www.rfi.fr/culture/20160626-peu-afrique-montmartre-culture-afro-expose-paris-mode>; "Un peu d'afrique à montmartre." *Amina Magazine*. July 2016. <http://www.amina-mag.com/evenements-type/expos/page/5/>. Expos Archives - 5, 7.

own wedding which included a wax-covered cake, monogrammed plates and M & M's, Patricia added a new spin to this African wedding including wax fabric and customized furniture.⁴³¹

Based on this wedding, she received an offer to do another wedding in Congo. As her business expands, she continues to plan for the future. Patricia says,

I think it's time to get an office. But with what I make, I am not sure. On my site, people pay me directly. When I called the bank to see what I could do, they said, 'Yes it's possible but your taxes will be very high.' So, for now, I wait. When I do decide to get an office, it must be located in Paris, not in the banlieue where I live. Because there are not enough people here and it is too far from the center of business. But the rent for an office in Paris can range between 600-700 euro a month. And I have periods where I do not get much business. After March, business slows down between October and March. Business is very slow. From April to August is my busiest period for business. In the future, I do want to have an office and decorate a movie premiere or even a Gala. I envision something classy and glamorous with chandeliers. It would be beautiful.⁴³²

With over fifty events completed in a single year, Patricia looks forward to the day that she can pursue her business full-time. Currently, she works a full-time job as a receptionist at a television company and organizes events during the weekends. With her family's help and the glowing reviews of customers, she continues to attract new clients.

⁴³¹ Claire Renée Mendy, "Vivre de sa passion: c'est possible!" *Femmes au pluriel*. September 20, 2016. <http://femmesaupluriel.com/vivre-de-passion-cest-possible/>.

⁴³² Patricia Lubelo, in discussion with the author. April 7, 2017.

Christian Joao



Figure 15. Christian Joao pictured before a business meeting.

Christian Joao was born in 1985 and grew up in the Parisian suburbs. Originally from Angola, his parents moved to Congo during the Angolan Civil War.⁴³³ After several years of living on the border between Angola and Congo, they were given asylum by France for political reasons. He was raised in Nanterre along with his older sister and younger brother. Christian completed his secondary education in 2001. Originally intent on becoming a cardiologist, he changed direction to pursue a career in business. He states, “To me it’s the best job in the world. It’s better to be a businessman than a president. Because if you really look at how business

⁴³³ For a detailed explanation of the cause of the Angolan Civil War and the exodus of Angolans to Congo see Fernando Andresen Guimaraes, *The origins of the Angolan Civil War: foreign intervention and domestic political conflict, 1961-76* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997).

works, you really can manage and supervise the world.”⁴³⁴ Joao attended business school in *La Defense* and earned a Master’s degree in Marketing and Business Development.

In 2009, Christian moved to Atlanta, Georgia after accepting an internship for *Enomatic* wine dispensary. His clients included restaurant owners, theaters, wine bars, hotels and stadiums. When reflecting on his decision to move to America, he says, “I wanted to learn the business in an American environment. It’s so different than Europe. Americans are the best business men in the world. But what I really wanted was to have a piece of the American Dream. I wanted to be in the country where the first black president was elected. That was the dream for me.”⁴³⁵ In the year after he completed the internship, Joao applied for several employment opportunities but was unable to find one that would sponsor his visa. Thus, when his visa expired in 2011, he moved back to Paris.

Upon return to Paris, Joao worked for two companies: an advertisement agency and the supermarket, Lidl. As their regional manager, he was in charge of five stores in Paris. This job sparked his interest in entrepreneurship due to disagreements with Lidl’s management style. He states,

In the month before I quit. I fixed what I could. 90% of my staff were mostly Black and Arab women. They are not French, so they are considered foreigners. My company puts pressure on these women and I wanted to help. I had a Black woman employee. Lidl kept giving her temporary contracts. One day, she came to my office crying and said, ‘Because of these temporary contracts. I cannot get an apartment. I need a permanent contract.’ Before my last day with my company, I arranged for her to get a permanent contract.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 6, 2016.

⁴³⁵ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 6, 2016.

⁴³⁶ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 6, 2016.

The turning point was when the corporate office forced him to fire an employee because she was “too fat.” He decided to give up comfortable earnings and the company Audi that day. In his last thirty days as manager, Christian attempted to change the company culture of fear and patriarchy.

Christian’s first business was selling hair weaves. Named after his business partner’s oldest daughter, *Nyella* was established in 2011. He explains, “It was hard due to the structure of the business. Basically, anyone who has 500 euros can start a hair weave business. There was so much competition.”⁴³⁷ Despite efforts to expand its online presence through websites, photoshoots and YouTube tutorials, the business struggled. The main problem was pricing,

In terms of figures, it’s a good business, you can make \$400-\$500 from one transaction. But the average French customer did not want to pay the price for quality hair. So, we switched our focus to professional customers. One in Switzerland, one in Bordeaux. Then in 2014, when we lost our two main customers, one went bankrupt and the second one terminated their contract with us. Our hair supplier glued instead of stitching the hair and we did not know. So, we sold the hair and it was ruined during installation. We learned the hard way. We tried website sales and those were even worse. Then we switched to selling “Nappy” products. We sold Mixed Chicks, Carol’s Daughter and Curls and those sales were better than selling the weaves. Plus, we cut costs because everything could be done on a website. But then, the shipping got too expensive and we lost more than we were bringing in. So, in total the hair business lasted three years.⁴³⁸

Despite this initial failure, Christian refused to become an employee again. In 2014, after reading an article in *Entrepreneur* magazine about foldable ballet shoes, he decided to try his luck with this business venture. Naming the new company, *Mes Ballerinettes*, he decided to sell

⁴³⁷ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 13, 2016.

⁴³⁸ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 13, 2016.

the shoes for 15 euro per pair. Manufactured in China, these shoes could fold into a small purse and came with a bag to store worn heels. Within 48 hours, the new company website was running and he placed his initial order for several hundred pairs. Reflecting on the haste in which he created the new company he says, “I just started. No survey, no market study, nothing. To make it popular, I made it a deal on Groupon. I made between 6,000-7,000 euros in a week.”⁴³⁹ Pleased with the results, he wanted to expand and sell the shoes to stores. Christian arranged meetings with two French department stores, *Galleries Lafayette* and *Printemps*, as well as the Parisian airports and the Dubai Mall. To promote the business, he did a breast cancer campaign in Dubai and gave away roses with *Mes Ballerinettes* business cards wrapped inside. *Galleries Lafayette* agreed to sell the shoes in Marseille and *Printemps* agreed to sell his product if he developed a leather prototype. All of these positive developments were thwarted when he received a call from Customs in May 2015. When the package arrived in France from a Chinese ship, a Customs officer called and delivered heartbreaking news. He informed Christian that the shoes did not have a “Made in China label” and therefore the products were illegal to sell. Joao recalls,

I had 5,000 shoes on that boat. I realized that it would be too much money and take too much time to send all the shoes back to China...It would cost more money to correct the issue than to start all over. So [customs] destroyed all 5,000 pairs. *Mes Ballerinettes* ended that day. It was another failure and I was back to square one. I had nothing.⁴⁴⁰

To supplement his income, Christian started selling clothing on Groupon. Arranging deals between clothing suppliers such as Diesel and Levi, he bought the items in bulk and called

⁴³⁹ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 13, 2016.

⁴⁴⁰ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 13, 2016.

this new company Genius Trading. He sold his products on GroupOn France, United Kingdom Germany and Canada. However, shipping these items was expensive and it took several weeks to obtain new merchandise. Thus, in order to cut shipping costs and increase his net revenue, Joao began selling smartphones on Groupon. Averaging only two or three sales a month, his net income was 10,000 euro. When considering new ways to increase his revenue, Christian remembered a 2011 meeting with hairweave suppliers next to a leather company.

This meeting inspired his newest business venture begun in 2015. This clothing manufacturing company was named *Group CJ* in a tribute to his name. In the first year of business, *Group CJ* netted zero euro in revenue. Thus, he was forced to continue his Groupon sales to make ends meet. In January 2016, after a year of emails and calls, Christian received an email from Guess agreeing to a manufacturing contract. Shortly after, he signed a second contract with Guess' sister brand, Marciano. After acquiring these two contracts, Christian realized that he had overcome his biggest struggle to date.

As a business owner, my biggest challenge in the textile industry is to have big brands give me a chance. I never met any representative for Guess in person. Our only interactions were through email and phone. To make it to that level through emails and calls and to get the clothing company Guess, to trust me and my company was my biggest challenge. I had to give an image that we are big company. But when I first started, I was the only one in the company. I was living in Paris in my mother's house and conducting my business in my bedroom. That was my multi-national company, the headquarters was my bed. I struggled but I had to convince myself that I could do it. I used to talk to the manager of Guess, who living in Los Angeles making tons of money every year. And I was just beginning. But I convinced them.⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴¹ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 13, 2016.

In his second year as C.E.O. of Group CJ, he taught himself the business. He admits, “When I began, I knew nothing about leather or fashion. I was discovering new things in every email. For example, they would say, ‘send us the T.O.P.’ I had to use Google and learn.”⁴⁴² The following year, he acquired two more contracts from Pepe Jeans and Diesel in June and September of 2017. As he plows forward, he is scheduling meetings with Mango and Zara. Courting their attention has required almost three years of quality and prototype samples and several meetings in Barcelona. Reflecting on his longest and most successful entrepreneurial venture to date, he states that he has not found too many French role models in his business. Besides business-partner and childhood friend Franck, Christian looks beyond France for inspiration, “I have no French role models. When you see the richest men in France, they were all born rich. They don’t look like me. I needed someone who had nothing and now they’re at the top. Those are the guys I look to: Diddy, Michael Jordan and Robert Smith. They are in the music industry, business, and sports.”⁴⁴³

Although Christian is based in France, he owns two clothing manufacturing factories in India. One is in New Delhi and the other is in Bangalore. He oversees a team in India composed of five people that manage the day-to-day activities of quality control and producing new prototypes for his suppliers. Each morning, he holds virtual meetings with the management team that oversees a total of 300 workers. In these meetings, they create new ways to reach their goal of increasing the volume of products manufactured in the factory in order to gain a percentage back for the company. In addition to the manufacturing business, Christian created a second

⁴⁴² Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 13, 2016.

⁴⁴³ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. January 3, 2018.

company. After his early morning Skype meetings, Christian acts as a headhunter for his new consulting business. He cites the need for this second venture due to the fact that he often does not see profit from his textile business for up to a year, whereas as a head hunter, he receives monthly compensation. The consulting business is based on recruitment for banking companies such as Créteil, Société Générale, and Caceis based in Dublin. Teaming with his longtime business partner and friend Franck, whose primary occupation is an actuary, they work together in the banking and insurance industries.⁴⁴⁴ Franck is primarily responsible for lining up potential clients and Christian arranges and conducts the meetings to hire new employees.

In the upcoming year, Christian plans to relocate to Dubai to continue the expansion of his business. In order to escape the French taxation system, he is certain that Dubai is the better option due to the fact that the United Arab Emirates has differing taxes for corporations and individuals. Relocating to Dubai would also facilitate the management of his small team of five people in the business development department. Although he looks forward to the move, Christian asserts that he must also keep a home in France. He states, “I have to always have a place here. Most of my family lives in Paris and most of the clients are based in Europe. In order to set up meetings with companies and arrange new contracts they will not agree to Dubai. It’s always in Europe. Pepe Jeans is based in Italy, Mango is based in Madrid, and I still have to take meetings in France.”⁴⁴⁵ With the opportunity to have a multi-national company with the next few years, Christian aims to have a total of six major brands for his textile company and to

⁴⁴⁴ Christian Joao’s childhood friend, Franck works in the banking industry. After earning his bachelor’s degree in Actuarial Science from Université du Québec à Montréal, he spent six years in Montreal. He later moved to Bulgaria to work for the French bank *Société Générale* and then transferred to the branch in Ireland for three years. In 2015, Franck returned to Paris where he works for a banking insurance company as an actuary. Franck, (mid 30’s of Cameroonian descent) in discussion with the author. February 28, 2017.

⁴⁴⁵ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. January 3, 2018.

continue growing his consulting business to net 300,000 euro. More importantly he wants to invest in other companies. He wants to “lift as he climbs,” Christian states, “Although I cannot afford yet to invest a lot of money in other companies, I want to. I would like to be like a “Mark Cuban” investment angel and give someone an opportunity. There are many people like me in Paris. I didn’t have someone to help me, but I can do it for another Black man or woman. That’s where I want to be. That’s when you’re really a boss.”⁴⁴⁶

Analyzing the Narratives of Black French entrepreneurs

The decision to keep the proceeding oral histories in a narrative form is a strategic choice that maps with scholarly conventions followed within the field.⁴⁴⁷ These methodical practices are critical to inserting individual subjectivity as a tool to reframe dominant narratives. This approach is influenced by a collaborative interviewee and interviewer relationship. Both parties work to capture the nuance of a singular experience but strive to understand these experiences as emblematic of a larger story. Although the pendulum of power swings heavily in the direction of the interviewee and dependence on memory, the study of these narratives is a key responsibility of the interviewer. The following section incorporates the approaches of an oral history including coding and theme selection to interpret and analyze findings. In its consideration of these individual stories, this segment examines overlapping and contrasting experiences to develop a community narrative. Five themes connect the accounts of Kady Mash, Kahi Lumumba, Oumou Diasse, Christian Joao and Patricia Lubelo: experiences of socio-economic limitation; transnational movement; a connection to Africa through inheritance,

⁴⁴⁶ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. January 3, 2018.

⁴⁴⁷ For more detail on oral history methodology and literature, see Introduction.

politics and identity; a duty and responsibility to their individual families and larger ethnic community; and the use of the digital and print media to raise the visibility of their economic profiles. As a point of entry, the entrepreneurial ventures of each business man and woman must be contextualized within the countervailing forces of socio-political and economic migration. Their differing experiences and proximity to immigration (whether first or second-generation African migrants) shape their notions of economic uplift and its impact on a heterogeneous Afro-French community. Despite these differences, read together their stories offer a window into a particular *mentalité* or vision of economic empowerment rooted in a multi-layered identity composed of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, class, family and employment.

These experiences of differing employment statuses represent the first theme, socioeconomic limitations and participants' various journeys toward entrepreneurship. Both Kahi and Christian contended with restrictions in corporate mobility. Employed at two *Entreprises CAC 40* companies in France, these spaces served as key sites of frustration but also knowledge building and social capital that was later used in the creation of their own businesses. Kahi defined his experience of "feeling out of place" at *Gaz de France* but also noted that it was a dream to work for such a "big group." These conflicting experiences served a motivating factor for him to create his own business. His frustration with feeling different from his peers overlapped with beliefs about community outreach. Thus, Kahi's entrepreneurial venture sought to combine his professionalization in information technology with a commitment to a more communal workplace environment. In a similar way, Christian's employment experiences overlap with that of Kahi. As a manager for the supermarket Lidl, Christian confronted a similar standoff between upper management and his own position as a regional manager. His sympathetic treatment of Black and Arab women employees that "could have been his mother"

was a key source of disagreement between Christian and Lidl executives.⁴⁴⁸ Using his position as a regional manager, he attempted to resolve some of the tensions between his mostly female, immigrant and non-white workforce. Ultimately, his inability to change these power dynamics was a key catalyst in a turn towards entrepreneurship. Based upon these experiences, Joao viewed entrepreneurship as a means of creating a more horizontal career trajectory between employer and employees. Though in practice, this idealistic vision was difficult to implement.

Another key theme that emerged from these stories was the role and use of digital/print media to raise the visibility of their economic profiles. Although each participant maintains an online presence and several press articles were used to add context to their narrative, Kady, Patricia and Kahi's interviews offered the most concrete evidence of their business model being intimately connected to the digital sphere. Within his explanation of challenges that he faced as a small-business owner, Kady did not explicitly mention the use of social media. However, he did discuss several entertainers that wear his clothing such as: Maître Gims, Youssoupha and BANA C4. A deeper examination of Kady's business website and Instagram page revealed that a key strategy for his social media presence was picturing himself with these celebrities or reposting photos of the celebrities wearing his designs. Although Kady's personal Instagram page only has 3,785 followers, just ten of the celebrities pictured on his account maintain a collective following of 4,895,400 people.⁴⁴⁹ This clear choice to link himself to such a massive following speaks to the monetization of social media and his continued desire to style people that

⁴⁴⁸ Christian Joao, in discussion with the author. October 13, 2016.

⁴⁴⁹ Musical artists: Maître Gims (1.8 million followers) , Youssoupha (249,000 followers), Hiro (740,000 followers), Keblack (823,000 followers) BANA C4 (41,100 followers), Dycosh (86,200 followers), Jaymaxvi (859,000 followers), Mokobe Traore (214,000 followers), New Orleans Pelicans basketball player, Cheick Diallo (51,100 people) and journalist-activist, Rokhaya Diallo (32,100 followers)

can increase the visibility of his brand. A critical component of his networking ability is years of experience and recognition as a club and party promoter in Paris.

Contrasting these previously cultivated relationships, Patricia initially struggled with developing a clientele base. Her earliest attempts to increase the visibility of her business were centered on word of mouth references, fliers and advertisements. These early experiments failed to build a sustainable and growing customer network. She turned to Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram platforms to maximize her reach. Over a two year period, Patricia learned to customize her profile on these social media platforms for a particular audience. Bigger businesses prefer to see her work on a website in comparison to mid-20's-30's aged women, who primarily contact her through Facebook and Instagram. In recent months, Patricia stopped used Snapchat to advertise for her business due to a decline in following.⁴⁵⁰ Finally, Kahi's use of social media differs from both Patricia and Kady. Although, Kahi maintains his own social media profiles on Twitter and Instagram, his preferred method for maximum business impact is leveraging digital influencer followings through a conference. The creation of ADICOM (African Digital Communication) days gathers 400 of the most recognizable and significant social media influencers from both Africa and France during a two day conference. Incentivizing their attendance with an award ceremony, Kahi benefits from both their social media followings and increased exposure in print media.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁵⁰ Patricia Lubelo, in discussion with the author. April 7, 2017. Her current social media following is 109 followers and on Facebook 200 followers.

⁴⁵¹ The success of this type of social media strategy is seen in the following press articles: "ADICOM DAYS 2019 - Africa Digital Communication." ADICOMDAYS. <https://adicomdays.com/>; Partnerships with Google, Facebook and Twitter and the inclusion of the following speakers: David Steinacker, Sub-Saharan Africa Senior Partner Manager for Google, Jocelyne Muhutu-Remy, Strategic Media Partnerships Manager Africa for Facebook, Adrian Ciesielski, Head of Twitter Sales for Ad Dynamo - Greater Africa. As well as appearances from social media influencers such as Sarah Yakan whose women's empowerment Instagram page boasts 588,000 followers and on Facebook 1.3 million

A third theme includes transnational movement as a key practice informing Black French businesses. After living in France for twenty years, Oumou considered relocating to the United States. During her travels in Harlem, New York, she met with other African hair stylists maintaining businesses along 125th street. In the course of these experiences, Oumou decided first that New York would not be a good fit for her. Secondly, after visiting these salons that she wanted to change directions from being a businesswoman to more humanitarian work. It is important to note that she never sold her hair salon in Créteil, which remains a critical source of income given the fundraising challenges that she encountered in NGO work. Through her NGO, Oumou facilitates transnational movement for “at-risk [Parisian] youth” from France to Africa. In their work rebuilding schools in her native Senegal, Oumou facilitates a new type of migration for Afro-French youth. This return to Africa and connections to migrants’ native African nation-state resonates with Kady. During his 2017 interview, he admitted that he never returned to Congo after leaving at the age of seven. In a follow-up interview, Kady announced a trip back to Congo. After spending two months in Kinshasa, Kady inferred that he would like to return more often and that his trip inspired new designs and products for his business.⁴⁵² In comparison to Kady and Oumou’s focus on returning to Africa for greater social impact in France, Kahi relocated to Abidjan to establish a central base for his business. During a six-year period, Kahi decided that returning to Africa was a better fit for his business model, which centered on cultivating African media creatives. Though he maintains a small office in Paris and “a foot in France,” Kahi saw a significant expansion in his business upon relocation. This movement away

subscribers; Digital influencer and comedian, Ebene that includes 1.1 million followers and Lee Litumbe, travel influencer with 137,000 followers.

⁴⁵² Kady Mash, in discussion with the author. January 4, 2018.

from France is similarly expressed by Christian, who planned to move to Dubai. Part of his rationale for moving to Dubai was to avoid the harsh French tax system, which Kady and Patricia also mentioned as a roadblock in the expansion of their businesses. Leaving France would help Christian better manage his team given the factory locations in New Delhi and Bangalore. Much like Kahi, Christian voiced a need to retain “a place in Paris” due to client offices and family.

These connections between transnational movement and the future of their businesses can be further analyzed by the centrality of Africa. In Oumou, Kady and Kahi’s interviews, each of the participants drew a concrete connection between Africa and monetization of their businesses. The three examples establish a generational fault line on the production of wealth. Oumou belongs to an older generation and self-consciously conceives of her African humanitarian work within principles of community service and social uplift. Her work is distinctly not monetized. While Kady and Kahi, both of the younger generation, conceptualize social uplift in terms of wealth production. This generational gap is particularly striking given the legacies of Kady and Kahi’s family lineage. Both participants are the children or grandchildren of African political activists and conceive of the connections between work and communal responsibility in terms of economic activism. This generational transition is further pronounced in terms of their definitions of success. Oumou defines success by the social and political impact she can have on youth and women in Africa and France. She supports this philanthropic motivation with the statement, “money doesn’t drive me. Humans do. I love humans especially the youth and I want to help.” In stark contrast, Kady asserts, “my dream is that my brand will be known in Africa,

France and the United States.” Kahi stated that one of his heroes is “P.Diddy” and he is committed to helping “African creatives monetize their gifts.”⁴⁵³

Finally, each of the participants discussed the role of family and a strong connection to Afro-French populations in their businesses. For Patricia, her family functions as her employees. Her mother, brother, sister and husband each serve various roles in the business. Ranging from company photographer to set-up and breakdown crews, Patricia’s family actively participate in the business, though she maintains creative and financial control. Their work is often unpaid and her business has not developed enough to afford a standing staff. Familial commitment to Patricia’s vision and the day-to-day production of the business is an invaluable source of support and labor. Both Kahi and Oumou expressed a sense of duty to the African community in their entrepreneurial endeavors. Though they differ on the question of monetization, Kahi and Oumou focus on African youths as a source of inspiration for their efforts of communal uplift and empowerment. Kady’s commitment to creating a “movement” is situated in the cultural legacies of fashion in the Congo. His dream to reproduce Congolese imagery worldwide represents a clear example of physically transmitting African culture through clothing. His choice to capture particularly celebrities of African-descent in his clothing is visible representation of this commitment. Finally, Christian noted that his experiences as a businessman was shaped by a lack of Black French role models. During the course of several interviews, he listed several American entrepreneurs including Mark Cuban, Diddy, Michael Jordan and Robert Smith. His dream is rooted in the opportunity to give back. His desire to help “another Black man or woman” is linked to a definition of success.

⁴⁵³ Kahi Lumumba, in discussion with the author. April 4, 2017.

Shades of Gray: The Silences in Narratives of Black French entrepreneurs

In these narratives of hope and economic uplift, each participant offered inspirational stories of overcoming struggles and systematic barriers to success. This final section considers the silences within these narratives. Theorized by historian Daniel James, the silences found in oral histories account for omissions and gaps within participant stories. Moving beyond romanticizing narratives of triumph, considering these silences or points of tension are critical to an interpretive analysis that accounts for human hubris in these sources.⁴⁵⁴ In re-examining the participant transcripts there were several gaps that if addressed would indelibly change the narrative.

Despite briefly addressing the legacy of his grandfather, Kahi benefits from both political and social capital in various circles. The name and the historical memory of Patrice Lumumba has undoubtedly influenced the nature of his business relations especially in Africa but also among Black people living in France. Though very costly, this inheritance shapes the arc of his business but also interpersonal relations. In her humanitarian and business efforts, Oumy marshalled the support of local politicians. She also serves as a city counselor. This political support and power is critical to the success of her efforts. Given the financial backing that NGO work requires, funding is a critical component to executing volunteer projects. In his refusal to become an employee, Christian established a business that employs workers mainly in India. In this geopolitical context, employee conditions are not subject to the same legislative governing as in the West. The pendulum of power swings heavily in the direction of owner/employer. His

⁴⁵⁴ Daniel James, *Doña María's story*, 157-212.

desire to acquire increasing capital and monetary wealth to “help” Black people may come at the cost of underpaying Indian workers. Patricia’s dependency on her family as her staff is complicated. The reality that she cannot always pay them but expects their help undoubtedly led to disagreements or the “inability” to help out. Though it is her desire to have a staff that she can pay and set stricter requirements for their time and energy until her business grows, she is limited in access to these resources. Finally, Kady’s reliance on tailors that are ubiquitous throughout the neighborhood of *Goutte d’Or* is particularly interesting. Though he designs clothes, he does not know how to sew. Thus, he depends upon tailors that are willing to replicate his designs and stitch his logo over their craftsmanship. The erasure of their intensive labor and the high costs of their work are important to consider as his business grows and may require larger distribution and manufacturing. In the consideration of these silences, it is important to emphasize that these gaps do not detract from their entrepreneurial endeavors nor from their commitment to uplift in the Afro-French community.

Afropean Entrepreneurs & Black Capitalism

The rise of the entrepreneur is an economic trend that continues to grow in many Western countries. Employees that are dissatisfied with the working conditions offered by large corporations, or men and women who have a different vision of what the workplace should look like are now venturing to create their own small and mid-size businesses. This positive uptick in entrepreneurial ventures can be seen as a both as response to stagnant unemployment rates and a

new trend in “gig” job opportunities that both supplement full-time work or may serve as the main source of income.⁴⁵⁵

This development in entrepreneurial endeavors by French citizens has had both a positive and negative impact on Afro-French communities. Considerable discrimination within the French employment sphere propels this entrepreneurial spirit. Often ignored or passed over for jobs, many Black French men and women have turned to becoming entrepreneurs. Given their university education and limited opportunities for promotion, migrant workers establish businesses.⁴⁵⁶ Met with a mixed bag of results, most participants note that funding is that largest hurdle in maintaining their businesses.⁴⁵⁷ They cite rejection by banks for small loans and the ebb and flow of the French economy as major factors in the life of their businesses. In order to understand how these micro level changes fit within a larger understanding of the French

⁴⁵⁵"Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2017." *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*. 2017. http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/employment/entrepreneurship-at-a-glance-2017_entrepreneur_aag-2017-en#page3.

⁴⁵⁶ In a 2011 OECD study, scholars discovered that, “migrant self-employment appears as a way to overcome discrimination or occupational downgrading in salaried work....that highly educated migrants in Spain and France are relatively more likely than their native-born counterparts to engage in entrepreneurship activities may point to a lack of appropriate opportunities in wage employment (compared with natives)... Not all migration countries within the OECD have public policy support measures directly targeting entrepreneurs of immigrant background. In France, specific programmes to enhance business development tend to target economically depressed areas – and all the potential as well as established entrepreneurs resident in those areas – rather than migrant entrepreneurs as a special group. However, since immigrants tend to be overrepresented in those areas, they appear to be an indirect target of those programmes. The same generally holds true for measures promoting entrepreneurship among vulnerable or socially disadvantaged groups...” See Joseph Mestres-Domènech and Maria Vincenza Desiderio. "Migrant Entrepreneurship in OECD Countries." 139-203. *OECD*, 2011. https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Part%20II%20Entrepreneurs_engl.pdf

⁴⁵⁷ In a 2008 study, researchers note that immigrant entrepreneurship is comprised of mainly small businesses. Companies led by immigrants with “at least ten employees on payroll is increasing...at a 3.8% rate.” Where the overall category of small businesses employing a minimum of ten employees is decreasing by 2.1%. Most importantly, the “most pronounced increase is the Sub-Saharan African group at 87.3%.” See Bernard Dihm and Emmanuel Ma Mung, “French migratory policy and immigrant entrepreneurship”, in *OLIVEIRA*, Catarina Reis and RATH, Jan (eds.), *Migrações Journal – Special Issue on Immigrant Entrepreneurship*, October 2008, n. 3, Lisbon: ACIDI, 85-97.

economy and the daily lives of these entrepreneurs, this chapter concludes with an analysis of the financial system through the lens of Black Capitalism.

Best articulated by American economic scholars and historians, “Black Capitalism” is a strategic movement. Black communities deploying this model endeavor to attain a stronger presence within the larger economy. A critical component of this business development is equity ownership. Scholars contend that increased access to capital by Black people within lower-class communities can result in more businesses in these areas and change the tide of national economic trends.⁴⁵⁸ Although these ideas originate within the American context, the principles of Black Capitalism are translated within the French context. Namely, increasing Black businesses within geographic areas with high concentrations of Afropean populations has produced a movement to gain more access to both national and international economic trends as well as provide employment opportunities for their community.⁴⁵⁹ As these Afropean entrepreneurs

⁴⁵⁸ Within this scholarly discourse two threads shape their investigation: individual or group success. In their differing analysis both approaches present limitations. Another faction of scholars disavow Black Capitalism as antithetical to notions of communal uplift. Instead, their work critiques capitalism as model for Black economic success given its subjugation of African peoples. For literature that outlines the theoretical contours and goals on Black Capitalism, see Laura Warren Hill and Julia Rabig, *The Business of Black Power: Community Development, Capitalism, and Corporate Responsibility in Postwar America* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard Univ. Press, 1982); Theodore Cross, *Black Capitalism: Strategy for Business in the Ghetto* (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1969); Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015); Earl Ofari, *The Myth of Black Capitalism* (Monthly Review Press, 1970); Alisha R. Winn, "Black Entrepreneurship: Contradictions, Class, and Capitalism." *Journal of Business Anthropology*3, no. 1 (2014): 79-108; Mehrsa Baradaran, *Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017) and Zulema Valdez, *The New Entrepreneurs: How Race, Class, and Gender Shape American Enterprise* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁴⁵⁹ The impact of employment discrimination upon African immigrant communities especially among second and third generation youth with advanced education were examined in a series of interviews that span a 12 year period. High school teacher Awaz Dehkani expresses her frustration with the French system in the statement, “[My students] feel that you play the game, you go to school, you do everything that, you know, that society and everybody wants you to do, and in the end, even with many degrees, they don't want you. We have no real laws to protect people from discrimination.” See Vikki Valentine, "Economic Despair, Racism Drive French Riots." *NPR*. November 08, 2005. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5004897>. This sentiment is echoed by Rashida, mother of a nineteen-year-old daughter, she states, "There's a lot of geographical discrimination...If your CV says Clichy-sous-Bois, you will be rejected even if you have a master's degree." Rashida's daughter,

developed and expanded their businesses, they created networks to support each other both economically and culturally.

Ultimately, the conditions that propelled the postcolonial movement of African migrants to France grew out of a need for a proletarian workforce but also transformed Europe. This transformation can be seen most clearly in France as the nation struggles to “absorb” its immigrant population.⁴⁶⁰ The connection to national economic trends and the growing need for global capital is essential to understanding how labor, migration and industrialization are part and parcel of the larger economic system known as capitalism.⁴⁶¹ This system maintains a historical timeline. The trans-Atlantic system was foundational in generating wealth but also establishing identities. As the economic system transitioned from slavery to capitalism, black labor (African slaves to African workers) helped create the modern world.⁴⁶² The progression to industrialization in the years between colonization and decolonization served as a catalyst for African migration to France. These labor migrations were crucial to the re-building of Paris after

Soukaina adds, "There's a lot of solidarity here... We're underestimated. There are negative perceptions of Clichy-sous-Bois and our real value is not recognized." For more narratives on French hiring practices and discriminatory employment see Anealla Safdar, "Clichy-sous-Bois: A suburb scarred by 2005 French riots." *Al Jazeera*. June 12, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/clichy-sous-bois-suburb-scarred-2005-french-riots-170606105958832.html>.

⁴⁶⁰ The use of absorb in this sentence refers to the insistence of the French that migrants adopt French practices and relinquish their identification with their country of origin. See Keaton, *Muslim Girls and the Other France*; Noiriél, *The French Melting Pot*; Todorov, *On Human Diversity* and Weil and Porter, *How to Be French*.

⁴⁶¹ Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World." *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 11-45.

⁴⁶² For works chronicling the historical development of African populations as the drivers of capitalism, see Edward E. Baptist, *The half has never been told: slavery and the making of American capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2016); W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black reconstruction in America: an essay toward a history of the part which Black folk played in the attempt to reconstruct democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Paul Gilroy, *The black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness* (London: Verso, 2007); Walter Rodney, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa* (Capetown: Pambazuka Press, 2012); Eric Williams, *Capitalism & slavery* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

the devastation of World War II. As the Parisian industrial belt “rusted” in the late 1970s and 1980s, African migrations continued and increased even as the wage labor market decreased.⁴⁶³ The closed system operation of the French economy coincided with state sponsored efforts for increased police vigilance in African-dominated communities. These oppressive measures were met with resistance from Afropeans. This resistance took the shape of two movements, one in the form of urban uprisings and a second response in the form of entrepreneurship.

Using Black Capitalism as a metric for restorative justice does present several limitations. Although these businesses offer greater racial representation within the French economy, the system of capitalism is fundamentally flawed. Many of the participants’ reflections about restricted access to funding, swelling taxation costs and limited access to bank loans contend with these structural barriers. The problems Black French entrepreneurs experience are emblematic of how the institutional makeup of the economy is designed to limit the growth of small-businesses.

The communal resistance to repression and economic limitations is part of a circular narrative. This chapter ends where it began with a consideration of the relationship between uprisings and economic stagnation. Historians, economists and the press have all offered explanations for why the 2005 uprisings occurred. The corollary relationship between uprisings and limited economic opportunity maintains a historical continuity that began much earlier than the age of globalization and transnational economic markets. Though technology and the pace in which change occurs has increased its frequency, the capitalist systems that maintain the ebb and flow of monetary resources remains unchanged. Constructed as a response to the constraints of

⁴⁶³Tyler Edward Stovall, *The rise of the Paris red belt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

racialism capitalism, black radicalism has many forms. Uprisings often serve as an ethno-racial response to political and economic oppression.⁴⁶⁴ Most recently explained by political economist Joshua Clover, the 2005 uprisings were a result of “idled capacities, with the surpluses generated by the production of non- production.”⁴⁶⁵

This examination of the relationship between uprisings and labor-based strikes contends that an uprising is “a form not just of collective action but of class struggle, when racialization seems to be a core characteristic.”⁴⁶⁶ The racial nature of urban uprisings is a direct response to class restrictions.⁴⁶⁷ The historical origins of these French millennial uprisings finds its genesis in decolonization. In his groundbreaking 1961 work, *Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon foreshadowed that “the formation of a lumpenproletariat is a phenomenon which is governed by its own logic... decrees from the central authorities can [not] check its growth...it is among these masses, in the people of the shanty towns and in the lumpenproleteriat that the insurrection will find its urban spearhead.”⁴⁶⁸ Fanon’s conception of colonial subjects’ rejection of metropole rule found a refurbished home within postcolonial migrants’ rejection of peripheral containment on the outskirts of the Parisian metropolis. The concentration of colonial legacies and post-colonial

⁴⁶⁴ For detailed explanation of Black radicalism see, Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: the making of the Black radical tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). His analysis of the use of uprisings and revolutionary activity is based on the important work, *The Black Jacobins* written by C. L. R. James.

⁴⁶⁵ Joshua Clover, *Riot. Strike. Riot: the new era of uprisings* (New York: Verso, 2016). Clover’s use of the term “riots” is not deployed in this dissertation. Instead I use the term “uprisings.”

⁴⁶⁶ Clover, *Riot*, 159-160. The rise of urban uprisings is a phenomenon seen throughout many Western countries including: the United States, England, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

⁴⁶⁷ Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 394.

⁴⁶⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Atlantic Press, 2005), 81.

economic limitations bred a growing discontent for the hypocrisy of French republican ideals.

Clover explains,

Given that the colonized can be absorbed neither into the state as free citizens nor into the economy as free labor...The relationship between race and capital and its historical connection to colonialism and post-colonial migrations [continues]...The shift from the use of mechanized labor to the deindustrialization of the west [accounts for the fact that] the great class recomposition and the abstraction of the economy are one and the same. Price-setting even in its contemporary form proves the most transient of palliatives. The public whose modality is *an uprising* must eventually encounter the need to pursue reproduction not just beyond the wage but beyond the marketplace.⁴⁶⁹

His analysis contextualizes the historical impact of decolonization and the roots of employment restriction for African migrants in Paris. Moreover, his analysis of the relationship between race and capital led him to the conclusion that Afropeans must seek opportunities beyond the marketplace.

This chapter suggests that African populations in Paris continue to create new employment opportunities for themselves and their community beyond the sphere of the corporate marketplace. As Afro-French entrepreneurs continue to develop businesses in various industries, they are keen on employing other Black people and actively seek opportunities to bring revenue and promote business models that have an impact on Africa. This transnational platform is rooted both in the historical fabric of the African diaspora but also in the cultural principles of cooperative economics and communal responsibility.⁴⁷⁰ Their collective fight

⁴⁶⁹ Clover, *Riot*, 164-165 and 172-173. (Emphasis added by author)

⁴⁷⁰ These cultural principles reaffirm the connective tissue of the African diaspora as seen by the creation of the US holiday Kwanzaa as a response to the Watts urban uprisings in 1965. Based upon Swahili cultural practice, Dr. Maulana Karenga borrowed from African history to develop seven principles for the social, cultural and economic uplift of African American communities. This reference to communal economic policy is codified in the Swahili word "*Ujamaa*," and in Bantu derived word "*Ubuntu*."

against economic exploitation in France affirms that Afro-French populations contend with other mechanisms for socio-economic justice beyond the realm of violence. In this work, Afropeans act as agents of change instead of victims of the system. Embodied in the triumphs and challenges of Afro-French entrepreneurs, they are responding to the fluctuations of the French economy with ingenuity and an optimism that asserts both an African radical revolutionary spirit and a French republican egalitarian sensibility.⁴⁷¹ Furthermore, as these businesses continue to gain value, the French economy will be forced to contend with the politics, social capital and cultural significance of Afro-French businesses; in addition to the potential of these companies to call attention to the visibility of Black French CEOs, European stakeholders and the rise of the “Black Euro.”⁴⁷² In the years to come, these businesses hold the power to restructure how future students, prospective employees and the larger Parisian society think about employment opportunities. More importantly, their increased visibility reveals that though Black French business owners indeed achieve varying levels of socioeconomic success, their visions of success remain partly incomplete.

Unequal outcomes between the middle and lower classes, men and women...substantiate the constraints of individual agency within [the French] social structure. The intersection of class, gender, race and ethnicity reproduces structural inequality [in France] through systems of oppression rooted in capitalism, patriarchy and White supremacy, even as they provide the basis for individual and collective agency. It is this *interdependence* of

⁴⁷¹ "Constitution de la Republique Francaise." *Assemble Nationale*. <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/connaissance/constitution.asp>; Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 5.

⁴⁷² For an example of the potential for growth, see "*Dirigeant de société "Upgrade."*" BFMBusiness. <https://dirigeants.bfmtv.com/Elikya-PITHER-5941765/>. Over a two-year period “UPGRADE” maintained a 2,083 € increase in the social capital of the company (2 000 € in 2012 to 4 083 € in 2014). Established by Afropean CEO, Elikya Pither in 2011, the company’s turnover was approximately 293 628 € in 2014 amounting in an increase of 6,775 € from the 286,853€ garnered in 2012. Elikya Pither, (mid-30’s of Gabonese descent) in discussion with author. February 24, 2017.

structure and agency that shapes and reproduces the entrepreneurial life of [Black French peoples].⁴⁷³

In their attempts to work within systems of oppression and call attention to the nature of inequality embedded in these systems, Afropean business owners navigate socioeconomic and political strata that impact their professional and personal lives. Their individual activities are limited but increasingly these businesses are developing communal collaborations that both generate income but also serve as call to action to defy systems of inequality. The desire of Black French populations to dismantle discriminatory practices and build stronger connections between Africa and France continues beyond the economic sphere and are increasingly visible in the entertainment industry and political activism.

⁴⁷³ (Emphasis added by author) Valdez, *The New Entrepreneurs*, 21.

Chapter Four: *Le Pouvoir Noir: The Politics of Identity, Pan-Africanism and Social Justice*

Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner... The names of these African Americans, victims of police violence, have been widely reported in recent months in the French media... [In France] the deaths [of Black French boys and men] during or following an arrest are often treated as miscellaneous, a non-event in the news, and the racial dimension widely silenced... In the mirror we hold to Ferguson, France should recognize its unsettling silhouette.⁴⁷⁴

In the 2015 documentary, *From Paris to Ferguson: Guilty of being Black*, Afro-French journalist, activist and filmmaker Rokhaya Diallo interrogated the linkages and disjunction between police brutality and the movements that call attention to the racial component of these events in the United States and France. The film juxtaposed the success of African American activists garnering international media attention to racially motivated crimes by American police with the lack of French media attention on Black French victims of police brutality. Diallo unpacked the reality that both America and France contend with racially motivated incidents between police forces and Black residents. However, the United States has been more effective in mobilizing national and international media focus due to its ability to use race as a marker of identity that incites violent police interactions. France lacks the legal lexicon to call attention to racial difference. Struck from the French constitution, “race” is no longer a component of identity recognized as a legal category.⁴⁷⁵ Thus in a “raceless” society, Black residents struggle

⁴⁷⁴ Juliette Deborde and Libé Labo, "Violences Policières: De Paris à Ferguson, Qui Sont Les Michael Brown Français?" *Libération*. March 23, 2016. Translated by Beti Ellerson. http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/03/23/violences-policieres-de-paris-a-ferguson-qui-sont-les-michael-brown-francais_1441425.

⁴⁷⁵ “Race” was added to the 1946 iteration of the French constitution in the wake of World War II. In response to the racially-charged crimes of German Nazis and the Vichy regime, France used the term “race” to position itself against racism. The first article of the 1946 constitution read, “All citizens are equal before the law ‘regardless of

to garner attention to the racial element of these violent altercations because an acknowledgment of race is deemed antithetical to French republican ideals. In an effort to inspire French activists, Diallo chronicles how activists in America foment and sustain these racial justice movements. Unifying her two roles as journalist and activist, she used film as a medium to tie together the function of media and the interrogation of police violence.

Born to Senegalese parents in Paris, Rokhaya Diallo grew up in the Parisian *banlieue* of La Courneuve. A year after the 2005 uprisings, she formed an organization called *The Indivisibles*. Dedicated to combating stereotypes and empowering Black French youth, Diallo's activism began when she reflected upon her own upbringing. For many years, she did not see herself as "Black." Relentless questions from white-French people prompted her identity crisis. She remembers, "when we were young, my brother and I had never asked ourselves, 'where do we come from,' until we were asked by others."⁴⁷⁶

origin, race or religion.'" Former President François Hollande campaigned on the promise to remove "race" from the Constitution arguing that there "are not different races" and that race "has no place in the Republic." Lawmakers agreed to remove the term "race" and replace it with "gender." The current first article of the constitution reads, "All citizens are equal before the law 'regardless of gender, origin or religion.'" For more information on the removal of race from the French constitution see Etienne Balibar, "Le Mot 'race' N'est Pas « De Trop » Dans La Constitution Française." *Mediapart*. October 5, 2015. https://blogs.mediapart.fr/etienne-balibar/blog/051015/le-mot-race-est-pas-de-trop-dans-la-constitution-francaise?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Sharing&xtor=CS3-66; Rokhaya Diallo, "France's Dangerous Move to Remove 'race' from Its Constitution." *The Washington Post*. July 13, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/07/13/frances-dangerous-move-to-remove-race-from-its-constitution/?utm_term=.50e4c7e46328; "'Race' Out, Gender Equality in as France Updates Constitution." *France 24*. June 28, 2018. <https://www.france24.com/en/20180628-race-out-gender-equality-france-updates-constitution>.

⁴⁷⁶ Didier Arnaud and Charlotte Rotman, "Humour Noir." *Libération*. March 17, 2009. http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2009/03/17/humour-noir_546579. For more information about Diallo's organization, *The Indivisibles* and its public reception, see Raphaëlle Bacqué, "Rokhaya Diallo, L'antiraciste Qui Divise." *Le Monde*. January 16, 2018. https://www.lemonde.fr/m-actu/article/2018/01/12/rokhaya-diallo-l-antiraciste-qui-divise_5240701_4497186.html; L.C. "Qui Est Rokhaya Diallo, La Militante Antiraciste Sur La Sellette Au Conseil National Du Numérique?" *20 Minutes*. December 14, 2017. <https://www.20minutes.fr/politique/2187943-20171214-rokhaya-diallo-militante-antiraciste-sellette-conseil-national-numerique> and Bernard Maro, "Les Y'a Bon Awards Ou L'antiracisme Sélectif Des "Je ne suis pas Charlie"." *Huffington Post*. October 05, 2016. <https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/bernard-marro/les-ya-bon-awards->

After years of being told that she was “different” from white-French people, she began a journey toward embracing her Blackness and challenging the internalized racism of France. The organization’s mission is to “put a stop to a partition of French citizenship” based upon physical appearance, geographical origin and religion.⁴⁷⁷ As Diallo’s public campaign against anti-racism grew in notoriety so did her journalism career. For a four-year period, from 2009-2013, Diallo was a regular commentator for the show *La Matinale* on Canal +. She held this position in addition to hosting two other nationally syndicated shows on *RTL* and “Fresh Cultures” on *Mouv* radio station.⁴⁷⁸ Her media career catapulted to new heights when Diallo accepted an appointment as a host for the newly minted BET-France network. In addition to her roles as television and radio talent, she directed and produced a series of documentaries.⁴⁷⁹ Diallo’s work

[2015 b 7584750.html](#). Diallo is often regarded by white-French people as a polemic figure that emphasizes notions of difference or division by encouraging racial pride.

⁴⁷⁷ This phrase “physical appearance, geographical origin and religion,” can be read as a reference to race, residence in the suburbs and the practice of Islam. For more on Diallo’s organization, see Habibou, Bangré, “« Les Indivisibles » Face Aux Préjugés.” *Afrik*. May 21, 2007. <http://www.afrik.com/article11773.html>.

⁴⁷⁸ Bernard Poirette, “Face à Face: Anne Fulda - Rokhaya Diallo.” *RTL*. July 10, 2011. <http://www.rtl.fr/actu/justice-faits-divers/face-a-face-anne-fulda-rokhaya-diallo10-7701388202>.

⁴⁷⁹ *Steps to Liberty* (2013) was written, directed and produced by Rokhaya Diallo for France Ô. The film reflects on the thirty-year anniversary of the March for Equality and Against Racism. Exploring the international connections between America and France, Diallo shares the journey toward a better understanding of identity. See “Rokhaya Diallo Présente Son Documentaire « Les Marches De La Liberté ».” *Le Parisien*. December 2, 2013. <http://www.leparisien.fr/tv/video-rokhaya-diallo-presente-son-documentaire-les-marches-de-la-liberte-02-12-2013-3370543.php>. *Networks of Hate* (2014) was written and directed by Rokhaya Diallo and Mélanie Gallard for LCP and France 3. The film examines the role of free speech on social media platforms and the internet. The documentary considers hate speech, anonymity, and bullying. See Olivier Couvreur, “BONUS - Les Réseaux De La Haine: L'interview De Rokhaya Diallo - France 3 Paris Ile-de-France.” *France 3*. June 05, 2014. <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/paris-ile-de-france/emissions/doc-24-paris-ile-de-france/actu/rokhaya-diallo.html-0>. *Not Yo Mama's Movement* (2016) was written, directed and produced by Rokhaya Diallo for TV5Monde and France Ô. This film chronicles her evolution as a Black French activist and the connections between her work and the new rise of activism within the United States in response to Ferguson, Missouri. See “Not Yo Mama’s Movement (U.S. Premiere).” *The New York Public Library*. October 26, 2016. <https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2016/10/26/not-your-mama’s-movement-premiere>.

is representative of a host of Black French individual and collective activities. Using various digital, visual and print media, they bring increased attention to the racialized experiences of African migrants and citizens. Ultimately, activists challenging the idea of “racelessness” assert the existence of race in France and the fundamental underlying inequalities that shape French society in this intervening period. Through the creation of grassroots movements, Afro-French activists promote visions of transnational Blackness that are empowering and counteract the disaggregating power of French colorblindness. Tying together two focal points of activist energy: policing and performance, this chapter argues that the navigation and negotiation of “racelessness” has constrained and severely limited Black French movements.

This chapter focuses on Black French protest efforts against racism and discrimination. Using two case studies in media and police brutality, it considers how activists grapple with calling attention to the lack of mainstream Black French representation and the underpinnings of inequality fostered by this invisibility. The first case study examines advocacy for greater Black representation in media. Subsequently, activists transitioned their efforts towards the types of Black depictions in both fictional and news media. The second case study analyzes Afro-French responses to over-policing and police violence by highlighting a series of incidents from the post-2005 era that sparked a new wave of protests. The infrastructure of demanding recognition and challenging the contradictions of the French state are a result of intensive campaigns for media representation. However, when these campaigns push beyond matters of representation to addressing racial inequality it encounters even more resistance.

The Black French community continues to experiment with a variety of tactics to vie for equality within France. The 2005 uprisings fundamentally changed the international visibility of their struggle for inclusion. The protests of second-generation youth infused activist efforts with

renewed urgency and rationale to contest their exclusion from universal rights guaranteed by the nation-state. Stemming from a longer history of dreams deferred, the Black community continues to challenge France's "racial aphasia" in their demands for multiculturalism.⁴⁸⁰ These efforts reveal the irreconcilable differences between the specific racialized experiences of Black immigrant populations in France and the universalism of the national motto "*Liberté égalité et fraternité*." The current French model makes it virtually impossible to bring together race and universalism. In this space, race functions as an evolving category of socio-cultural identification rather than political classification. Thus, this forced vision of racelessness leaves activists without the avenues to raise racial inequality within formal political channels. For Black French people "the personal is political," and their experiences reveal that conversations about race are finally beginning instead of reaching an ending point. In a nation that rhetorically claims universal equality for all of its citizens, Black people are fundamentally denied these rights by the state. These case studies address the ways in which activists have tied together refusal to acknowledge race with the subsequent perpetuation of substantive inequality for Black people within French society.

Collectif Égalité & Black French Representation in the Media

Tropes of visibility and invisibility permeate Afro-French representation in media. The invisibility of Black people and their experiences of inequality are at the center of activists' campaigns. In reckoning with the French state, activists focused first on recognition and

⁴⁸⁰ Most clearly articulated by distinguished scholar Ann Laura Stoler, "colonial aphasia" engendered an increasing level of resentment for migrants once they arrived in the metropole. She states that the "'sordidly racist' and 'systematic' compartmentalized violence that colonialism animated, the 'lines of force' it created, and the 'degradations' it instilled in the colonies and in Europe---among both colonizer and colonized." See Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France." *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 121-56.

acceptance of Black individuals. One of the key areas of emphasis was the push for representation in mainstream media. The next stage of this movement centered on why being seen mattered politically, socially, economically. Calling for character portrayals that moved beyond depictions of Black French people as criminals and vagrants, activists maintained that these destructive portrayals mapped with French society's iconography of Black people. Accordingly, Afro-French media personalities used their public platforms to call attention to and wrestle with these inequalities.

A critical catalyst in the demand for greater representation in media occurred during the 2000 César Awards. In the wake of the public celebration of French diversity as a result of 1998 World Cup win, the César Awards provided a stark counterpoint to the ways in which French media failed to live up to these grandiose visions of an egalitarian society. On February 19, 2000, Canal + broadcast the 25th anniversary of the César Awards.⁴⁸¹ Throughout the evening, France honored the year's most celebrated actors, directors and films. Midway through the ceremony, Djibouti-born actor Luc Saint-Éloy and renowned Cameroonian author Calixthe Beyala surprised the audience with an unscripted appearance on the stage. Decrying the invisibility of Black men and women, Luc Saint-Éloy offered the following commentary:

On behalf of the 8 to 10 million [non-white] French citizens...we want to tell you that the situation we have suffered for too long violates any concept of human dignity. Just imagine! Imagine in this country, a television that transmits exclusively black images. Imagine in this country, all the cinemas screens would project stories exclusively between blacks for blacks to the exclusion of any other color...And you dear compatriots, imagine, you are absent, invisible. Just imagine!...But this is not fiction, only our harsh

⁴⁸¹ The *César* Awards are the French equivalent of the Oscars.

reality in a white [French] world that excludes all other parts of the population, whose only fault is to be Black or Yellow.⁴⁸²

Adding to Saint-Éloy's commentary, Calixthe Beyala offered her own observations about the lack of Black visibility in French cinema. She stated, "We are here to tell you and believe that the French cinema should draw upon this country's multiculturalism."⁴⁸³ They concluded their five-minute speech by publicizing the *Collectif égalité* (Equality Collective), a group of actors, creatives and activists dedicated to calling attention to the need for diversity in French media.⁴⁸⁴

In the moments preceding their speeches, Saint-Éloy and Beyala descended from their balcony seats and proceeded toward the podium. Bypassing security, they seized the stage and interrupted the ceremony. Neither Saint-Éloy nor Beyala were scheduled to deliver remarks that night. Yet, they used the opportunity to address both audience viewers and the cabinet ministers seated in the theater that night. Their seemingly unscripted and impromptu speeches were planned. In addition to securing seats to attend the award show, they also drafted their remarks the evening before.⁴⁸⁵ Saint-Éloy's comments were a response to his experiences as both an actor and director in the French entertainment industry. Beyala directed her statement toward the Minister of Culture Catherine Trautmann. In 1999, she wrote a letter to Trautmann condemning

⁴⁸² This moment in French television history can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5ch_7idjAk. The full transcript was translated by Astrid Siwsanker. This transcript has been edited by the author.

⁴⁸³ This moment in French television history can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5ch_7idjAk. The full transcript was translated by Astrid Siwsanker. This transcript has been edited by the author.

⁴⁸⁴ This committee works for a better integration of visible minorities in the French audiovisual and cinematographic landscape, for more information, see the biography written about Luc Saint-Éloy by Stéphanie Bérard, "Luc Saint-Éloy." November 27, 2015. <http://ile-en-ile.org/saint-eloy/>.

⁴⁸⁵ Panel Discussion with Luc Saint-Éloy and Calixthe Beyala. June 21, 2017.

the “deficit of representation of Blacks on [TV] and threatened to sue the state.”⁴⁸⁶ Moving beyond a letter writing campaign, Beyala used this televised moment to address Trautmann face to face and challenge the minister’s silence in response to her letter. The live broadcast captured Saint-Éloy and Beyala insistence that politicians be held accountable for addressing the concerns of citizens. Moreover, this high stakes moment represented an opportunity to nationally publicize the experiences of Black people on a platform that continually rendered them invisible. As they began to read their manifesto, neither activist knew how long they had before security would escort them out of the theater. In the end, they were not interrupted during the reading of their speech by the Minister of Culture Catherine Trautmann.



Figure 16. Luc Saint-Éloy and Calixthe Beyala pictured during the 2000 César Awards.

However, the television director undercut their message by using two camera techniques to contradict their statements. First, the director panned the camera back and forth between the

⁴⁸⁶ Abdoulaye Gueye, “Manufacturing Blackness,” in *Becoming Minority: How Discourses and Policies Produce Minorities in Europe and India*. Edited by Tripathy, Jyotirmaya, and Sudarsan Padmanabhan (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 76.

audience and the speakers in an effort to capture the shock and disdain of the audience. Next, the camera zoomed in on the few non-white actors seated in the audience during moments when Beyala and Saint-Éloy noted the shortage of Black actors within the industry. This cinematic maneuver subliminally suggested that they made false claims countered by the Black faces in the audience.⁴⁸⁷ These two camera movements failed to undermine a key statement made by Calixthe Beyala. Despite their diminutive representation in the film industry, no major César award was ever awarded to a Sub-Saharan African man or woman. This flashpoint unearthed the “unsettling parody of the situation the *Collectif* describe: even when two black people take center stage in a French TV program (albeit illegitimately), they are marginalized and undermined by the director’s – and the spectator’s – gaze.”⁴⁸⁸ This constant undermining was exacerbated by the popular press. The Equality Collective’s pointedly political stance in the artistic world drew polemical responses from popular commentators and artists at the time. The press condemned Beyala and Saint-Éloy. They framed their call for diversity as an “attack” and a “divisive” plea.⁴⁸⁹

In their first public appearance after the Césars, the Equality Collective organized a demonstration in May 2000 called the “National March of Black People for Honor and Respect.” Amassing a crowd of a little less than one thousand people, *Liberation* magazine deemed the

⁴⁸⁷ Nicki Hitchcott, "Calixthe Beyala: Black face(s) on French TV." *Modern & Contemporary France* 12, no. 4 (2004): 473-482.

⁴⁸⁸ Hitchcott, "Calixthe Beyala: Black face(s) on French TV," 473-482.

⁴⁸⁹ In *Le Monde* (22/02/2000), "Tonie Marshall triomphe aux Césars," 30; "Cérémonie des Césars: pladoyer pour les comédiens noirs" in France Antilles culture société (Fev. 2000) ; In *L'Express*, "La tentation des quotas après les femmes en politique, les noirs à la télévision, le Collectif Égalité passe à l'attaque," 96 *L'Express* 24/02/2000 ; DOSSIER: 25ème Cérémonie des Césars ; *TF1*, Les News 21/02/20; <http://www.csa.fr/Espace-Presse/Communiqués-de-presse/Audition-des-representants-du-Collectif-Egalite-Calixthe-Beyala-Manu-Dibango-Dieudonne-Luc-Saint-Elois>.

event a failure. Unable to build collaborations with the country's major anti-racist organizations, the report argued that the Collective was "overconfident in its ability to mobilize [the community]." ⁴⁹⁰ Despite the small scale of the march, the Collective boasted at least one high-profile media personality. Among the attendees for the march was the Collective's co-founder, Franco-Cameroonian comedian Dieudonné M'bala. His presence in their march offered an increased sense of visibility to their cause. ⁴⁹¹

The Equality Collective organized two additional marches that year, but each failed to mobilize further demonstrations. Still, their efforts garnered the attention of the *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (CSA). The group met with the CSA to further "rehabilitate the image of the African community in the media." ⁴⁹² Later that year, media sociologist and Professor of Information Sciences and Communication Dr. Marie-France Malonga shared her findings with CSA in the landmark study, "Presence and Representation of Visible Minorities on French

⁴⁹⁰ Stéphanie Binet, "Contre la télé en blanc et blanc. Le collectif Egalité manifeste contre l'absence des Noirs du petit écran." *Libération*. May 22, 2000. <http://www.liberation.fr/medias/2000/05/22/contre-la-tele-en-blanc-et-blanc-le-collectif-egalite-manifeste-contre-l-absence-des-noirs-du-petit-ecran-325965>.

⁴⁹¹ Dieudonné M'bala is a French actor, activist and comedian. Born in Fontenay-aux-Roses, France to a Cameroonian father and a white French mother, he rose to fame as a comedian whose jokes were based on race. Early on in his career, he aligned with the anti-racist left group "Les Utopistes" against the right-wing National Front. Only receiving 8% of the national vote, *Les Utopistes* advocated for legalizing *sans-papiers* migrants. Between the years 2000-2005, he collaborated with pan-African leaders as well as anti-racist organizations such as: Calixthe Beyala, CRAN and Claudy Siar. After becoming friends with right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2005, Dieudonné became increasingly polemical to his French audience often inciting anti-Semitic jokes and terroristic activity. His entertainment career spiraled as he was refused entry to Belgium and Canada and was convicted of inciting racial hatred.

⁴⁹² "Consulter Les Annonces Du JO Association." *Direction De L'information*. January 22, 1999. http://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/association/index.php?ctx=eJwlyTOOwjAMBtDvKkgrA7Kd5ocD9ATsVhUFgRTh4qY9PwNvfdrxdOj5wbrvVqFfWDtOb36p5pv5OtpteGv36WHbBK24UsiRCrF14ExRhLL8I3GiOLNw4VAopRIZInqP5egdPOMHIFAd!A_&page=36&WHAT=oeuvre.

Television.”⁴⁹³ Her research revealed that there was a “low level of representation of ‘visible minorities,’ particularly in the film and television industry.”⁴⁹⁴ The Equality Collective used Malonga’s findings to advocate for representation quotas in the media industry and used public forums to challenge the absence of Black French voices.⁴⁹⁵ Despite their initial advances, the group lost traction by 2002. On one hand, their efforts were subsumed by a national campaign to contest racial discrimination. Acting Prime Minister Lionel Jospin silenced the Equality Collective’s growing momentum by grouping efforts against racial discrimination within five major anti-racist/anti-Semitic organizations: French League of Education and Lifelong Learning, SOS Racism, International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA), Movement Against Racism and for the Friendship of Peoples (MRAP) and the League for Human Rights (LDH). Despite the longstanding existence of the aforementioned groups that had by the late twentieth century adopted a more race conscious approach, their activities were primarily rooted in the fight against anti-Semitism. Moreover, most of the groups were not explicitly concerned with putting Black French voices at the center of their public platform. Thus there was a clear

⁴⁹³ Marie-France Malonga, “Présence et représentation des minorités visibles à la télévision française.” A summary was published as “Présence et représentation des minorités visibles à la télévision française: une étude Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel,” *La lettre du CSA* 129, 2000, 12-14.

⁴⁹⁴ CSA was “created by the law of January 17th, 1989,” with the role of guaranteeing the freedom of audio-visual communication in France. It succeeded the High-ranking authority of the audio-visual communication (1982-1986) and the National Commission of the communication and freedoms (1986-1989),” CSA. “Presentation of the Council.” Presentation of the Council/the CSA. <http://en.www.csa.fre05d.systranlinks.net/Le-CSA/Presentation-du-Conseil>. The findings presented by Dr. Malonga were first presented in a study by the Center for Information and Studies on International Migration, *Presence and Representation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities on French Television*, ARA Survey, Paris, CIEMI, 16- October 30, 1991, 92. This study formed the basis for her doctoral thesis entitled, “Ethnic minorities and French television: from representation to reception. The black populations face the small screen,” (PhD. University Paris II - Panthéon Assas, 2007).

⁴⁹⁵ For more information on racial quotas in the media see Nayrac Magali, “La Question De La Représentation Des Minorités Dans Les Médias, Ou ...” *Surveys and Perspectives Integrating Environment and Society*. October 04, 2011. <https://journals.openedition.org/urmis/1054#bodyftn12>.

difference between these mainstream anti-racist organizations and *Black* organizations like the Equality Collective that aimed to “naturalize both their existence as a distinctive [racial and ethnic] group in France and the Frenchness of this community.”⁴⁹⁶ By ignoring the Equality Collective in his public call to action, Jospin effectively muzzled the group from access to the French political system.⁴⁹⁷ A subset of public commentators suggested that the Prime Minister did not acknowledge the Equality Collective due to the fact that one of its key figures was mired in controversy. Calixthe Beyala confronted claims that she plagiarized portions of her book, *The Little Prince of Belleville*.⁴⁹⁸ This scandal eroded the already minuscule white French public support for the group. However, within the Black community future media personalities and activists acknowledged the inroads paved by Equality Collective.

The next battle would take shape over the anchor’s desk on the nightly news. In 2004 and in 2006, leading French news stations France 3 and TF1 hired their first Black news anchors. The hiring of Audrey Pulvar and Harry Roselmack grew directly out of demands from French

⁴⁹⁶ Gueye identifies five Black organizations that were established in this period, *Equality Collective* in December 1998 in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in France; *Africagora* led by Dogad Dogoui in 1998, which organized Black entrepreneurs; *Association pour Favoriser l’Integration Professionnelle* (AFIP) in 2002; *Cercle d’Action pour la Promotion de la Diversite* (CAPDV) which gathered Black politicians, activists, and academics in 2004 and *Representative Council of Black Associations* (CRAN) in 2005, which was an attempt to consolidate these smaller organizations into a singular unit. See, Gueye, Abdoulaye. “Manufacturing Blackness,” in *Becoming Minority: How Discourses and Policies Produce Minorities in Europe and India*. Edited by Tripathy, Jyotirmaya, and Sudarsan Padmanabhan (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 69 and “The Labyrinth to Blackness: On Naming and Leadership in the Black Associative Space in French.” *French Cultural Studies* 24 (2): 196-207.

⁴⁹⁷ “Le Collectif ‘Egalité’ Obtient Le Label De La ‘Grande Cause Nationale’ Pour 2002.” *Ligue Des Droits De L’Homme*. February 4, 2002. <https://www.ldh-france.org/Le-collectif-Egalite-obtient-le/>.

⁴⁹⁸ For more on the Beyala Plagiarism case, see Béatrice Gurrey, “Le Plagiat Sans Peine.” *Le Monde*. September 22, 2011. https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2011/09/22/le-plagiat-sans-peine_1575879_3260.html; Nicki Hitchcott, “Calixthe Beyala: Prizes, Plagiarism, and ‘Authenticity’.” *Research in African Literatures* 37, no. 1 (2006): 100-09; M. A., “Marc Levy, Alain Minc, Calixthe Beyala Devant La Justice.” *Le Figaro*. October 14, 2007. http://www.lefigaro.fr/livres/2007/09/20/03005-20070920ARTFIG90223-marc_levy_alain_minc_calixthe_beyala_devant_la_justice.php.

activists and pressure from French officials both before and after the 2005 uprisings and launched a new series of conversations about the significance and importance of Black media representation.

Audrey Pulvar became the first Black national news anchor in 2004. Born the daughter of a political figure in Martinique, Pulvar carried the weight of her father's dreams. In an interview, she reflected on her father's desires. She lamented, "[he] expects me to be the next Oprah. That's not possible in this country; the French system does not allow that kind of opportunity."⁴⁹⁹ Co-anchoring the evening news slot on the state-owned channel France 3, Pulvar was both a target of praise and criticism. Many social pundits disparaged her arrival to the national television as premature. Reflecting on her experiences, Pulvar asserted, "I had to prove myself continually, more than any white [person] in a similar position."⁵⁰⁰ This process of "proving herself" led to an international career that spanned across a decade and on multiple platforms (print, visual and audio-visual programming) in France.⁵⁰¹ In her book entitled, *Free*

⁴⁹⁹ Lester Sloan, "The News From Paris." *Ebony*, August 2007, 95-96. Audrey's father, Marc Pulvar founded the Martinican Separatist Movement and served as its national secretary. In addition to serving as the Secretary of Martinican Central Workers' Trade Union Confederation. For more information see Christine Cupit and Peggy Pinel-Féréol, "Marc Pulvar était Un "leader Charismatique" - Martinique La 1ère." February 03, 2018. <https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/martinique/marc-pulvar-etait-leader-charismatique-556123.html> and Christine Chivallon, *L'esclavage, Du Souvenir à La Mémoire: Contribution à Une Anthropologie De La Caraïbe* (Karthala éditions, 2012), 414.

⁵⁰⁰ Lester Sloan, "The News From Paris." *Ebony*, August 2007, 95-96.

⁵⁰¹ After hosting the nightly news show "19/20" on France 3, she joined i>Télé for its nightly news program and hosted a political segment. More recently, Pulvar appeared on France 2's Saturday night talk show and the Le Grand 8, a daily talk show on the network D8. See Prisma Média, "Audrey Pulvar - La Biographie De Audrey Pulvar." *Gala*. https://www.gala.fr/stars_et_gotha/audrey_pulvar. In 2017, Pulvar took a break from journalism to pursue a career as the director of the Foundation for Nature and Man, she explains, "I left this profession because I felt that at the head of the Foundation for Nature and Man, I was going to take political stances that prevented me from continuing my job as a journalist." When asked if she would ever return to the field of journalism, she stated, "I do not know," leaving herself a small window of fire for a day to come back." For more on her new more political role see, "Audrey Pulvar, Pourquoi Elle a Quitté Le Journalisme." *Europe 1*. September 23, 2017. <http://www.europe1.fr/medias-tele/audrey-pulvar-pourquoi-elle-a-quitte-le-journalisme-3443780>.

like them: Portraits of Singular Women, Pulvar wrote about twenty feminist figures who impacted her life and career. Her book is particularly useful to examine her positionality as a Black French woman. This text offers clear insight in her own voice to the particular challenges of the French media industry and simultaneously highlights the way in which she explicitly tries to minimize the impact of race and instead focuses on gender identity. Adopting “raceless” language characterized much of her public career and later subsequent relationship to anti-racist activism.⁵⁰² In this work, she noted that “the press remains the most misogynist bastion” within French society.⁵⁰³

As the first Black woman seen on national news, Pulvar was named a role model for Black youth. She shied away from communal pressure to serve as a forerunner for “her race” for most of her career. Citing an experience of visiting a local school, she stated, “I...try to encourage young people. What I find most painful is when some Black people say I’m not Black enough, but I’m a Black girl.” In the face of colorism and sexism, Pulvar left her career as a journalist to pursue a role as a feminist activist who lobbied for political reform. In her career as both a journalist and activist, Pulvar encountered constant criticism. Although she was the first Black person on national news, she did not want to be an anti-racist activist. However, being “the first” forced her into a political role due to lack of representation. For many in the Black community, her reluctance to serve as a role model meant that she bought into notions of

⁵⁰² A concrete example of her grappling with racism in the media can be seen in a blog post written by Pulvar in 2010, entitled “Negre je suis, negre je resterai,” in response to an incident when Jean-Paul Guerlain, the celebrated perfume maker told an interviewer, “For once I began to work like a nigger. I don’t know if niggers have always really worked.” From, <http://louviers-2008.blogspot.com/2010/10/negre-je-suis-negre-je-resterai-par.html>

⁵⁰³ Alice Coffin, "Audrey Pulvar: «Cela Ne Me Dérange Pas D'être L'emmerdeuse De Service»." *20 Minutes*. October 30, 2014. <https://www.20minutes.fr/television/1471595-20141030-audrey-pulvar-derange-etre-emmerdeuse-service>.

“racelessness.” During the majority of her career, Pulvar rarely talked about race and its impact on her career trajectory. At the same time, she was at the helm of many feminist causes including confronting sexual harassment in the television world.⁵⁰⁴ Continuing within a longer tradition of Black women in political positions, their presence remains highly contested within and outside of their designated racial community. Black women remain controversial interlocutors. This intersection between race and gender granted Pulvar access to certain roles and positions but also made her subject to heightened criticism that differed from those who would follow.

Two years after Pulvar began her career at France 3, news station TF1 hired the Martiniquan journalist Harry Roselmack. His hiring was more directly tied to the political urgencies of the 2005 urban uprisings. In the wake of the 2005 urban uprisings, President Jacques Chirac responded to claims by the international press that France lacked non-white faces on national television.⁵⁰⁵ He reminded media companies that they had a responsibility to represent the inclusivity of French society. In his call for diversity, Chirac urged media outlets to hire men and women who would show both French citizens and the world that the country was committed to a more accurate portrayal of society.⁵⁰⁶ Chirac’s pressure on media outlets

⁵⁰⁴ Audrey Kucinskas, "Les "porcs" Dans Le Journalisme: Audrey Pulvar Raconte Son Agression." *L'Express*. January 04, 2018. https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/medias/les-porcs-dans-le-journalisme-audrey-pulvar-raconte-son-agression_1973471.html.

⁵⁰⁵ "«Paris Brûle» : Quand Les Médias Américains Parlaient Des émeutes De 2005." *Le Figaro*. October 27, 2015. <http://tvmag.lefigaro.fr/le-scan-tele/etranger/2015/10/27/28007-20151027ARTFIG00002-paris-brule-quand-les-medias-americains-parlaient-des-emeutes-de-2005.php>.

⁵⁰⁶ For more coverage of Chirac’s comments about diversity and the media as well as popular reception to his commentary, see: "Jacques Chirac Défend Le Modèle D'intégration à La Française." *Le Monde*. November 15, 2005. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2005/11/14/m-chirac-propose-un-service-civil_710207_3224.html; "La Représentation Des Minorités Progresses Dans L'audiovisuel Français, Indique Le CSA." *Le Monde*. November 10, 2006. https://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2006/11/10/la-representation-des-minorites-progresse-dans-l-audiovisuel-francais-indique-le-csa_833278_3236.html; Sylvia Poggioli, "Riots Highlight Lack of Diversity in French Media." *NPR*. December 08, 2005. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5043742>; Martine Silber, "La Diversité, Une Idée Très Médiatique Mais Peu Pratiquée Par Les Médias." *Le Monde*. November 26, 2005. <https://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2005/11/26/la-diversite-une-idee-tres-mediatique>

particularly private entities forced them to keep up with diversity initiatives undertaken by state-owned channels.

On July 17, 2006, Harry Roselmack began his career as the first Black news anchorman for Europe's largest privately-owned television station. His temporary six-week summer assignment was a response to Chirac's call for media diversity and to demands by Black French activists for more diverse faces on television. Amirouche Laidi, the president of a national media diversity organization, called Roselmack's hiring "a huge advance... This is like a bombshell for us - a black man presenting the 8pm news on the biggest television station in France."⁵⁰⁷ Echoing these sentiments of triumph, Patrick Lozès, acting president of the Representative Council of Black Associations (CRAN), stated, "It's very good news, not just for black people, but for France in general... It shows that black people can succeed somewhere other than sports and music."⁵⁰⁸ Roselmack's success as a journalist was cemented in history by drawing in an inaugural viewership of over eight million (three million more than the station's nightly average).⁵⁰⁹ As a result of his overwhelming positive reception, Roselmack became a permanent

[mais-peu-pratiquee-par-les-medias_714577_3236.html](http://www.inaglobal.fr/en/sciences-sociales/article/diversity-french-television); Marc Cheb Sun, "Diversity on French Television." *InaGlobal*. November 10, 2010. <https://www.inaglobal.fr/en/sciences-sociales/article/diversity-french-television>.

⁵⁰⁷ "Black TV Newsman Is French First." *BBC News*. March 08, 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4786376.stm>. *Club Averroes* is a collective of over 400 professionals that are committed to promoting diversity within French media and entertainment outlets. Each year, the organization releases a report on the state of affairs in the media and diversity. (<http://www.clubaverroes.com>). The club's president, Amirouche Laidi is of Algerian descent and has served the organization since its inception in 1997. See Samy Ghorbal, "Amirouche Laidi." *Jeune Afrique*. November 29, 2005. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/62715/archives-thematique/amirouche-laedi/>. For more information about TF1's strategy behind hiring Roselmack see Claire Frachon, *Media and Cultural Diversity: In Europe and North America* (Paris: Institut Panos, 2009), 41-46.

⁵⁰⁸ Katrin Bennhold, "For French Blacks, a Face on TV News Is Only a Start." *The New York Times*. August 14, 2006. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/14/arts/television/14anch.html>.

⁵⁰⁹ For metrics on Roselmack's debut see, "Harry Roselmack - MYTF1." *TF1*. <https://www.tf1.fr/dossier/harry-roselmack>. For nightly news metrics see John Lichfield, "France Gets Its First Black TV Presenter after Chirac

fixture for the TF1 channel. During his career as a journalist, he worked on three shows. In addition to his continuing role as anchor for the nightly news on “Sept à huit,” he also expanded his presence in the media world as a producer and screenwriter for television, documentaries and film. He credited much of his success to the early strivings of Luc Saint-Éloy and Calixthe Beyala at the 2000 César awards. He states, “[their] actions...helped make it possible for me.”⁵¹⁰

As Black French journalists made considerable in-roads with on and off-air production credits, similar developments occurred on big-screen. On February 24, 2012, Canal+ broadcast the annual César awards. Many of the same French film stars seated during the 2000 César awards were present. For the first time in the thirty-seven years of the award’s existence, the Best Actor award was given to a Black man. Omar Sy was the first Black man to be nominated for the award and the first to win it. Earlier that month, he took home the Lumière award (French equivalent of the Golden Globes) for Best Actor. Born to a Mauritanian mother and Senegalese father in the western Parisian *banlieue* of Trappes, Omar won both awards for his groundbreaking performance in the French blockbuster *The Untouchables*. Ranked one of the

Pressure." *The Independent*. April 01, 2009. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/france-gets-its-first-black-tv-presenter-after-chirac-pressure-6107251.html>.

⁵¹⁰ Lester Sloan, "The News From Paris." *Ebony*, August 2007, 95-96. Despite the early success of journalists Pulvar and Roselmack, quantitative studies found that French media was still not representative of the current demographics of society. The sitting president of the CSA, Michel Boyon stated, "'I would not say that these results are not satisfactory, I would say that they are unacceptable. They are intolerable in the France of 2008. Diversity is life. And unfortunately, our television today does not reflect what it should be expressing and representing today...You will see that compared to the study done in 1999, 9 years ago, progress is minimal. And it is not because there has been a slight progression, a very slight progression, that one has to imagine that the problem is about to be solved, far from it. This situation is not acceptable, it is not admissible, it is not tolerable, and everyone must draw the consequences.'" In *Médias et diversités*, *Ministère de la culture et de la communication*, <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/104000287.pdf>, 31. For a more detailed explanation of the composition of the committee and its propositions see, "Médias Et Diversités." *Direction De L'information Légale Et Administrative*. May 2010. <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/104000287/index.shtml>.

highest grossing films in French cinematic history, it spent ten straight weeks as France's number one film in the box office.⁵¹¹

The film stars Omar Sy as Driss, a down-on-his-luck ex-convict living in the Parisian suburbs. Appearing for an interview as a live-in caregiver, Driss presumes he will not be hired and can begin receiving government assistance. As fate would have it, Driss is hired to care for a wealthy quadriplegic named Philippe. As their friendship blossoms, Philippe introduces Driss to the luxuries of upper-class life while Driss helps Philippe embrace a *carpe-diem* mentality and introduces him to elements of Black culture. Based on a true story, the film concludes with a closing shot of Philippe di Borgo and his French-Algerian caregiver named Abdel Sellou.⁵¹² The film received assorted views. Some critics proclaimed the film as inspirational while others criticized the film for being situated within the cinematic trope of Driss as the “magical negro” and Philippe as a “savior” figure.⁵¹³ Despite this mixed reception by film critics, *Untouchables* grossed \$365.1 million worldwide becoming the second highest grossing film in

⁵¹¹ "Intouchables" choisi pour représenter la France aux Oscars." *Le Monde*. January 11, 2013. http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2012/09/18/intouchables-choisi-pour-representer-la-france-aux-oscars_1761895_3246.html; Miles Marshall Lewis, "Omar Sy Wins French César Award for Best Actor. Formidable. Ouais?" *Ebony*. March 01, 2012. <http://www.ebony.com/entertainment-culture/omar-sy-wins-french-cesar-award-for-best-actor-formidable-ouais>.

⁵¹² Nigel Farndale, "Untouchable: the true story that inspired a box office hit." *The Telegraph*. September 05, 2012. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/9509665/Untouchable-the-true-story-that-inspired-a-box-office-hit.html>.

⁵¹³ For more critiques of the film, see Eleanor Beardsley, "In France, A Star Rises From An Oft-Neglected Place." *NPR*. June 28, 2012. <https://www.npr.org/2012/06/28/155858272/in-france-a-star-rises-from-an-oft-neglected-place>; Jean-Jacques Delfour, "«Intouchables»: Cendrillon Des temps Modernes." *Libération*. November 29, 2011. http://next.liberation.fr/cinema/2011/11/29/intouchables-cendrillon-des-temps-modernes_777982; Daphnee Denis, "Why American Critics Think a Popular French Movie Is Racist." *Slate Magazine*. May 25, 2012. http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2012/05/25/the_intouchables_racist_french_people_don_t_think_so_and_here_s_why_.html; Devorah Lauter, "Hit French Movie 'Intouchables' Has Some Crying 'racism'." *Los Angeles Times*. January 01, 2012. <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jan/01/world/la-fg-france-untouchables-20120102>; Jay Weissberg, "Film Review: 'Untouchable'." *Variety*. October 14, 2013. <http://variety.com/2011/film/reviews/untouchable-1117946269/>.

French box office history and the top grossing foreign film of the year within the United States.⁵¹⁴ The success of the film resulted in invitations for the cast and crew to dine at the Élysée Palace with President Sarkozy. However, Omar Sy declined his invitation citing a hectic filming schedule.⁵¹⁵ His decision not to attend the event was discussed in several media outlets as both a political rebuff and a thinly masked protest of Sarkozy's treatment towards Black and immigrant populations.⁵¹⁶ However, Sy's historic win at the César's called attention to both the mainstream invisibility of Black actors and the type of role that garnered Best Actor praise.

Omar Sy's portrayal of Driss fits within the tropes outlined by French sociologist Marie-France Malonga. Her findings characterized "three reoccurring types of characters representing

⁵¹⁴ For more information about *Intouchables* record-shattering box office numbers, see Alice Bosio, "Intouchables Réussira-t-il à Battre Les Ch'tis ?" *Le Figaro*. January 09, 2012. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/cinema/2012/01/09/03002-20120109ARTFIG00573-intouchables-reussira-t-il-a-battre-les-chti-s.php> and Pamela McClintock, "Box Office Milestone: 'Intouchables' Top Grossing Foreign Film of 2012 in North America." *The Hollywood Reporter*. July 24, 2012. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/intouchables-box-office-353541>. The unprecedented success of the film "Intouchables" has resulted in an American re-make of the film starring comedian Kevin Hart and Emmy award-winning actor Brian Cranston named "The Upside" set to debut in 2018. For more information about the upcoming film, see Nick Romano, "Bryan Cranston and Kevin Hart's 'The Intouchables' Remake Gets New Title." *Entertainment Weekly*. August 2, 2017. <http://ew.com/movies/2017/08/02/the-intouchables-remake-upside-bryan-cranston-kevin-hart/> and Irv Slifkin, "Kevin Hart Goes Dramatic for the Hollywood Remake of the French Hit 'Intouchables'." *Los Angeles Times*. June 09, 2017. <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-ca-mn-intouchables-remake-20170609-story.html>.

⁵¹⁵ Clea Caulcutt, "French Blockbuster Star Snubs Sarkozy." *The Local*. December 15, 2011. <https://www.thelocal.fr/20130806/2038>; "Omar, Le Grand Absent De L'Elysée." *Le Parisien*. December 11, 2012. <http://www.leparisien.fr/loisirs-et-spectacles/omar-le-grand-absent-de-l-elysee-15-12-2011-1769745.php>.

⁵¹⁶ Though Sy never addresses interpretations of his absences by the media beyond his official press statement citing a film conflict. The coverage of his "invitation refusal" can be reviewed in the following stories: Muriel Frat, "Omar Sy Ne Déjeunera Pas à L'Élysée." *Le Figaro*. December 14, 2011. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2011/12/14/97001-20111214FILWWW00345-omar-sy-ne-dejeunera-pas-a-l-elysee.php>; "«Intouchables» : Omar Sy Décline L'invitation De Nicolas Sarkozy." *Le Parisien*. December 14, 2011. <http://www.leparisien.fr/actualite-people-medias/intouchables-omar-sy-decline-l-invitation-de-nicolas-sarkozy-14-12-2011-1768179.php>; Miles Marshall Lewis, "Omar Sy Wins French César Award for Best Actor. Formidable. Ouais?" *Ebony*. March 01, 2012. <http://www.ebony.com/entertainment-culture/omar-sy-wins-french-cesar-award-for-best-actor-formidable-ouais>; Christopher Ramoné, "Omar Sy N'ira Pas à L'Elysée." *L'Express*. December 14, 2011. https://www.lexpress.fr/culture/cinema/omar-sy-n-ira-pas-a-l-elysee_1061396.html.

‘visible minorities’: the victim, the delinquent and the savage.⁵¹⁷ Malonga’s study contends that mere representation is not enough within French media. She argues that the next frontier of representation is qualitative progression instead of quantitative growth. Her work insists that an oversaturation of negative imagery portrayed by non-white French actors has a negative impact on the daily life of Black French people. This surplus of Black characters seen on television and film as the “delinquent” and the “savage” coalesce with generalizations made by the police about Black males as criminals. In a scene from *The Untouchables*, Driss takes Philippe on a high-speed ride around Paris. When confronted by the police, Driss and Philippe are cornered by a swarm of cop cars. Police slam Driss’ body to the hood of the car and a gun is pointed at his head. The police’s assumption that Driss was both a criminal and “armed and dangerous” overlap with caricatures most vividly seen in the practice of identity checks.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁷ "10h: Audition De Madame Marie-France MALONGA." *Conseil Supérieur De L'audiovisuel*. March 16, 2007. <http://www.csa.fr/content/download/18305/323463/file>; Aude Lorriaux, "À La Télévision, Des Minorités Visibles Mais Pas Assez Mises En Valeur." *Slate Magazine*. January 14, 2016. <http://www.slate.fr/story/112713/diversite-television-sondage>.

⁵¹⁸ For more information on the racialized elements of identity checks, see Angelique Chrisafis, "Former Students Sue French State for 'racist' Stop and Search." *The Guardian*. October 22, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/22/former-students-sue-french-state-for-racist-stop-and-search>; Rokhaya Diallo, "France Fails to Face Up to Racism." *The New York Times*. December 28, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/28/opinion/france-racism-rokhaya-diallo.html>; "Ethnic Profiling in France: A Well-Documented Practice." *Open Society Justice Initiative*. 2011. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/ethnic-profiling-in-france-a-well-documented-practice-english-2011-05-23.pdf>; "La Lutte Contre Le Racisme, L'antisémitisme Et La Xénophobie." Commission Nationale Consultative Des Droits De L'homme. 2010. http://medias.lemonde.fr/mmpub/edt/doc/20110412/1506227_95b4_cncdh_2010_basse_def.pdf.



Figure 17. Omar Sy (pictured in his role as Driss) during the police chase scene.

Black youths are routinely singled out by police forces in unwarranted *contrôles*. These interactions are often violent and can sometimes lead to death. Changing the narrative about Black males as violent and savage in fictional portrayals has the power to translate into daily life. Activists' focus on "rehabilitating" the media image of the African community is critically linked to their efforts to confront violent police interactions and French society's criminalization of their presence based upon race. In a survey conducted in partnership with *Slate* magazine, only 33% of French society believed that Black people were represented positively in the media, whereas 65% of people polled believed that diversity in media was numerically well represented.⁵¹⁹ This disjuncture between mere numerical representation and positive perception is at the core of Black French activists' agenda. Often citing the presence of Harry Roselmack, activists draw a sharp line between fictional television and film representation and the French press. Roselmack's reputation as a respected journalist and public figure in the press often stood in contrast to fictional television and film depictions of Black men as vagrants and criminals.

⁵¹⁹ Viavoice Diversity, "Les Français Et La Diversité à La Télévision." *Institut-Viavoice*. January 2016. <https://www.scribd.com/doc/295420251/Les-Franc-ais-et-la-diversite-a-la-te-le-vision>.

Despite being “touted as the ‘ultimate symbol’ of ethnic diversity in France,” Roselmack offered a much more dismal response to this narrative of progress.⁵²⁰ In a 2017 interview with *TéléObs*, he remarked, “You could not imagine that putting a black guy on the 8 pm [news] was going to change everything.”⁵²¹ Countering activists’ praise of his mainstream success and embrace by French society, Roselmack recognizes that achieving “diversity” is far more complex than his singular presence on television. Broadly acclaimed as a “sex symbol,” he is often used as a foil to dominant narratives of Black males as “criminals” and “illegal.”⁵²² This status as a “sex symbol” propelled white French anxieties about Black people as objects of desire. In the face of his success and positive reception by white French audiences, Roselmack still confronts the impact of racism. Race was a propelling factor in his recruitment to TF1 and the realities of both political and socioeconomic daily life in France. Penning an editorial within *Le Monde* entitled “Racist France is back,” Roselmack discusses the weight of racism in his own life and self-identification, “I am first a man, a son, a brother, a husband and a father, a citizen, a journalist, a passionate [person] and yes, yes, it's true, I'm black. The Republic, its slogan and its laws manage, most of the time, to make me forget it.”⁵²³ His introspective musing of “forgetting”

⁵²⁰ Alexandre Le Drollec, "Harry Roselmack: "Il Ne Fallait Pas S'imaginer Que Mettre Un Noir Au 20 Heures Allait Tout Changer"." *TéléObs*. March 18, 2017. <https://teleobs.nouvelobs.com/actualites/20170314.OBS6559/harry-roselmack-il-ne-fallait-pas-s-imaginer-que-mettre-un-noir-au-20-heures-allait-tout-changer.html>.

⁵²¹ Le Drollec, "Harry Roselmack "

⁵²² For more on French portrayals of Black people in the media, see Aude Konan, "Why Black People in France Are Still Invisible." *Media Diversified*. May 15, 2015. <https://mediadiversified.org/2015/05/12/why-black-people-in-france-are-still-invisible/comment-page-1/>; Yohann Turi, "Harry Roselmack S'affiche Très Sexy Torse Nu: Un Mystérieux Tatouage Orne Ses Pectoraux." *Voici*. August 17, 2018. <https://www.voici.fr/news-people/actu-people/photos-harry-roselmack-saffiche-tres-sexy-torse-nu-un-mysterieux-tatouage-orne-ses-pectoraux-649718>.

⁵²³ Harry Roselmack, "Harry Roselmack: "La France raciste est de retour". *Le Monde*. November, 4, 2013. https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2013/11/04/harry-roselmack-la-france-raciste-est-de-retour_3508055_3232.html?fb_action_ids=417707535023659&fb_action_types=og.recommends&fb_source=othe

that he is Black most of the time is countered later in the editorial with a list of examples in French politics, daily language, iconography and communal sentiments of racial segregation rooted in anti-blackness. Roselmack penned his thoughts about racism and daily life in response to an incident with the Minister of Defense, Christiane Taubira, a woman of Afro-Caribbean descent.

In 2015, the right-wing magazine *Minute* published a photograph of Christiane Taubira with the caption, “Crafty as a monkey, Taubira gets her banana back.”⁵²⁴ She faced three public attacks that likened her to an animal throughout her political career. During a public protest, a young French white child threw a banana at her. In an interview on national television, a far-right candidate stated she would rather see Taubira “in a tree swinging from the branches rather than in government.”⁵²⁵ Public outcry against these racist attacks flooded social media. However, an outpouring of responses by her political colleagues remained alarmingly minuscule. This silence is starkly contrasted by what the press deemed “Taubirmania” by LGBTQ advocates and the left/center politicians during her proposal to legalize gay marriage.⁵²⁶ Taubira countered this erosion of political capital during racially infused incidents. In an interview, she linked her individual experiences to France’s political foundation. She stated, “apart from my own personal

[r_multiline&action object map=%7B%22417707535023659%22:525782557496124%7D&action type map=%7B%22417707535023659%22:%22og.recommends%22%7D&action_ref_map.](#)

⁵²⁴ “« Minute » Condamné En Appel Pour Avoir Comparé Christiane Taubira à Un Singe.” *Le Monde*. September 17, 2015. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/09/17/minute-condamne-en-appel-pour-avoir-compare-christiane-taubira-a-un-singe_4761214_3224.html.

⁵²⁵ “Black Minister Compared to a Monkey - Again.” *France 24*. November 13, 2013. <https://www.france24.com/en/20131113-france-racism-black-minister-taubira-monkey-banana-magazine-cover>.

⁵²⁶ Jon Frosch, “In French Gay Marriage Debate, a Political Star Is Born.” *France 24*. May 12, 2013. <https://www.france24.com/en/20130211-france-gay-marriage-adoption-christiane-taubira>.

case, these racist attacks are an attack on the heart of the Republic.”⁵²⁷ Yet, representatives of the Republic did not respond to the series of racist incidents as an attack. Instead, black journalists like Roselmack used their platform to offer a public defense of her legitimacy as a leader and to shine a light on the deep-rooted racism within France. His article called attention to the ways in which racial and gendered prejudices erected barriers that Taubira could not destroy alone.⁵²⁸ In the end, Harry Roselmack’s staunch support for the Minister of Defense heightened his visibility and reception within the Black community.

The overall success of both Roselmack and Pulvar opened the door for several more Black journalists on primetime television including Rokhaya Diallo seen on BET-France.⁵²⁹ Diallo’s career as a respected journalist positioned her to be an ideal candidate for French President Emmanuel Macron’s National Digital Council (CNNum) in 2017. This committee of experts would help the new president develop a more informed digital policy.⁵³⁰ However, her

⁵²⁷ Alexander Stille, "The Justice Minister and the Banana: How Racist Is France?" *The New Yorker*. June 19, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-justice-minister-and-the-banana-how-racist-is-france>.

⁵²⁸ Alexandre Le Drollec, "Harry Roselmack: 'Il Ne Fallait Pas S'imaginer Que Mettre Un Noir Au 20 Heures Allait Tout Changer'." *TéléObs*. March 18, 2017. <https://teleobs.nouvelobs.com/actualites/20170314.OBS6559/harry-roselmack-il-ne-fallait-pas-s-imaginer-que-mettre-un-noir-au-20-heures-allait-tout-changer.html>. For more information about the Taubira incident, see Jean Birnbaum, "Taubira, La Banane Et Les Dérives Du Politiquement Incorrect." *Le Monde*. November 01, 2013. https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2013/10/31/politiquement-abject_3506228_3260.html; Jon Frosch and Sarah Leduc, "Black Public Figures Sound Alarm on 'racist France'." *France 24*. November 14, 2013. <http://www.france24.com/en/20131106-france-racism-christiane-taubira-harry-roselmack-marine-le-pen-nicolassarkozy>; Nabila Ramdani, "Racism in France Is a 'latent Problem'." *BBC News*. November 08, 2013. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-24864086/nabila-ramdani-racism-in-france-is-a-latent-problem>; Fabrice Rousselot and Sonya Faure, "Christiane Taubira: «Des inhibitions Disparaissent, Des Dignes Tombent»." *Libération*. November 06, 2013. http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2013/11/05/des-inhibitions-disparaissent-des-dignes-tombent_944910.

⁵²⁹ Several other Afro-French journalists have since acquired positions on French national television including: Cameroonian Elizabeth Tchoungui (France 24 and TV5), Burundian Karine Le Marchand (France 3 and TV5), Marie-Aline Méliyi (Télé-Loisirs and LCI) and Christine Kelly (France 3, LCI, Demain.TV)

⁵³⁰ Though the digital committee was not the brain-child of Macron, the French national government decided to form the thirty-person forum to advise the new president. See Claire Legros and Sandrine Cassini, "Le Conseil National Du Numérique Lance Un Débat Public Sur La Régulation Des Plates-formes." *Le Monde*. October 11, 2017.

role as a Black activist received considerable criticism. Open reproach by political leaders for her public stance against racism greatly differed from receptions to Harry Roselmack's editorial denouncing racism. As soon the national committee announced Diallo's appointment, the mainstream right-wing party *Les Républicains* published an "open letter" to the government protesting her selection. Citing her advocacy against racism, use of the terminology "institutionalized racism" and support for feminist organizations, *Les Républicains* denounced her candidacy.⁵³¹ This pushback occurred despite her selection being approved by the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, Mounir Mahjoubi.⁵³² Diallo was swiftly dismissed from the voluntary position by the government to ensure "greater peace of mind"

https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2017/10/11/le-conseil-national-du-numerique-lance-un-debat-public-sur-la-regulation-des-plates-formes_5199405_3234.html and "Nos Travaux." *CNNum*.
<https://cnnumerique.fr/en/nos-travaux#societe-numerique>.

⁵³¹ For the entire transcript of the open letter see, Zafimehy, Marie. "Pourquoi Rokhaya Diallo A-t-elle été écartée Du Conseil National Du Numérique?" *RTL*. December 16, 2017. <http://www.rtl.fr/actu/politique/pourquoi-rokhaya-diallo-a-t-elle-ete-ecartee-du-conseil-national-du-numerique-7791447394>. The letter mentions her being "outspoken on institutional racism" in France. As well as her lending support to "feminist movements" such as *Collectif Mwasi* (an Afro-Feminist organization). Mwasi garnered national attention when they proposed to offer a conference with select sessions only available to Black women. This display of racial "separatism" caused the mayor of Paris to call for a ban on the programming. Anti-racist groups such as SOS Racisme and LICRA expressed their disapproval of the conference as well. See, "Paris Mayor Calls for Ban of Black Feminist Festival 'prohibited to White People'." *RT International*. May 29, 2017. <https://www.rt.com/news/390030-paris-feminist-festival-black/> and Pierre Sorgue, "« Ne Nous Libérez Pas, on S'en Charge » : Le Cri Des Afroféministes." *Le Monde*. July 28, 2017. https://www.lemonde.fr/m-actu/article/2017/06/16/ne-nous-liberez-pas-on-s-en-charge-le-cri-des-afrofeministes_5145330_4497186.html.

⁵³² Secretary of State for Digital Affairs Mounir Mahjoubi's approval and appointment to the French cabinet position is critical given that he is one of the few non-white politicians represented within national office. Born in Paris to Moroccan immigrants, he was a former member of the National Assembly for Paris (June 21, 2017-July 21, 2017), President of the French Digital Council (February 2, 2016-January 19, 2017) and began a role as Secretary of State for the Digital Affairs (May 17, 2017). Despite being in agreement with Diallo's original appointment, Mahjoubi would later backpedal in his support releasing an office statement that said, "[the office of Mounir Mahjoubi] confirms that Rokhaya Diallo is at the heart of the problem: 'Following the appointment of the Council, members of the government and Matignon received a lot of messages and comments reported on the case of Ms. Diallo.'" From "Le Gouvernement Ne Veut Pas De La Militante Antiraciste Rokhaya Diallo Au Conseil National Du Numérique." *Franceinfo*. December 19, 2017. https://www.francetvinfo.fr/societe/imbroglio-au-conseil-national-du-numerique-apres-la-nomination-de-rokhaya-diallo_2514341.html.

within CNNum. In response to this reactionary decision by French policymakers, head of the Digital Advisory board Marie Ekeland resigned her position as well. In an official statement, she said “in France, we don’t want to hear dissonant voices. It shows that we don’t know how to calmly debate different points of view.” Following her lead, 27 other members of the 30-person committee resigned in solidarity.⁵³³

The collapse of CNNum’s first National Digital Council sparked international attention and garnered overwhelming negative press for new president Emmanuel Macron and the French government. This negative press revealed both staunch resistance to differing opinions under the guise of universalism but also the fallacy of French colorblindness. Rokhaya Diallo offered the following commentary about her position at the center of this political debacle.

I think [this controversy] shows there’s a great tension...What you can see today is there are topics which are very hard to discuss in France, namely race issues. There has been a wave of support for me by people...There are generations now who understand that France today is also made up of people like me, that I’m part of France today, and whether you want to listen to me or not, you have to take that into account. It’s painful for some people but crucial for the future.⁵³⁴

⁵³³ Ekeland was quoted in the following interview, Angelique Chrisafis, "French Race Row Erupts as Feminist Forced off Advisory Body." *The Guardian*. December 20, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/20/french-race-row-erupts-as-feminist-forced-off-advisory-body>. In a joint statement released by all resigning members of the digital committee, they state, “Noting the impossibility of implementing his project, considering that the work of the Council can no longer be done in effective ways, we decided to collectively present our resignation.” For more public reception to this controversy see Sandrine Cassini, "Le Conseil National Du Numérique Perd Sa Présidente Et La Quasi-totalité De Ses Membres." *Le Monde*. December 20, 2017. https://www.lemonde.fr/pixels/article/2017/12/19/marie-ekeland-demissionne-du-conseil-national-du-numerique_5231925_4408996.html and for the entire transcript of the group resignation, "Demain Est Un Autre Jour - Message Collectif." *CNNum*. December 19, 2017. https://cnnumerique.fr/demain_autrejour_message_collectif. Echoing disdain for Diallo’s dismissal, The French Human Rights League released a statement, saying: “In a democracy, the state must respect the pluralism of opinions to inform public action and enrich it.”

⁵³⁴ Chrisafis, "French Race Row Erupts," *The Guardian*. December 20, 2017.

After two weeks of relentless media attention both nationally and internationally, the Digital Council moved forward with a new composition of committee members deemed “less divisive.” The “Diallo scandal” carried both political and personal weight for all those involved. Individuals supportive of Diallo signed petitions rallying support. Politicians from the left, right and center who clamored for her dismissal were publically ridiculed on an international stage by activists, journalists and celebrities. Moreover, Diallo’s dismissal revealed a certain angst with discussing the “taboo” topic of race as well as the insidious nature of colorblind rhetoric within France.⁵³⁵ In her work as both an activist and a journalist, Diallo urged both the French state and its citizenry to address the gravity of racial difference in a nation that denies its existence. To make her point devastatingly clear, she stitched a thread between France and the United States using the trifecta of race, police brutality and the media.

One of the editorials that right-wing critics of Diallo’s appointment looked to was her 2014 piece entitled, “We have Fergusons in France – but the French media looks away,” Diallo reminded French citizens, the government and the media that they have a responsibility to tell the truth.⁵³⁶ She highlighted widespread French coverage of American race-fueled police brutality in sharp contrast with the media’s deafening silence on similar occurrences happening within the hexagon.⁵³⁷ French media hid behind the veil of colorblindness in its coverage of racially

⁵³⁵ Maboula Soumahoro, "In France, a Woman Has Been Dismissed for Her Anti-racism. Where Is Our égalité? | Maboula Soumahoro." *The Guardian*. December 27, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/27/france-anti-racism-dismissed-feminist-rokhaya-diallo>.

⁵³⁶ Rokhaya Diallo and Sihame Assbague, "We Have Fergusons in France-but the French Media Looks Away." *The Root*. September 15, 2014. <https://www.theroot.com/we-have-fergusons-in-france-but-the-french-media-looks-1790877054>.

⁵³⁷ "Ferguson, Sombre Miroir Des Fractures Américaines." *Le Monde*. August 20, 2014. https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2014/08/19/ferguson-sombre-miroir-des-fractures-americales_4473377_3232.html?xtmc=ferguson&xtr=1; Laure Mandeville, "L'Amérique En Proie Aux Tensions Raciales." *Le Figaro*. August 16, 2014. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2014/08/15/01003->

motivated incidents with the police. Diallo noted that two days before Michael Brown was murdered, a 42-year-old John Doe was found dead in a local French police precinct. Later that year, two other men were found dead in police custody. All of these men were of African descent.

In France, the deaths of non-white men in police custody seem to follow a nearly identical pattern. These instances often begin with police stopping men “young and of color” in the form of an identity check. In the process of this check, the man or boy is killed. The accused officers plead self-defense or that the person in custody died of “unexplained causes.” Media outlets only release the “official” version of events offered by the precinct. In retaliation against the wrongful death, there is an uprising in the suburban community where the incident occurred. More police are summoned to squelch the uprising. The family of the victim file a civil suit against the officers. Most of the time, the officers involved do not pay damages.

This cycle of police brutality and urban uprisings began in the 1980s and continues to the present. Diallo invoked the deaths of Traoré and Benna that preceded the 2005 uprisings as a parallel to the untimely murder of Michael Brown. Careful not to argue that the precise circumstances of police brutality are identical in the United States and France, Diallo roots the use of force by officers to a deep-seeded racism that finds its genesis in slavery within the United States and in colonialism within France. French society ignores this history of state-sponsored violence upon Black communities under the guise of universalism and its colorblind rhetoric.

[20140815ARTFIG00151-l-amerique-en-proie-aux-tensions-raciales.php](http://www.parismatch.com/Actu/International/Ron-Johnson-le-sauveur-de-Ferguson-582970) and Olivier O'Mahony, "Policier, Il Apaise Les Tensions - Ron Johnson, Le Sauveur De Ferguson." *Paris Match*. August 22, 2014. <http://www.parismatch.com/Actu/International/Ron-Johnson-le-sauveur-de-Ferguson-582970>.

While applauding French coverage of racially motivated police brutality in America, Diallo implored media companies and journalists to turn the mirror from the United States back to France and expose how the identity of non-white citizens visibly make them a target for both racial profiling and excessive force by police officers. Diallo admonished that until France confronts its systemic racism, tensions between Black communities and the police will remain. Unaddressed, the cycle of police brutality and urban uprisings will continue and “as in Ferguson...tensions will remain in France.”⁵³⁸ Her call to media outlets for increased focus on racially motivated crimes concretely links the issues of visibility and invisibility. Police officers’ visible recognition of race catalyzes their often violent interactions with Black populations. In contrast to white French populations, who are seemingly unaffected by identity checks, Black French populations contend with these moments as emblematic of their visibility and signifying their difference. However, the media renders these incidents invisible by never acknowledging the role of race. This refusal by the media to contend with race not only perpetuates experiences of inequality but contradicts the egalitarian basis of French society. The longer history of racial discrimination and prejudice impacts Black media personalities but also everyday life.

Rokhaya Diallo’s warning that racial tensions will continue unless things change in France provides a point of contrast between herself and fellow journalist Harry Roselmack in regards to spheres of change. Despite his skepticism about the nature and pace of social change, Roselmack is encouraged by the developments in French media. When discussing the progress made over the ten years since the urban uprisings of 2005, he stated, “These changes are slow,

⁵³⁸ Rokhaya Diallo and Sihame Assbague, "We Have Fergusons in France-but the French Media Looks Away." *The Root*. September 15, 2014. <https://www.theroot.com/we-have-fergusons-in-france-but-the-french-media-looks-1790877054>.

too slow, no doubt. They take time, but they take place regularly and continuously.”⁵³⁹ Citing the recent César awards, he relished in the fact that the Best Short Film Award was given to “two young French directors of African descent [Alice Diop and Maïmouna Doucouré].” He noted that the film industry is ‘even more closed’ than television. Diop and Maïmouna Doucouré’s César award means that “the lines are moving. Diversity [has begun] to manifest itself.”⁵⁴⁰

At the helm of this manifestation of diversity are Black women.⁵⁴¹ Alice Diop and Maïmouna Doucouré winning the Best Short Film Award was significant. Even more important is the nature of their work. Diop’s film entitled *Vers la tendresse*, examined the role of love within the daily lives of young African men in the suburbs. Doucouré’s film entitled *Maman(s)*, chronicled the life of a young Senegalese girl reeling from impact of polygamous family

⁵³⁹ Alexandre Le Drollec, "Harry Roselmack: "Il Ne Fallait Pas S'imaginer Que Mettre Un Noir Au 20 Heures Allait Tout Changer"." *TéléObs*. March 18, 2017. <https://teleobs.nouvelobs.com/actualites/20170314.OBS6559/harry-roselmack-il-ne-fallait-pas-s-imaginer-que-mettre-un-noir-au-20-heures-allait-tout-changer.html>.

⁵⁴⁰ Drollec, "Harry Roselmack" *TéléObs*.

⁵⁴¹ The following year at the Cannes Film festival, a collective of sixteen Black actresses launched a movement named “*Noire n’est pas métier*.” (Black is not my profession) Penning a book under the same name, these actresses protest the racist jokes, clichés and stereotypes, they’ve had to endure while working in the film industry. Citing comments like, “Fortunately you have fine features,” or “you speak African?” and “Too black to [play a mixed person].” Actress Nadège Beausson-Diagne laments the common refrain, “not African enough for an African.” Another actress Aïssa Maïga argues that “the imagination of French productions is still imbued with clichés inherited from another time...Things are changing but so slowly...[Since the calls] I expect for a fairer representation does not take place, I need to express myself...Our presence in French films is all too often due to the unavoidable or anecdotal need to have a black character.” In their demands for more equal representation beyond stereotypical roles and access within the film industry, the women have embarked on a public campaign to raise more awareness about the challenges they face, see, « Noire N'est Pas Mon Métier »: Des Actrices Dénoncent Un Racisme Latent Du Cinéma Français." *Le Monde*. May 05, 2018. https://www.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2018/05/04/noire-n-est-pas-mon-metier-des-actrices-denoncent-un-racisme-latent-du-cinema-francais_5294572_3476.html and Jean Talabot, "Noire N'est Pas Mon Métier: Naissance D'un Mouvement à Cannes." *Le Figaro*. May 17, 2018. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/festival-de-cannes/2018/05/17/03011-20180517ARTFIG00160-noire-n-est-pas-mon-metier-naissance-d-un-mouvement-a-cannes.php>

upbringing. The films explore notions of race and elements of African culture and its position within French society.

Maïmouna Doucouré's film *Maman(s)* is told from the perspective of eight-year old Aida. Living in a Parisian *banlieue*, her life is idyllic until her father's return from a trip to Senegal. In addition to his luggage, Aida's father arrives with another woman and an infant. Her world crumbles as she watches her mother mourn the loss of her singular position within her husband's life and grappling with the reality that she must make room for his second wife. Intent on restoring order, Aida commits to getting rid of both the second wife and the baby. Though ultimately unsuccessful, Aida learns to make room for both her second mother and her new sibling. Loosely based on Doucouré upbringing in the nineteenth arrondissement of Paris, she willingly confronts the taboo topic of polygamy in France. Various African countries practice polygamy. However in France, this practice is illegal. Doucouré's film explores the reality of polygamous families living in France.

Growing up in Paris, Maïmouna Doucouré was the fifth out of ten children. At a young age, she realized that her father had two families. *Mother(s)* is a fictional take on her understanding of how love and a child's interpretation of love is filtered through the lens of polygamy. Her commitment to publicizing the often-private anguish and scarring of this practice is encapsulated in her remark, "I really wanted to show the suffering of women and particularly of children because, for me, we often forget to think about them and speak to them."⁵⁴² In her honest display of this suffering by woman and children, she also triumphed in the film industry.

⁵⁴² Sharon Waxman, "The Inspiring Story of Maimouna Doucoure – TheWrap's ShortList 2016 Jury Winner." *TheWrap*. August 29, 2016. <https://www.thewrap.com/the-inspiring-story-of-maimouna-doucoure-our-shortlist-2016-jury-winner/>. Echoing the need to move beyond stereotypes and create programming that is reflective of everyday life and the varied experiences of people within the African Diaspora is also a commitment also honored

In her acceptance speech, Maïmouna Doucouré recounted to audience members her dream of becoming a film director and the reality that most African women filmmakers encounter barriers within the industry based on race and gender. She said,

The day I told my mother that I wanted to do cinema, she said to me, ‘It's not for us. Do you see people who look like you?’ Today, Mom, I hope that I have succeeded in proving you wrong. Because we also need to tell each other, [that we] exist on the [television] screens and [in] cinema... There are people behind [the scenes] who are fighting to bring down the walls, so that [the reality of life in] France is told in its diversity.⁵⁴³

This endeavor to bring diversity to the film industry and portray the reality of life for Black people in France is also reflected in the work of co-Best Short Film César Award winner Alice Diop.

Alice Diop’s film, *Vers la tendresse* or *Towards Tenderness*, is a return to her childhood suburb La Courneuve. She interviewed four young Black and Arab men about their conceptions

by Alice Diop. Their collective work fits within a growing body of work that can be deemed an “*Afro Feminine Renaissance*” of Filmmaking. This includes the work of Isabelle Boni-Claverie, *Too Black to Be French* (2015). See Nicolas Michel, "Documentaire: « Trop Noire Pour être Française? »" *Jeune Afrique*. July 01, 2015. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/242511/societe/trop-noire-pour-etre-francaise>; Amandine Gay’s *Ouvrir la Voix* (2016) see Séverine Kodjo-Grandvaux, "Amandine Gay, Porte-voix Afro-féministe." *Le Monde*. December 08, 2016. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/12/07/amandine-gay-porte-voix-afro-feministe_5045147_3212.html and Margaux Lacroux, "Amandine Gay: Noire Is the New Black." *Libération*. October 08, 2017. http://next.liberation.fr/images/2017/10/08/amandine-gay-noire-is-the-new-black_1601701; and Mame-Fatou Niang, *Mariannes Noires* (2016), see Siegfried Forster, "Des «Mariannes Noires» Au Festival De Films De La Diaspora Africaine (Fifda)." *RFI Afrique*. September 11, 2017. <http://www.rfi.fr/culture/20170908-mariannes-noires-festival-films-diaspora-africaine-fifda-mame-fatou-niang>.

⁵⁴³ Marie Kirschen, "Le Discours De Cette Réalisatrice Aux César a ému Tout Le Monde." *BuzzFeed*. February 24, 2017. https://www.buzzfeed.com/mariekirschen/le-discours-de-cette-realisatrice-aux-cesar-a-emu-tout-le-mo?utm_term=.tpDJE6BZx#.wdv4NM3n7. Also, in her speech, she acknowledges, Euzhan Palcy. Palcy is a filmmaker from Martinique, who became the first director (male or female) to win a Cesar. Maïmouna Doucouré reminds audience members that “thirty-one years ago [Palcy] was here and received this award,” for Best Short Film. Public Reception to Diop and Doucouré winning a Cesar for Best Short Film minimized the historic nature of their win to focus on how they were “responding to issues for the visible minority. For more information about the public reception to the Cesar’s see Jacques Mandelbaum, "Césars: « Elle », « Juste La Fin Du Monde » Et « Divines » Primés." *Le Monde*. February 26, 2017. https://www.lemonde.fr/oscars-cesars-ceremonies/article/2017/02/25/aux-cesars-2017-pas-de-hold-up-mais-une-prime-pour-elle-juste-la-fin-du-monde-et-divines_5085388_5040963.html.

of love. Presented in a documentary format, their voices narrate personal adventures with love. Despite many of their initial comments being rooted in misogyny and displays of machismo, Diop successfully unearths layers of fragile masculinity and their desire to be loved unconditionally. The creation of the film began after observing several young men in La Courneuve and the Parisian suburb, Montreuil, After watching them loafing around her apartment, Diop confronted them. She let them see and hear her initial work and hoped that they would also participate in the project.

After organizing a workshop for them, she recounted, “[after] seeing what I had filmed, they pretended not to recognize it; but spoke to me differently when we saw each other face to face.”⁵⁴⁴ Collectively, the young men refused to recognize themselves. However, their isolated voices revealed desires for intimacy, feelings of loneliness and innocence. These sentiments are glaringly absent in mainstream media portrayals of Black male youth. In the film, Diop moves beyond a monolithic heterosexual view of love and relationships to examine homosexuality. This sexual identity remains at the fringe of societal acceptance. Through the voice of a young African gay man named Patrick, Diop grappled with the complexity of race, gender and sexuality as well as communal acceptance. Unable to come out to his parents, he and his lover spend weekends in a hotel room located in Aulnay-sous-Bois where they will not be recognized. Their need to hide also coincides with the other heterosexual young men interviewed that feel the need to hide the desire for love and tenderness. Although Diop initially intended to create a fictional

⁵⁴⁴ François Ekchajzer, ""Vers La Tendresse", Magnifique Film Sur L'amour Dans Les "quartiers"." *Télérama*. January 4, 2017. <http://www.telerama.fr/television/a-voir-sur-telerama-fr-vers-la-tendresse-magnifique-film-sur-l-amour-dans-les-quartiers,152277.php>. Describing the dissonance between using imagery of the boys in Montreuil and the voices of young men in La Courneuve, she states, “Every film has to invent its own form.” She continued, “Being made to dissociate my sounds of unusable images to put them on others, which do not correspond to them, allowed me to move away from the direct cinema as I practice it. But also, to give these voices a form of universality by taking them out of the bodies of those who state them.”

film about love in the suburbs, what she unearthed is much more powerful. The struggle and journey of ordinary young men finding love in France is encapsulated in the words of a young interviewee, “Love is not for Africans.”⁵⁴⁵ This painful reflection shines a light on the invisibility of accurate portrayals of Black men in the media in addition to society’s method of silencing displays of masculine emotion. Through the film, Diop successfully confronts stereotypes about young Black men in France and effectively destroys these caricatures by allowing Black men to speak for themselves. The documentary exposed French’s society rejection of young Black men especially with respect to sentiments of love. Often mainstream media projects images that dismiss Black men as objects of affection. However through Diop’s cinematography and their own words, young African men describe an innate desire to be loved and the quest to make that deep-seeded yearning a reality.

On the night Alice Diop received a César for her short film, she placed Afro-French male youths at the forefront of her success. After thanking the four protagonists, she said, “I would like to dedicate this César to other young boys whose voices bear little [significance], not enough and for some even any at all. I wanted to dedicate this César to Theo Luhaka, to Adama Traoré, to Bouna and Zyed, to Lamine Dieng, to Amine Bentounsi and to Wissam. I’m sorry if I butchered their names but it was important for me to name them tonight.”⁵⁴⁶ Dedicating her

⁵⁴⁵ Sylvie Braibant, "Quand Alice Diop Nous Entraîne "vers La Tendresse" Au Masculin." *TV5 MONDE*. February 26, 2017. <https://information.tv5monde.com/terriennes/quand-alice-diop-nous-entraîne-vers-la-tendresse-au-masculin-95766>. Faced with standard tropes of hyper-masculinity and bestial imagery of African men presented in pornography, Diop undercuts this dominant narrative with the voices of these young men that desire much more than what society presents them.

⁵⁴⁶ "Alice Diop Rend Hommage Aux Victimes Des Violences Policières Aux César." *YouTube*. February 25, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHVCmgZV2k0>. Throughout this dissertation and at previous points within this chapter, the identities and circumstances of their encounters with the police are discussed (Theo Luhaka, Adama Traoré, Bouna Traoré and Zyed Benna). For continuity purposes, Lamine Dieng died in police custody on June 17, 2007. After being arrested in the Parisian neighborhood of Belleville, he died in the police van while in transit to the precinct. An initial autopsy concluded that he died as a result of cardiac arrest related to a cocaine

César to the victims of police brutality, Diop sent a powerful message to the millions of people that tuned in to watch the awards show. Responding to the question posed by Rokhaya Diallo, “Do Black Lives Matter in France?” Diallo’s resounding answer was that they do.



Figure 18. Alice Diop pictured during the 2017 César Awards.

overdose. A second autopsy revealed that he died to asphyxiation (akin to the circumstances of Adama Traoré). For a more detailed review of the events surrounding his death see Gérard Davet, "Mort De Lamine Dieng: L'IGS écarte "la Responsabilité Des Fonctionnaires"." *Le Monde*. July 10, 2007. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2007/07/10/mort-de-lamine-dieng-l-igs-ecarte-la-responsabilite-des-fonctionnaires_933823_3224.html and "Mort De Lamine Dieng à Paris: La Justice Confirme Le Non-lieu." *Le Parisien*. June 29, 2017. <http://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75020/mort-de-lamine-dieng-a-paris-la-justice-confirme-le-non-lieu-29-06-2017-7098861.php>. Amine Bentounsi was shot in the back and killed by a police officer in 2012. The incident occurred in a northern Paris suburb. After his family filed a civil suit, the case went to trial. Initially, the officer was acquitted. A second trial led to the officer named Damien Saboundjian, being found guilty of deliberate assault resulting in death. He was given a five-year suspended sentence. This sentence will not require him to serve any time in jail nor has he stopped working as a police officer. For a more detailed review of the events surrounding his death see Lucie Soullier, "Affaire Bentounsi: Le Policier Condamné En Appel, La Légitime Défense Non Retenue." *Le Monde*. March 11, 2017. https://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2017/03/10/un-policier-condamne-en-appel-a-5-ans-de-prison-avec-sursis-pour-avoir-tue-un-fugitif-d-une-balle-dans-le-dos_5092860_1653578.html and Willy Le Devin, "Affaire Bentounsi: Le Policier Condamné En Appel, La Légitime Défense Non Retenue." *Libération*. March 09, 2017. http://www.liberation.fr/france/2017/03/09/affaire-bentounsi-le-policier-condamne-en-appel-la-legitime-defense-non-retenue_1554640. Wissam (El-Yamni) was arrested on New Year’s Eve in 2011. While in police custody, he enters a state of coma. Nine days later, it is announced he died. Conflicting autopsies reveal his death was a culmination of a “toxic cocktail” of cocaine and alcohol as well as the use of the "folding" technique, which consists of keeping the head resting on the knees, while being transported to the police station. A preliminary autopsy, revealed a "compression of the internal carotid arteries" during transport in police car. The two officers responsible were indicted in 2014 and later acquitted. For a more detailed review of the events surrounding his death see, "Mort De Wissam El-Yamni: Vers Un Non-lieu." *Le Figaro*. January 06, 2017. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2017/01/06/97001-20170106FILWWW00386-mort-de-wissam-el-yamni-vers-un-non-lieu.php> and "Mort De Wissam El-Yamni, Un Nouveau Rapport Contredit La Version Policière." *Libération*. December 26, 2016. http://www.liberation.fr/direct/element/mort-de-wissam-el-yamni-un-nouveau-rapport-contredit-la-version-policriere_54614/. These deaths of young Black and Arab men prompted Rokhaya Diallo to write the following article, "Do Black Lives Matter in France?" *Al Jazeera*. August 06, 2017. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/08/police-violence-france-justice-adama-170804091317713.html>.

This moment epitomizes both the struggles and triumphs of Afropean activists in France. The reality remains that the experience of African people living in Paris is not a narrative of progression or regression devoid of each other. Even as progress is made in the media world such as increasing the number of Black journalists at national television stations, Black women cinematographers creating content that displays the lived realities of African migrant communities to a Black woman wielding political power in the Élysées Palace, inequality continues. Moreover, this success comes at a tremendous cost. Harry Roselmack would not have reached nightly news without the deaths of Bouna Traoré and Zyed Benna, which forced President Chirac to demand more diversity in the media. Audrey Pulvar left the journalism world to pursue a more political career demanding representation for women on a larger stage.⁵⁴⁷ Christiane Taubira resigned her post as Minister of Defense in protest of President Hollande's proposal to remove French nationality from dual-citizens convicted of terrorism.⁵⁴⁸ Even as

⁵⁴⁷ In an op-ed, Pulvar demands, "When will a Black Woman be on the Cover of Elle [magazine], see Sonia Rolland, and Audrey Pulvar, "A Quand Une Femme Noire En Couverture De "Elle" ?" *Le Monde*. January 31, 2012. https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2012/01/31/a-quand-une-femme-noire-en-couverture-de-elle_1636689_3232.html.

⁵⁴⁸ Christiane Taubira resigned from office January 27, 2016. She protested President François Hollande's proposal to remove dual-citizenship from those convicted of terrorism. This legal measure was offered as a response to the terrorist attacks that took place on November 15, 2015. See, "French Justice Minister Christiane Taubira Resigns after Terror Law Row." *France 24*. January 27, 2016. <http://www.france24.com/en/20160127-french-justice-minister-christiane-taubira-resigns-hollande>. Presenting her arguments and disagreement with the President in the book entitled, *Murmures à la jeunesse*, Taubira took a public stand against the harness of the law and its racist overtone. See Thomas Wieder, "Le Réquisitoire De Christiane Taubira Contre La Déchéance De Nationalité." *Le Monde*. February 01, 2016. https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2016/01/31/le-requisitoire-de-christiane-taubira-contre-la-decheance-de-nationalite_4856833_823448.html. In statements discussing her resignation, she wrote, "I choose to be true to myself, to my convictions and values, to my battles and my relationship to others. I am true to us, to us as I understand it...We know how to fight it [terrorism], but must not concede it any victory, whether it is military, political or symbolic, because this country [France] has strength and imagination, its destiny relies on solid foundations." Quoting Aimé Césaire, she concluded, "We will not give the world to these dawn assassins." See Cécile Bourgneuf, "Aimé Césaire, La Référence De Christiane Taubira." *Libération*. January 27, 2016. http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/01/27/aime-cesaire-la-reference-de-christiane-taubira_1429338 and Tim Hume, "French Justice Minister Christiane Taubira Resigns." *CNN*. January 27, 2016. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/27/europe/france-justice-minister-christiane-taubira-resignation/index.html>. Following her resignation, she made only one statement via Twitter, "Sometimes to resist means staying, sometimes resisting means going." She also faced profound racism during her tenure as Minister of Defense. The

Alice Diop's invocation of the victims of police brutality was an especially poignant example of how media representations highlight the political and day-to-day struggles of Black French youth. Her cry that their names be remembered, and that justice has not been served for their senseless murders reverberates in activist writings, social media posts by young Black and Arab youth and community protests that occur all too frequently in the city of Paris and its outer suburbs. As they gain more momentum and international visibility, Black French people continue to use their platforms to secure the promises of "*Liberté, égalité, et fraternité*" guaranteed by French citizenship. Yet, inequality persists. In a 2015 interview, Cameroonian author Léonora Miano expressed her frustrations with the disparity between the national motto and the lived experiences of Black French people. Reflecting on the ten years since the deaths of Benna and Traoré in 2005, Miano addresses the gap between the French use of republican ideology and the persistent inequality that shapes Black experiences. She stated, "I am fed up with fraternity without equality. What's the point of fraternity if it doesn't work with equality...Fraternity doesn't work if we're not equal."⁵⁴⁹ The quest for equality in a society that fundamentally denies the existence of racial inequality are the root of Black French activist pursuits.

National Front posted her photograph alongside a picture of a chimpanzee on a Facebook page. One of her achievements as Minister of Defense was the passing of gay-marriage law in France. In protest of this law, crowds chanted "Taubira, t'es foutue, les Français sont dans la rue." ("Taubira, you're fucked, the French are in the street!"). At a different rally, a child symbolically handed Taubira a banana in reference to previous comments and iconography mocking her African heritage. See Alexander Stille, "The Justice Minister and the Banana: How Racist Is France?" *The New Yorker*. June 19, 2017 <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-justice-minister-and-the-banana-how-racist-is-france> and footnote 68 within this chapter.

⁵⁴⁹ Aude Konan, "Why Black People in France Are Still Invisible." *Media Diversified*. May 15, 2015. <https://mediadiversified.org/2015/05/12/why-black-people-in-france-are-still-invisible/comment-page-1/>

Black Lives Matter France

Rokhaya Diallo's evocation of the American movement, Black Lives Matter (BLM), calls attention to the nature of police violence that occurs in France and is not acknowledged. In the same way, that Black American activists used the BLM Movement to underscore that American media outlets also did not provide adequate coverage of police violence against Black people. Many of these incidents between police forces and Black males that ended in death were not covered by the press. Instead social media made these violent interactions a centerpiece of digital discussion and forced mainstream media to contend with this issue. The growth of the Black Lives Movement from 2012 to 2014 in response to incidents in Sanford and Ferguson propelled Black French activists and particularly Diallo to use #BlackLivesMatter as an example of a movement that was tremendously successful in focusing racially conscious attention on issues of police brutality in a society that traditionally ignored them. However, the key difference between this call to use Black American social justice efforts and Black French activism is the language and the framework to describe racial inequality. Diallo's article argues that in order for Black French activists to gain the same type of momentum of BLM, they need to change the narrative. This tactical move by Black French activists and Black Lives Mater France signals a transition from online and media activism back into the streets of Paris.

In the American context, the BLM movement emerged out the acquittal of George Zimmerman, who shot seventeen-year old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida on February 26, 2012.⁵⁵⁰ In the two weeks before national press began to air the story, social media implicitly

⁵⁵⁰ "Justifiable Use of Force." *State of Florida, Statutes & Constitution*: 2012. http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0776/0776.html; "Events Leading to the Shooting of Trayvon Martin." *The New York Times*. April 01, 2012.

addressed the reality that Black lives did not matter to a segment of American society.⁵⁵¹ The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter not only addressed the nature of violent interpersonal interactions between white and Black people in the United States, but also the media portrayal of Zimmerman's racial identity in juxtaposition to that of Trayvon Martin. BLM explicitly addressed the nature of violence committed in addition to the erasure of Martin's personal significance in subsequent investigations by police, court proceedings and media representations.

#BlackLivesMatter became more than a Twitter hashtag when three women activists called attention to the lack of female and non-heterosexual media representation in the wake of Trayvon's death.⁵⁵² Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi used their platform to raise awareness about the deaths of unarmed Black men and women across the nation. They organized peaceful protests, rallies and raised money to expose the alarming number of Black men, women and children killed by the police and civilian vigilantes.⁵⁵³ As the hashtag metamorphosed into a

<http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/02/us/the-events-leading-to-the-shooting-of-trayvon-martin.html>.

⁵⁵¹ Daniel Trotta, "Trayvon Martin: Before the World Heard the Cries." *Reuters*. April 03, 2012. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-florida-shooting-trayvon/trayvon-martin-before-the-world-heard-the-cries-idUSBRE8320UK20120403>.

⁵⁵² Cited from the Black Lives Matter Website, BLM members "see and understand significant gaps in movement spaces and leadership. Black liberation movements in this country have created room, space, and leadership mostly for Black heterosexual, cisgender men—leaving women, queer and transgender people, and others either out of the movement or in the background to move the work forward with little or no recognition. As a network, we have always recognized the need to center the leadership of women and queer and trans-people." For more on Black Lives Matter, see Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele, *When They Call You A Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019).

⁵⁵³ Jonathan Capehart, "From Trayvon Martin to 'Black Lives Matter'." *The Washington Post*. February 27, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2015/02/27/from-trayvon-martin-to-black-lives-matter/?utm_term=.acc731cee9c5; Darran Simon, "Five Years after Trayvon Martin's Death, a Movement Lives on." *CNN*. February 27, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/26/us/trayvon-martin-death-anniversary/index.html>.

movement, various cities and towns established Black Lives Matter local chapters, which led to the Black Lives Matter Global Network. This network of national and international chapters uses grassroots leadership and a flexible programmatic agenda to support organizers in transnational contexts.⁵⁵⁴

In 2016, Black Lives Matter launched its French chapter in response to the death of Adama Traoré. This history of violence by officers during a *contrôle d'identité* is rooted in racism. Police overwhelmingly target males of North and Sub-Saharan African descent. A national study found that Black and Arab male youths were “20 times more likely than others to be stopped.”⁵⁵⁵ Protected under French law, police can stop anyone deemed in “breach of public order.”⁵⁵⁶ A grossly abused tool, officers primarily stop “suspicious-looking” individuals. Identification checks are source of anxiety and danger within the Black community largely due to the fact that majority of youth interrogated by police are innocent of any and all crimes. What are theoretically supposed to be brief interactions for proof of identity, habitually result in verbal and physical assault. Black youths and adults describe police actions often going well-beyond

⁵⁵⁴ Barbara Ransby's article argues that Black Lives Matter is distinctive in its approach due to its shift from hierarchical leadership platforms that dominate national activist organizations to emphasis on grassroots organization. For more information, see Barbara Ransby, "Black Lives Matter Is Democracy in Action." *The New York Times*. October 21, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/21/opinion/sunday/black-lives-matter-leadership.html>. Ransby further details her argument in the book, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-first Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018).

⁵⁵⁵ "Discrimination, Contrôle Au Faciès... Quelles Sont Les Règles Du Contrôle D'identité?" *France 3*. October 22, 2018. <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/paris-ile-de-france/seine-saint-denis/discrimination-contrrole-au-facies-queelles-sont-regles-du-contrrole-identite-1562604.html>.

⁵⁵⁶ Plausible reasons for an identity check include: committed or attempted to commit an offense, preparing to commit a crime or offense, or can provide information about a crime or offense, is the subject of research ordered by a judicial authority, or has violated the obligations or prohibitions to which it is subject in the context of a judicial review, a house arrest with electronic surveillance, a sentence or a measure followed by the judge of the application penalties. See, "Contrôle D'identité: Quelles Sont Les Règles?" *Service-Public*. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1036>.

proof of identification ranging from orders to empty their pockets and bags to full body searches.⁵⁵⁷ As a result, in African migrant communities, it is customary to “disperse” in order to avoid these humiliating and violent interactions with the police.⁵⁵⁸

Later that year over 1,000 individuals marched in protest of Adama Traoré’s death after a routine identity check. The rallying cry, “no justice, no peace,” echoed throughout France as protesters took to the streets to demonstrate against the questionable circumstances under which Traoré died. On the evening of July 19, 2016, police confronted Adama and his brother, Bagui Traoré. Adama fled the scene in an attempt to avoid an identity check because he forgot his ID.⁵⁵⁹ In the process of his arrest, police officers pursued Adama. Three officers forced him to the ground over his cries that he could not breathe. After being handcuffed and transported to the precinct, he lost consciousness and later died in police custody.

After his family was made aware of the suspicious circumstances of his death, the Traoré family became targets for retribution after raising their concerns and organizing protests. Adama’s family and local supporters arrived at a local council meeting to request more information about his death. Police barred their entrance and used teargas to disperse the crowd.

⁵⁵⁷ “The Root of Humiliation” | Abusive Identity Checks in France.” *Human Rights Watch*. July 07, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/01/26/root-humiliation/abusive-identity-checks-france#>.

⁵⁵⁸ See “Quelles Sont Les Règles En Matière De Contrôle Et De Vérification D’identité?” *Service-public*. Direction de l’information Légale Et Administrative (Premier Ministre) verified on July 29, 2015, <http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/F1036.xhtml>; “Police et minorités visibles: les contrôles d’identité à Paris,” *Open Society Justice Initiative*, 2009, <http://www.cnrs.fr/inshs/recherche/docs-actualites/rapport-facies.pdf>

⁵⁵⁹ From this point, there are multiple and conflicting accounts of what occurred after this arrest. For a more detailed account of the events leading to Adama Traoré’s death, see, Boutry, Timothée. “Les Dernières Minutes D’Adama Traoré.” *Le Parisien*. August 02, 2016. <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/les-dernieres-minutes-d-adama-traore-02-08-2016-6010063.php>; Sarah Paillou, “En Images. Mort D’Adama Traoré: La Marche Bloquée Par Les CRS.” *Le Parisien*. July 30, 2016. <http://www.leparisien.fr/beauvais-sur-oise-95260/en-images-mort-d-adama-traore-la-marche-bloquee-par-les-crs-30-07-2016-6005987.php>.

On the day of the second council meeting, police arrested Adama's brothers Bagui and Youssouf before they left the house. Charged with verbal and physical abuse towards the police, the brothers were denied bail. Despite offering evidence of contradictory testimonies by local authorities, both brothers were sentenced to several months in jail and were fined 7,000 euros in damages. In addition to these punishments, the judge banned Bagui Traoré from living in Beaumont-sur-Oise for two years.⁵⁶⁰

The court cited a "need for serenity" as justification for the residency ban. Alluding to his role in public protests, the judge framed Traoré's presence in the city as threat to public order. Protected under national law, residence bans are typical in domestic violence and drug trafficking cases.⁵⁶¹ Its goal is to protect civilian victims from further harassment or contact with an assailant. This unusual application of the law to a resident protesting police violence and interactions with officers raises questions about judicial intentionality. Increasingly, political activists are subject to residence bans.⁵⁶² A tool of repression, the law bars individuals from communities where they carry political influence and from their family. Public officials claim

⁵⁶⁰ Julia Pascual, "Bagui Traoré Condamné à Huit Mois Ferme Pour Violences." *Le Monde*. December 15, 2016. http://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2016/12/15/un-des-freres-d-adama-traore-condamne-a-huit-mois-ferme-pour-violences_5049076_1653578.html.

⁵⁶¹ The text of the law reads, "The prohibition of residence prohibits the defendant from appearing in certain places determined by the jurisdiction. It also includes surveillance and assistance measures. The list of prohibited places and the measures of supervision and assistance may be modified by the judge of the enforcement of sentences, under the conditions set by the Code of Criminal Procedure. The prohibition of residence may not exceed ten years in the case of a conviction for a crime and five years in the case of conviction for an offense." See "Article 131-31, Created by Law 92-683 1992-07-22 JORF 23 July 1992 Corrigendum JORF 23 December 1992." *Légifrance*, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006070719&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006417303>.

⁵⁶² Florent, an anti-nuclear activist was also banned in 2016. See "Meuse: Un Militant Anti-nucléaire Brave Son Interdiction De Territoire." *Le Parisien*. March 27, 2017. <http://www.leparisien.fr/strasbourg-67000/meuse-un-militant-anti-nucleaire-brave-son-interdiction-de-territoire-27-03-2017-6800946.php>.

there are no exact statistics for the use of this sentence. However, Adama's sister Assa Traoré framed the punishment as a weapon of family destruction. One of her brothers died at the hands of police officers and her other two brothers were imprisoned and banned from the city where the family lived due to their participation in an assortment of protests. In an appeal, the judge sentenced Bagui Traoré to six months in prison but lifted the residency ban amidst massive public outcry.⁵⁶³

Adama Traoré's death and its impact on his family became a national issue. Emerging as the family's spokesperson, Assa Traoré maintained the ability to speak out and not face the same type of criminal sanctions as her brothers. Her capacity to enter into politically charged spaces and critically engage individuals that wield political, cultural and social power is a tactic replicated by Black women in a variety of other national contexts. She called upon local organizers, politicians and cultural icons to help deliver the message: "Justice and truth for Adama."⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶³ For more detail on the residence ban and press coverage of Bagui Traoré's arrest see Claire Hache, "Affaire Traoré: Comment Expliquer L'interdiction De Séjour à Beaumont-sur-Oise?" *L'Express*. December 15, 2016. https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/justice/affaire-traore-comment-expliquer-l-interdiction-de-sejour-a-beaumont-sur-oise_1860749.html; "Affaire Adama Traoré: Le Point Sur La Situation." *Clique.tv*. July 19, 2018. <http://www.clique.tv/affaire-adama-traore-depots-de-plainte-et-financement-de-frais-de-justice-pour-la-maire-de-beaumont-sur-oise/>; Julia Pascual, "Bagui Traoré Condamné à Huit Mois Ferme Pour Violences." *Le Monde*. December 15, 2016. https://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2016/12/15/un-des-freres-d-adama-traore-condamne-a-huit-mois-ferme-pour-violences_5049076_1653578.html; Romain Chiron, "Beaumont-sur-Oise: Les Frères D'Adama Traoré Condamnés, Le plus Jeune Remis En Liberté." *Le Parisien*. December 14, 2016. <http://www.leparisien.fr/beaumont-sur-oise-95260/beaumont-sur-oise-prison-ferme-requise-contre-les-freres-traore-14-12-2016-6456504.php>; Antoine Hasday, "La Mort D'Adama Traoré, Une Affaire D'État." *Slate*. July 26, 2017. <http://www.slate.fr/story/149028/mort-adama-traore>.

⁵⁶⁴ Louise Couvelaire, "Assa Traoré, La Sœur D'Adama, Porte-voix Des Quartiers Malgré Elle." *Le Monde*. December 14, 2016. http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/12/14/assa-traore-porte-voix-des-quartiers-malgre-elle_5048631_3224.html.



Figure 19. Assa Traoré pictured during a “Justice for Adama” march on July 22, 2017.

Her message galvanized a host Black French individuals who spoke out about the failures of the French state to reckon with its intensive inequalities. Answering Assa’s call, a collective of high-profile artists, athletes, actors, writers and academics drafted an open letter to local and national authorities outlining the inconsistencies of the official police report and violations in police conduct. The group wrote

“The Adama Traoré affair is everybody's business: to affirm and defend equal rights...we, artists, athletes, actors, [and] writers...relay...[that] the inhabitants of working-class neighborhoods are hit daily by economic and racial violence ... We refuse to accept that a growing part of the French population is abandoned by the Republic, and we demand the strictest impartiality of the state when forces of order go beyond the law...That is why we...support the demand of truth and justice for Adama...[and] all the victims of violence by forces of law and order. It is our common cause: together against police violence and their impunity.”⁵⁶⁵

Mobilizing their efforts to increase the visibility of the cause, several of the signatories volunteered to perform at La Cigale in Paris on February 2nd. Performing under the banner “*Vérité pour Adama*” (Truth for Adama), some of French rap’s biggest stars including Kery

⁵⁶⁵ Signatories included: the French rapper Fik’s Niavo, Casey, Alice Diop, Rokhaya Diallo, Omar Sy, Joan W. Scott (historian and Professor Emerita at Princeton University) and Sylvie Tissot (French sociologist, activist and documentary filmmaker). For the full manifesto see “Mort D’Adama Traoré: «Si on Se Tait, C’est Toute Notre Société Qui Se Salit».” *Libération*. February 14, 2017. http://www.liberation.fr/france/2017/02/14/mort-d-adama-traore-si-on-se-tait-c-est-toute-notre-societe-qui-se-salit_1548531.

James, Mac Tyer, Medina, Sofiane, Ärsenik, and Youssoupha organized a concert to raise funds for the family's legal fees. Speaking on behalf of the group, Youssoupha explained the purpose of the show, "It's a concert to show support for the family and (local) mobilization. What the family is asking for is simple: it is justice and truth. But the cause of Adama also bears a political and social aspect with the broader issue of police violence."⁵⁶⁶ This use of Hip Hop performers deploying their social and cultural capital towards political movements fits within a longer history of the musical genre. Black French rappers like Kery James, Casey, Bams and MC Solaar use their lyrics to challenge French society's silence on inequality. Themes of uplift, political criticism and community engagement pervade their musical content. Thus, this post-2005 manifestation of conscious Hip Hop to propel political change maintains historical roots. Over the past two decades, artists contended with these issues in their music. Unifying earlier generations of rappers with millennial artists, their efforts to raise awareness about a long history of police brutality demonstrates that Black musical artists are political figures and their work is representative of protest art. Even so, the same day that some of France's biggest Hip-Hop artists performed in protest of police violence, another incident between a Black youth and several French officers reignited the Parisian suburbs.

On February 2, 2017, a young Afro-French man was walking home in the neighborhood of Aulnay-sous-Bois when he was stopped by the police.⁵⁶⁷ Four officers responding to reports

⁵⁶⁶ The details of the sold-out concert were explained at the press conference hosted by several of the artists and Assa Traoré. See "Affaire Traoré: « C'est Un Concert De Soutien à La Famille Et De Mobilisation »." *Le Parisien*. January 30, 2017. <http://www.leparisien.fr/beauumont-sur-oise-95260/affaire-traore-c-est-un-concert-de-soutien-a-la-famille-et-de-mobilisation-30-01-2017-6640023.php>.

⁵⁶⁷ There are various and conflicting accounts on the actual events of the police encounter. For more narration on the incident occurring on February 2, 2017, see Joel Dreyfuss, "The tragedy of Theo L. reveals France's failures on race." *The Washington Post*. February 16, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/02/16/the-tragedy-of-theo-l-reveals-frances-failures-on-race/?utm_term=.ac42d1dde408; Claire Digiacomì, "Arrestation à Aulnay-sous-Bois: l'IGPN contredit la version de Théo et écarte la thèse du viol."

of drug-dealing began stopping young men in the area. Performing the routine *contrôle d'identité*, the officers profiled young Black men whom they thought fit the suspect's description. Among the youth stopped by the police was twenty-two year old Theo Luhaka.

The officers demanded identification from Luhaka and others walking with him. Forcing the boys to line up against a street wall, their faces were pressed against the building. When one of the young men questioned the actions of the officers. He was met with threat of physical assault and fines. Theo Luhaka raised his voice in defense. Yanked from the wall, police dragged him further from the street cameras. As they scuffled, one officer struck his skull and back. Another officer unleashed tear gas clouding Theo's vision. A third officer allegedly sodomized him using an expandable baton.⁵⁶⁸ Handcuffed and bleeding profusely, police officers brought him to the local precinct.

That night, word spread of Theo's brutal attack through Snapchat, Twitter and Facebook postings. As he was rushed to the hospital for treatment of anal canal wounds, an explosion of

Huffington Post. February 09, 2017. <http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2017/02/09/arrestation-a-aulnay-sous-bois-ligpn-contredit-la-version-de-theo-a-21710305/>; Jeanne Cavelier, "Affaire Théo: manifestations contre les violences policières." *Le Monde*. February 13, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2017/02/09/affaire-theo-manifestations-contre-les-violences-policieres_5076878_1653578.html; Peter Holley, "A black man accused French police of raping him. Police claim it was an accident." *The Washington Post*. February 11, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/02/11/a-black-man-accused-french-police-of-raping-him-police-claim-it-was-an-accident/?utm_term=.4ffaae1f6169; Blandine Le Cain, "Affaire Théo: la police des polices privilégie la thèse de l'accident plutôt que celle du viol." *Le Figaro*. February 10, 2017. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2017/02/09/01016-20170209ARTFIG00128-affaire-theo-la-police-des-polices-privilegie-la-these-de-l-accident-plutot-que-le-viol.php>.

⁵⁶⁸ Nelly Terrier and Éric Pelletier, "Aulnay-sous-Bois: le terrible témoignage de Théo." *Le Parisien*. February 07, 2017. <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/aulnay-sous-bois-le-terrible-temoignage-de-theo-07-02-2017-6661128.php>

fury detonated.⁵⁶⁹ In neighborhoods around Paris, youth hurled rocks and handmade petrol bombs at the police. Returning the volley of arms, police unleashed tear gas into the night air. While this violent exchange escalated, uprisings erupted in other Parisian *banlieues* including Bobigny, Argenteuil, Clichy-sous-Bois, Les Ulis and provincial cities in Nantes, Marseille and Rouen. For several days, protestors set fire to cars and destroyed local bus shelters. These events resulted in 245 arrests.⁵⁷⁰

On Monday, February 6th, Black Lives Matter France organized a march. Hundreds marched along the streets of Aulnay-sous-Bois wearing t-shirts and carrying banners that read “Justice for Theo.”⁵⁷¹ Soon the protest moved from the periphery to the metropole, when thousands gathered around *Place de la Republique* with raised signs declaring, “Racist Cop go to Jail.”⁵⁷² Three days later, riot police were deployed to sixteen high schools within Paris where students blocked the school entrances with fiery trashcans in protest.⁵⁷³ In an effort to quell the

⁵⁶⁹ "France: témoignage de Théo, victime dans l'affaire d'Aulnay-sous-Bois." *TV 5 Monde*. February 7, 2017. <http://information.tv5monde.com/info/france-temoignage-de-theo-victime-dans-l-affaire-d-aulnay-sous-bois-153083>.

⁵⁷⁰ For more information on the uprisings that occurred in the wake of the “Theo Incident,” see “Theo 'rape' case fuels clashes with police in Paris area.” *BBC News*. February 13, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38957953>; Joel Dreyfuss, “The tragedy of Theo L. reveals France's failures on race.” *The Washington Post*. February 16, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/02/16/the-tragedy-of-theo-l-reveals-frances-failures-on-race/?utm_term=.ac42d1dde408.

⁵⁷¹ “Justice for Theo: Protests erupt after police rape.” *France News*. February 06, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/justice-theo-protests-erupt-police-rape-170206161606495.html>.

⁵⁷² Karina Piser, “Are France's Protests Against Police Brutality the Start of a New Movement?” *World Politics Review*. February 23, 2017. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/21333/are-frances-protests-against-police-brutality-the-start-of-a-new-movement>.

⁵⁷³ Chloé Marriault, “Blocus lycéens: « Je préfère recevoir du gaz lacrymogène plutôt que de me taire ».” *Le Monde*. February 24, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/violences-policieres/article/2017/02/23/blocus-lyceens-je-prefere-recevoir-du-gaz-lacrymogene-plutot-que-de-me-taire_5084508_5078781.html.

rising tide of protests, uprisings and marches, French President François Hollande visited Theo at a local hospital.

Despite this display of empathy by the President, the protests persisted. Immigrant communities clamored for charges of rape and the firing of the accused police officers. When the police report was released to the public, communal indignation grew as the official statement asserted the sodomy charge was an “accident.” Their angry cries reverberated through time echoing similar demands for justice and the end of police brutality that reached a crisis point in 2005. These sentiments were embodied in a banner with the following phrase, “Theo and Adama remind us why Zyed & Bouna ran.”⁵⁷⁴ This phrase captures the visceral nature of why young Black men flee identity checks. The violent nature of these interactions with police are fraught with flagrant abuses of their power which engender sentiments of fear and danger. When Zyed and Bouna ran to avoid an identity check, they died. After being confronted by police forces, Adama died in their custody. Theo escaped with his life but bore the scars of a vicious attack.

These events occurred two and a half months before the 2017 French Presidential election. Presidential candidates used the “Theo Affair” to situate their political positions and the sentiments of many white French citizens on police engagement with Black communities. Each candidate weighed in on the events and the aftermath of the incident on various media platforms. François Fillon, the right-center candidate, insisted “that all the truth must come out” but condemned the violence. Emmanuel Macron, the independent party candidate, used the hashtag

⁵⁷⁴ For more information about the banner linking Theo Luhaka to the deaths of Bouna Traoré, Zyed Benna and Adama Traore, see, http://scd.france24.com/en/files/element_multimedia/image/manifestations_bobigny_002.jpg. For a detailed narration of the events leading up to the death of Adama Traore, see Bahar Makooi and Guillaume Guguen, “A young Frenchman's death raises suspicions of police brutality.” *France 24*. November 28, 2016. <http://www.france24.com/en/20161127-young-frenchman-death-raises-concerns-police-brutality>.

#JusticeforTheo to express his “full confidence in the justice system” and his belief that Theo and his family would get answers for the actions of the police officers.⁵⁷⁵ Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the Left-wing candidate, suggested that the violence was being encouraged, without specifying by whom.⁵⁷⁶ Marine Le Pen, the far-right candidate and daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, voiced support for the police forces and their “right to defend themselves.”⁵⁷⁷ These four responses ultimately reveal the range of French state attitudes and their method for addressing these issues. Categorizing their statements both in support and condemnation of the police as well as the restrained backing of Theo expose France’s persistent denial of racially charged incidents between police forces and Black French residents. This continued rebuff of Black communities and their publicized experiences with inequality map with over forty years of political marginalization. Drawing parallels to 2005, the press and academics condemned white French political foot-dragging.⁵⁷⁸ They argued that if politicians continued to render these

⁵⁷⁵ "Quand Macron rendait "hommage à Théo et à son entourage"." *Valeurs actuelles*. January 30, 2018. <https://www.valeursactuelles.com/politique/quand-macron-rendait-hommage-theo-et-son-entourage-92838>.

⁵⁷⁶ Joel Dreyfuss, "The tragedy of Theo L. reveals France's failures on race." *The Washington Post*. February 16, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/02/16/the-tragedy-of-theo-l-reveals-frances-failures-on-race/?utm_term=.ac42d1dde408

⁵⁷⁷ Ali Saad, "Justice for Theo: Who can protect us from the police?" *Al Jazeera*. February 16, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/02/justice-theo-protect-police-170216085902545.html>.

⁵⁷⁸ For popular press and academic responses to the “Theo Affair” see Delphine De Mallevoüe, "Émeutes: «Tous Les éléments Sont Là Pour Que Le Mouvement Se Diffuse»." *Le Figaro*. February 13, 2017. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2017/02/13/01016-20170213ARTFIG00307-sebastian-roche-tous-les-elements-sont-la-pour-que-le-mouvement-se-diffuse.php>; "Violences En Banlieue Parisienne: "on Peut Parler De 'révolte' Politique"." *Europe 1*. February 13, 2017. <https://www.europe1.fr/societe/emeutes-en-banlieue-parisienne-on-peut-parler-de-revolte-politique-2976809>; "Mort D'Adama Traoré: «Si on Se Tait, C'est Toute Notre Société Qui Se salit»." *Libération*. February 14, 2017. https://www.liberation.fr/france/2017/02/14/mort-d-adama-traore-si-on-se-tait-c-est-toute-notre-societe-qui-se-salit_1548531; Adrien Rouchaleou, "Affaire Théo. Les Violences Policières, un Quotidien Qui Ne Passe plus." *L'Humanité*. February 20, 2017. <https://www.humanite.fr/affaire-theo-les-violences-policieresun-quotidien-qui-ne-passe-plus-632385>; Léo Pajon, "Bougnoule, Bamboula... D'où Viennent Ces « Maudits Mots »?" *Jeune Afrique*. February 21, 2017. <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/404891/culture/bougnoule-bamboula-dou-viennent-maudits-mots/>.

incidents and the variety of tactics used (protesting, court cases, legislative lobbying, music, film, press) invisible, the nation reeled toward insurrection unparalleled since 2005. Despite initial overtures and the use of social media to discuss the “Theo Affair,” political commitment to rectifying these abuses of power quickly and quietly dissolved. After his election, President Emmanuel Macron refrained from using his political platform to address the growing tensions between police and non-white community members or discriminatory patterns in French society.

For a growing body of Black activists, academics and popular commentators, the worsening of Black living conditions in Paris and the surrounding suburbs is directly related to the increasing militarization of the police force. French researcher Hacène Belmessous rooted the initial escalation in police surveillance to the aftermath of 2005. He argued that “the mission of the police is no longer to ensure its role as a guardian of order in the public sphere...it has merged in[to] this new apparatus that is the counter-guerrilla urban.”⁵⁷⁹ Officers occupy Black communities as “enemy territory.” The police engagement with the community and recognition of their humanity no longer exists. Your “friendly crime fighting neighborhood officer,” has evolved into units of officers dressed in military gear accompanied by a hovering helicopter. Big Brother-like technology allows police to capture images from cameras placed throughout areas of the neighborhood. Thus, officers can monitor the activity of the neighborhood from the precinct. This uptick in surveillance and the militarization of local police allows Belmessous to conclude that a “‘police democracy’ has been established” especially in Black and immigrant

⁵⁷⁹ Hacène Belmessous, "Contre La «démocratie Policière», Le Droit Commun." *Libération*. February 14, 2017. http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2017/02/14/contre-la-democratie-policiere-le-droit-commun_1548451.

communities. The police's "repressive role is a function of state-led monitoring agendas instead of the overall good of the community."⁵⁸⁰

Contrary to Belmessous' claim that a drastic shift in police training and occupation of Black and immigrant neighborhoods began after 2005, these changes actually started before the uprisings.⁵⁸¹ In 2003, acting Minister of Interior Nicholas Sarkozy dismantled the "community policing" infrastructure. Still in its infancy, community policing had demonstrated some initial success.⁵⁸² However, Sarkozy bemoaned the officers' activities and engagement with residents. He remarked, "[the] police are not here to organize local rugby games, but to arrest delinquents."⁵⁸³ Former Minister of Interior Jean-Pierre Chevènement criticized Sarkozy's actions by applauding the officers' progress. Citing the achievements of community policing in Québec and the Netherlands, Chevènement implemented this form of policing in France from

⁵⁸⁰ Belmessous, "Contre La «démocratie Policière»" *Libération*.

⁵⁸¹ The terms *défavorisé* or '*zones urbaine sensibles*' connote economic, social or cultural disadvantage. This terminology is often deployed by government officials to describe neighborhood occupied primarily by North and Sub-Saharan Africans. See "En France, Des Banlieues Pauvres Toujours plus Pauvres." *RFI Afrique*. December 19, 2013. <http://www.rfi.fr/france/20131219-france-banlieues-pauvres-toujours-plus-pauvres>.

⁵⁸² Chronicled by Arthur A. Jones and Robin Wiseman, international human rights lawyers, consultants and authors on international policing, social policy and human rights, their work focuses on the transnational connections between France and Europe, in their article entitled, "Policing and Terrorism: The French (Dis)Connection and The Lessons for America," the authors conclude, "community Policing was both popular and effective. See, [http://www.lacp.org/Articles%20-%20Expert%20-%20Our%20Opinion/060321-TheFrench\(DIS\)connection-AJ.htm](http://www.lacp.org/Articles%20-%20Expert%20-%20Our%20Opinion/060321-TheFrench(DIS)connection-AJ.htm). During the years 2000 through 2002, it was responsible for reducing crime rates throughout the country by an average of 17% per year for crimes of violence, and several percentage points over that rate for property crimes. Studies showed that the number of separate "interventions" with youth, especially immigrant young people, correlated closely with the declining rates of criminal activities. During that same period, crime closure rates increased by over 50%." (on page 5 of the report) Supported by a report released by the French police, *La Préfecture de Police au service des Parisiens*, "*Les avancées de la police de proximité* », at www.prefecture-police-paris.interieur.gouv.fr.

⁵⁸³ Sarkozy's remarks were captured in Toulouse (the original pilot city for the community policing program led by Lionel Jospin. See Julia Pascual, "*Le Chantier à Risques De La Police Du Quotidien*." *Le Monde*. August 20, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2017/08/19/le-chantier-a-risques-de-la-police-du-quotidien_5174139_1653578.html.

1998-2001. In its initial stages of testing and customization for the French context, he recognized that the program needed more time that Sarkozy refused to permit. In an interview with *Politis* magazine, Chevènement lamented that community policing was “surreptitiously –and really quickly cancelled and emptied of its budget and of its basic substance by (new Minister) Nicholas Sarkozy.”⁵⁸⁴ Chevènement continued to criticize the defunding of community policing, paramilitary tactics and offered an alternative solution. He stated, “[it’s] time to give back to the Community Police their funding and...their effective tools, especially in the “no go” areas and in the giant ghettos surrounding our cities. But this presupposes a concept of democratic humanism on the part of the police themselves.”⁵⁸⁵ Unlike his predecessor, Sarkozy did not presume that police should be “democratically human.”

The militarization of the police propelled to new heights as the government expanded its powers in the wake of the November 2015 terrorist attacks. Sitting President François Hollande announced a state of war and increased police and army occupation of France to unseen levels.⁵⁸⁶ The argument of many Black people is that the police are instead being trained to fight not terrorists but others. This comes at a tremendous cost for Black and North African individuals. Organized over the slogan, “Urgent: Our Police Murder with Impunity,” the families of victims amassed a list of over 131 individuals murdered or mutilated during interactions with the

⁵⁸⁴ Interview of Jean-Pierre Chevènement in *Politis* Magazine, by Denis Sieffert, December Issue, 2005. <https://www.politis.fr/editions/regular/49/>

⁵⁸⁵ Interview of Jean-Pierre Chevènement in *Politis* Magazine

⁵⁸⁶ François Hollande, "Speech by the President of the Republic before a Joint Session of Parliament (Versailles, 16.11.15)." *France Diplomatie: Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*. November 13, 2015. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/defence-security/parisattacks-paris-terror-attacks-november-2015/article/speech-by-the-president-of-the-republic-before-a-joint-session-of-parliament>.

police.⁵⁸⁷ These families demand justice and the creation of legislation targeted toward holding police officers accountable for flagrant violence. Anti-racist organizations such as SOS Racism, CRAN and LICRA lend support to these individual and community efforts.⁵⁸⁸ To date, parliament has not successfully passed any legislation regarding police behavior and the list of non-white individuals impacted by police violence continues to grow.

The interconnected relationship between race, history and French national identity is an evolving category that has shifted and transformed over the past forty years. Nevertheless, Black demands for greater visibility and their wrestling with society's institutional inequality remain a permanent feature of their experiences in France. Three generations of Black migrants have added complexity and nuance to previously unilateral positions on these connections. African immigrants and citizens continue to challenge the current politicization of a homogenous Black caricature prevalent in French culture. This attempt to "essentialize" the African community is at the forefront of activist engagements in Parisian society. Their emphasis on media depictions and its impact on daily life links representation to a fundamental recognition of humanity. By shifting the focus to "everyday" interactions, activists explore how these violent behaviors are normalized and desensitized over time especially through negative portrayals of Black people. Colonial conceptions of race resulted in "othering" Black migrants living in the post-colonial metropole. Long after the violent catalyst of decolonization fizzled, police brutality and the frustration of Black communities embodied in the suburban uprisings from the 1980's to the new

⁵⁸⁷ "Qui Sera Le Prochain?" *Urgence-notre-police-assassine En Toute Impunité*. January 25, 2018. <http://www.urgence-notre-police-assassine.fr/123663553>.

⁵⁸⁸ See "SOS Racisme Lance Un Appel à Témoin! #Police." *SOS Racisme*. February 2, 2017. <https://sos-racisme.org/police/>; "Contrôles Au Faciès : Le Cran Met à Disposition Un "auto-récépissé" à Télécharger Pour "contrôler Les Contrôleurs"." *Franceinfo*. July 21, 2017. https://www.francetvinfo.fr/faits-divers/police/contrôles-au-facies-le-cran-met-a-disposition-un-auto-recepisse-a-telecharger-pour-contrôler-les-contrôleurs_2293903.html.

millennium persists. French insistence on “racelessness” in the face of overwhelming evidence that police view Black people as criminals in an attempt to drown the deafening cries of Black French people prove that race still matters.

Epilogue: *Africa, France and the Future: "Liberty, equality, Mbappé & the 2018 World Cup*

Kylian Mbappé was five months old when France won its first FIFA World Cup championship in 1998. Born to a Congolese father and Algerian mother, Mbappé was raised in the northern Parisian *banlieue* of Bondy.⁵⁸⁹ Twenty years later, he was selected for the 2018 French national team. As France prepared for the FIFA tournament, the national team moved swiftly through the preliminary games. Sports commentators and local news channels predicted that the 2018 French national team had the talent to win it all. At the center of these hopeful forecasts was Mbappé. Expectations that he would serve as the team's talisman dominated the soccer world. Many believed Mbappé was destined to make World Cup history and join the Brazilian soccer legend Pelé as the youngest player to score a goal in a World Cup Finals match.

Over the course of the 2018 FIFA tournament, the French national team controlled each game. On July 15, 2018, Paris buzzed with excitement, *Les Bleus* were headed to the World Cup final in a match against Croatia. Hundreds of thousands of fans swarmed the city. Parisians packed local bars. Beyoncé and Jay-Z postponed their sold-out *On the Run Tour II* concert to accommodate over 50,000 loyal soccer fans in attendance.⁵⁹⁰ AfroPunk created fan zone areas for music festival patrons to watch the match. At 5:00pm, the city of Paris and soccer fans

⁵⁸⁹ Rory Smith and Elian Peltier, "Kylian Mbappé and the Boys From the Banlieues," *The New York Times*, published on June 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/07/sports/soccer/france-world-cup-kylian-mbappe.html>.

⁵⁹⁰ Eric Frankenberg, "Beyoncé & JAY-Z's On the Run II Tour Finishes with More Than \$250 Million," *Billboard Magazine*, published on October 23, 2018, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/8481384/beyonce-jay-z-on-the-run-ii-tour-sales-by-the-numbers> and "Current Boxscore," *Billboard Magazine*, published on July 18, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180801170215/https://www.billboard.com/biz/current-boxscore>.

around the world waited with bated breath for the World Cup final kick-off. The summer air was electric with energy as many fans camped outside for over ten hours in preparation for the match.

After a tense first half, Paul Pogba, the son of Guinean immigrants, kicked a 59 foot goal to seal France's 3-1 lead over Croatia. Ecstatic fans chanted, "Whoever does not jump is not French!" Their movements caused "mini-earthquakes."⁵⁹¹ The ground literally shook with excitement. Shortly after, Kylian Mbappé scored a goal of his own and ensured France's victory over Croatia. Twenty years after France secured their World Cup win in 1998, the national team brought the title back to the hexagon. Led by scorers Kylian Mbappé, Paul Pogba and Antoine Griezmann, the decisive 4-2 win sent Parisians back out into the streets in celebration.



Figure 20. Paul Pogba (pictured left) and Kylian Mbappé (pictured right) after their 2018 World Cup Final win.

Almost one million people stormed the Champs-Élysées waving French flags and embracing each other. They chanted, "*Liberté, Égalité, Mbappé.*"⁵⁹² Over 100,000 people sang

⁵⁹¹ Pierre Bouvier, "Coupe Du Monde 2018: Oui, Un Match De Foot Peut Provoquer Un Séisme," *Le Monde*, published on June 18, 2018, https://www.lemonde.fr/mondial-2018/article/2018/06/18/coupe-du-monde-2018-oui-un-match-de-foot-peut-provoquer-un-seisme_5317183_5193650.html and "Coupe Du Monde 2018: La Terre a « tremblé » En France Dimanche," *Le Monde*, published on July 18, 2018, https://www.lemonde.fr/mondial-2018/article/2018/07/18/coupe-du-monde-2018-la-terre-a-tremble-en-france-dimanche_5333169_5193650.html.

⁵⁹² Laura Costelloe, "Liberté, Egalité, Mbappé: French Football and the Banlieues." *RTE*, published on July 14, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/eile/brainstorm/2018/0713/978399-liberte-egalite-mbappe-french-football-and-the-banlieues/>; Europe 1, "Jean-Philippe Visini: "Liberté, égalité Et Kylian Mbappé !" *YouTube*, published on October 16, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo9ZFUno-1E>; Faure, Louis, and Pascal Jalabert, "Liberté, égalité, Mbappé." *L'Alsace*, published on July 15, 2018, <https://www.lalsace.fr/actualite/2018/07/15/liberte-egalite-mbappe>.

the lyrics to “N**gaz in Paris” along with Jay-Z and Beyoncé as they wore Paris Saint-Germain jerseys (the top team in France’s domestic league). Thousands of cars beeped their horns and draped the tri-colored flags outside their windows. French president, Emmanuel Macron delivered an emotional speech. He exclaimed, “I told you and the coach to bring back the second star. You did it! You made us dream, you played wonderful football, you made 60 million French people and kids everywhere dream and you’ll see tomorrow when you go back home...a big thank you to you, to the whole team.”⁵⁹³ The next day, a parade for the national team filed the players along the Champs-Élysées again gathering hundreds of thousands of fans. After the parade, the players were officially received by the President. In photos, Macron dabbed with Paul Pogba and he led the team in several chants in front of the Élysée Palace.⁵⁹⁴

In the days following France’s second World Cup win, the world reacted to this achievement. Much of the attention focused on the team’s racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Of the 23 players who formed the French World Cup team, 14 are of (Black) African descent, 2 of North African descent and 5 were raised in the suburbs.⁵⁹⁵ Reflecting on

⁵⁹³ “'Merci, You Did It': Macron Revels in France's World Cup Triumph.” *The Local*, published on July 15, 2018, <https://www.thelocal.fr/20180715/merci-macron-revels-in-frances-world-cup-triumph>.

⁵⁹⁴ Angelique Chrisafis, “French Team Celebrate World Cup Win with Paris Victory Parade.” *The Guardian*, published on July 16, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/16/france-to-celebrate-world-cup-win-with-paris-victory-parade>; The President invited hundreds of young football players from the *banlieues* where several of the French team began playing football as children. In a speech, he told the players: “Never forget where you’re from. You’re from right here,” gesturing to the football trainers and volunteers from youth teams in the suburbs who had been invited; “If Anyone Can Get a President to Dab, It’s Paul Pogba! Here He Is with France’s President Emmanuel Macron.” *Kick Off Magazine*, published on July 17, 2018, https://twitter.com/KickOffMagazine/status/1019108432014663681?ref_src=twsrc^tfw|twcamp^tweetembed|twtterm^1019108432014663681&ref_url=http://www.zejournal.mobi/en/index.php/news/show_detail/11268/twiter.

⁵⁹⁵ Kylian Mbappe (Congolese and Algerian descent raised in the Parisian banlieue of Bondy); N’Golo Kanté (Malian descent raised in the Parisian suburbs of Rueil-Malmaison); Blaise Matuidi (Angolan and Congolese descent raised in Toulouse); Benjamin Mendy (Ivorian descent raised in the Parisian suburb of Longjumeau); Paul Pogba (Congolese and Guinean descent raised in the Parisian suburb of Lagny-sur-Marne); Presnel Kimpembe (Congolese and Haitian descent raised in Beaumont-sur-Oise); Steven Nzonzi (Congolese and French descent raised in the

France's dominating win over Croatia, South African comedian Trevor Noah joked, "Africa Won the World Cup!"⁵⁹⁶ His comment caused a tidal wave of reactions on both sides of the Atlantic as people of African descent, the French government and the players themselves weighed in. Debates erupted on social media, leading activists and scholars wrote opinion pieces navigating the complicated story of race, identity and nationality in contemporary France.

In the wake of these events, the French ambassador to the United States, Gérard Araud penned a letter to Trevor Noah reprimanding him for his statements. He wrote,

France does not refer to its citizens based on their race, religion or origin. To us, there is no hyphenated identity, roots are an individual reality. By calling them an African team, it seems you are denying their *Frenchness*. This even in jest, legitimizes the ideology which claims whiteness as the only definition of being French.⁵⁹⁷

The letter was reposted to Twitter and a second series of debates erupted. This public debacle escalated when Noah responded to Araud's letter in a subsequent show. Reading the letter to audience members, Trevor Noah clarified his previous comments by stating that he did not mean to deny any of the players their sense of "Frenchness." Instead in his impassioned monologue, he

Parisian suburb of La Garenne-Colombes); Steve Mandanda (Congolese descent born in Kinshasa, DRC raised in Évreux); Djibril Sidibé (Malian descent raised in Troyes); Samuel Umtiti (Camerroonian descent born in Yaoundé, Cameroon raised in Lyon); Corentin Tolisso (Togolese and French descent raised in Tarare); Ousmane Dembélé (Mauritanian, Senegalese descent and Malian descent raised in Vernon); Thomas Lemar (Guadeleopean descent, born in Baie Mahault, Guadeloupe and raised in Normandy); Raphaël Varane (Martiniquais descent raised in Lille).

⁵⁹⁶ Bethonie Butler, "Trevor Noah Joked Africa Won the World Cup. The French Ambassador Isn't Happy." *The Washington Post*, published on July 19, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/reliable-source/wp/2018/07/19/trevor-noah-joked-that-africa-won-the-world-cup-the-french-ambassador-isnt-happy/?utm_term=.8fd43c816f40; "France Triumphs at the World Cup & John Schnatter Quits Papa John's - The Daily Show with Trevor Noah (Video Clip)." *Comedy Central*, published on July 18, 2018, <http://www.cc.com/video-clips/35y00l/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah-france-triumphs-at-the-world-cup---john-schnatter-quits-papa-john-s>.

⁵⁹⁷ U.S., French Embassy, "On @TheDailyShow , @Trevornoah Called the @FrenchTeam 's World Cup Win an 'African Victory'. Read Ambassador @GerardAraud 's Response." *Twitter*, published on July 18, 2018, <https://twitter.com/franceintheus/status/1019691552384352257>. [Emphasis in original quote]

questioned both the parameters of French assimilation policies and their impact on an individual's sense of identity. Trevor asked why players cannot be both French and African. He noted that within the definition of nationalism offered by the ambassador, Araud underscores the notion that in order to be French, the players must "erase their African-ness." Noah countered this position with the statement, "I don't take their Frenchness away, but I also don't think you need to their African-ness away."⁵⁹⁸ His comments highlighted the constant resurfacing of duality among multi-ethnic French populations. Since the 1980s, these questions of identity pervade politics and public debate. In response to comments made by both Noah and Araud, Rokhaya Diallo penned an article entitled, "On football, identity and 'Frenchness'."

She wrote,

A common French identity cannot and should not be created by whitewashing history. These athletes should not be forced to forget their heritage - and their ancestors' stories - in order to legitimize their Frenchness... Despite what Araud says, France is not a nation that defends the French identity of its black athletes - and black citizens in general - at all times. The non-white citizens of France are only celebrated and embraced as fully French when they perform extraordinary feats - when they win the World Cup or save the life of a child by climbing the façade of a building with bare hands. This demonstrates the fragility of non-white Frenchness: raised to the clouds when they act exceptionally and reduced to their origins at the slightest mistake. French footballers of African descent are not any less French than their white counterparts, and they should not need to disown their African heritage to prove that.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁸ The Daily Show, "The French Ambassador to the U.S. @GerardAraud Criticized Trevor for Congratulating Africa on France's World Cup Victory. Trevor Responds #BetweenTheScenes." *Twitter*, published on July 19, 2018. https://twitter.com/TheDailyShow/status/1019751037853241344?ref_src=twsrc^tfw|twcamp^tweetembed|twtrm^1019751037853241344&ref_url=https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/7/19/17590302/trevor-noah-france-french-ambassador-araud-world-cup.

⁵⁹⁹ Rokhaya Diallo, "On Football, Identity and 'Frenchness'." *Al Jazeera*. August 02, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/football-identity-frenchness-180801080257299.html>. Diallo's reference to "save the life of a child by climbing the façade of a building with bare hands," is an allusion to an event earlier in the year when a Malian migrant rescued a children who was about to fall from a balcony. For his heroism, the French president granted him French citizenship. See Samantha Beech and Ben Westcott, "'Spiderman' Granted French Citizenship after Rescuing Child from Paris Balcony." *CNN*. May 28, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/28/asia/paris-baby-spiderman-rescue-intl/index.html>.

Her comments synthesized years of conversations and scholarship on the connections between racial and national identity. The linkage between “African-ness” and “Frenchness” remains at the core of French national controversy and decades of sociopolitical and cultural negotiation by Black populations living in France. Their lived experiences underscore the reality that dual identities exist and are already embraced by Black French people. Penned just before the final World Cup match, Professor Maboula Soumahoro applauded this duality. She wrote, “Blackness is French. Blackness is an experience... Go, *Les Noirs!* Because you can be Black and French.”⁶⁰⁰

Despite this open celebration of Blackness and Frenchness in 2018, issues of racial inequality remained particularly salient just before the World Cup. In 2017, Black Lives Matter France had publicized a series of violent attacks upon Black suburban youth. A national study conducted that year on police brutality detailed that “40 percent of young people between the ages of 18 to 24 reported having been stopped by police, 80 percent of men in that age range ‘perceived as black [or] Arab/from the Maghreb,’ reported being stopped by the police.”⁶⁰¹ The 2017 French Presidential election had exposed a spike in racist and anti-immigrant positions among voters. Far-right candidate Marine Le Pen campaigned on curtailing immigration, despite a significant dip in these migration processes and played on xenophobic and racial fears to garner

⁶⁰⁰ Maboula Soumahoro, “Go, Les Noirs! Because You Can Be Black and French.” *AFROPUNK*. July 15, 2018. <https://afropunk.com/2018/07/french-constitution-black-feminist/>.

⁶⁰¹ “Relations between Police and the Population Relations: The Defender of Rights Publishes a Survey on Identity Checks.” *Défenseur des Droits*. January 17, 2017. https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/170120-cp-ddd-enquete_relations_police_population-en_1.pdf.

34% of the national vote.⁶⁰² This election represented the FN's best national performance in its 45 year history.

The use of sports and soccer in particular to reunite a divided nation and address issues of discrimination, racism, and national identity summoned recollections of the short-lived experiment with diversity under the banner "*Black, Blanc, Beur*" in 1998. Twenty years later, many of the same issues plaguing Black French residents endure. National youth unemployment rates linger at 21% and in various *banlieue* areas this percentage spikes at 40%.⁶⁰³ Tensions between police forces and suburban youth continue. These tensions resurfaced in the immediate wake of the 2018 win. As Paris reveled in its second World Cup victory, violent exchanges between youth and police erupted which led to the suspension of public transit to several suburban neighborhoods.⁶⁰⁴ Furthermore, public campaigns around racial identity and Frenchness received increased exposure under the banner "*Je suis noire, pas Black.*" This movement codified in film, paraphernalia, marches and music empowers Afro-French populations to reclaim the word "*Noire*" to describe their racial identity instead of the English

⁶⁰² Alissa J. Rubin, "Macron Decisively Defeats Le Pen in French Presidential Race." *The New York Times*. May 07, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/07/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-france-election-marine-le-pen.html>.

⁶⁰³ Amrani, Iman. "France Squandered the Unity of Its Last World Cup Win. This Time Must Be Different | Iman Amrani." *The Guardian*. July 16, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/16/divided-france-world-cup-victory-macron-players>.

⁶⁰⁴ "Police and Football Fans Clash in Paris after France's World Cup Victory – Video." *The Guardian*. July 15, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/video/2018/jul/16/police-and-football-fans-in-paris-clash-after-frances-world-cup-victory-video>; "World Cup: Paris Celebrations Turn Violent on the Champs Elysees." *BBC News*. July 16, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-44844447/world-cup-paris-celebrations-turn-violent-on-the-champs-elysees>;

term “Black.”⁶⁰⁵ The French state’s resistance to contending with race, national identity and belonging in the new millennium underscores the reality that sports cannot and will never be able to upend the deep-seeded roots of racial inequality in French society.

Moreover, these moments of euphoria continue to paper over decades of systemic discrimination. Brewing underneath the national celebration of the 2018 World Cup victory remains a simmering discontent within marginalized communities. If the 1998 title taught Black communities anything it was that this era of good feelings “last[s] about as long as the fireworks.”⁶⁰⁶ The question that activists face once again is what will happen now that the fireworks have faded? The use of racelessness to cloak the problematic disparities within society is an enduring tactic. As long as these inequalities remain unresolved and once the “World Cup effect” wanes, history foretells that the system is bound to give way to something harsher and uglier in the years ahead.

⁶⁰⁵ Amadine Gay’s 2017 film “Ouvrir La Voix” (Speak Up) contends with these sentiments through a series of interviews with Black French women. See, “Ouvrir La Voix.” Ouvrir La Voix. Accessed February 10, 2019. <https://ouvrirlavoixlefilm.fr/>.

⁶⁰⁶ “French Spirit of 1998 Turns Sour.” *CNN*. April 26, 2002. <http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/worldcup/04/26/france.lepen/>.

Abbreviations

ADEF – Association for the Development of Foyers
ADICOM – Africa Digital Communication
AFIP – Association pour Favoriser l’Intégration Professionnelle
AFRAP – Association for the Parisian Region Foyers
AFTAM – Association for the Reception and Training of Migrant Workers
AN – Archives Nationales in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine
AOM-AEF- Archives d’Outre Mer in Aix-en-Provence
ASSOTRAF – Association for Assistance to African Workers
BLM – Black Lives Matter
CAPDV – Cercle d’Action pour la Promotion de la Diversité
CNNum – National Digital Council
CRAN – Representative Council of Black Associations
CSA – Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel
FANE – Fédération d'action nationaliste et européenne
FAS – Fonds d’Action sociale
FEANF – Fédération des Étudiants D’Afrique Noire en France
FIFA – Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FN – National Front
GDF – Gaz de France
HLM – Habitations à loyer modéré
LDH – League for Human Rights
LICRA – International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism
MOACOSI – Miss Oumy À Coeur Solidarité Internationale
MRAP – Movement Against Racism and for the Friendship of Peoples
OAPEC – Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
OAS – Organisation armée secrète

ONI – Office National D’Immigration

RPR – Rally for the Republic

SNCF – Société nationale des chemins de fer français

SONACONTRA – National Society for the Construction of Housing for Worker Housings

SONACOTRAL – National Society for the Construction of Housing for Algerian Worker Housing

SOUNDIATA – Association for Solidarity, Dignity and Unity in Welcoming African Workers

SSRC – Social Science Research Council

UDF – Union for the French Democracy

UGTSF – Union Générale des Travailleurs Sénégalais en France

ZFU – Zones franches urbaines

ZRU – Zones de redynamisation urbaine

ZUS –Zone urbaine sensible

Glossary

Afrique sur Seine – A 1955 film directed by Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and Mamadou Sarr. The film's title "Africa on the Seine" became synonymous with capturing experiences of Sub-Saharan populations in Paris.

Aide au retour – This term meaning "aide to return" was a government sponsored financial incentive for recent migrants to return to their home country in 1977. The government offered unemployed immigrants who worked in France for more than five years the equivalent of 1,524 euros to leave.

Arrondissements – This term refers to local districts within Paris.

Baccalauréat – This term is used to describe the equivalent of an American high school diploma.

Banlieue – This term is used to describe a suburban location within Paris.

Banlieusards – A slang French term for someone from the suburbs often connoting their lower socioeconomic status.

Bensikin – This term refers to a traditional Cameroonian song during which people swing from one foot to the other, then, in turn, enter the circle and improvise a stanza.

Beur – A French term with origins in the verlan inversion of the word "arabe" inverted first as "rebeu" and secondly as "beur" used to describe people of North African descent.

Bidonvilles – Roughly translated as shantytowns, the term describes the construction of this lodging along the periphery of many French cities during the mid-20th century.

Black – An English term used to describe African diasporic populations in France as well as distance French language speakers from a maternal language reference to race.

Black-Blanc-Beur – The phrase translated as "Black, White, Arab" was supposed to champion racial diversity in France during the 1998 World Cup tournament.

Bouillabaisse – A French word used to describe a traditional fish stew originating from Marseille. This stew is used as a model to describe the acculturation process and diversity model of France by Sociologist Loretta Bass.

Circulaires – A term used to describe French administrative and ministry action particularly in reference to immigration.

Cités de transit – A term used to describe the American equivalent to urban housing projects.

Cité Universitaire – A term used to describe the main Parisian housing center for foreign students in Paris. The campus is located in the 14th arrondissement.

Contrôle d'identité – A term used to describe an identity check, which is a police procedure protected under French law. The police can stop anyone and ask for their identification in order to prove their citizenship.

Décalage – A term popularized by the scholar Brent Hayes Edwards. He defines *décalage* as a “gap” in space and time and uses the word to represent the un-evenness of the African Diaspora as a model for individual experiences that resist and or escape linguistic translation

Dénatalité française – A term that connotes low population growth.

Entreprises CAC 40 – A term that describes the equivalent to the American Fortune 500 companies.

Eurafrica – A term used in postcolonial France to describe the continued connections between Europe and Africa.

Foyers – A term used to describe single-sex dormitories originally created for African migrant workers in early 1960's and 1970's.

Françafrique – A term coined by French economist François-Xavier Verschave to describe economic policies between France and African in the postcolonial period.

Goutte d'Or – A term used to describe a neighborhood in the 18th arrondissement of Paris, more recently referred to as “Little Africa.

Habitations à loyer modéré – A term used to describe government low cost housing.

Harkis – A term used to describe Algerian Muslims who supported France's presence in Algeria.

Jus soli – A term used within French nationality law, which is derived from the Latin phrase meaning “right of soil.”

Laïcité – A term used to endorse the practice of secularism. Within France, outward displays of religious patronage are discouraged within the public sphere.

La Marseillaise – A term used to describe the French national anthem.

Les Trente Glorieuses – A term used to describe thirty glorious years of economic growth from 1945 to 1975.

Liberté égalité et fraternité – A phrase used to outline the national motto “Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood.”

Nègre – A term used to describe people of African descent in France, meaning negro and also pejoratively as nigger.

Noire – A term used to describe people of African descent in France.

Pieds-noirs – A term used to describe Algerian people of Jewish descent.

Problème des banlieues – A term used to situate social, political and economic problems within suburban neighborhoods.

Sans-papiers – A term used to describe undocumented individuals.

Sappeur – A word used to describe a social and cultural phenomenon begun in Kinshasa and Brazzaville during the colonial period. Congolese men repurposed the hand-me-downs of colonial administrators to make them their own. Altering and layering French designer brands with bright colors, patterns and fabrics, the men celebrate political freedom and individuality through their clothing.

Seuil de Tolerance – A phrase used by French President François Mitterrand to describe a “threshold of tolerance” in regard to immigration.

Tirailleurs – A term that is an abbreviation of the words *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*, which refers to colonial troops recruited from West, Central and East Africa known collectively as Sub-Saharan or Black Africa.

Violence urbaine – A phrase used to describe urban violence particularly in suburban neighborhoods.

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Figure 1 – Page 3

Photo of Claude Mamba Sy in 1945. Image courtesy of Musée du Général Leclerc. Image believed to be in Public Domain.

Figure 2 – Page 52

Photo of Paulin Vieyra (pictured standing on the left) and Mamadou Sarr (pictured seated) in 1955 during the filming of *Afrique sur Seine*. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 3 – Page 56

Photo of the African “student” character descending from a street car. (Screen capture from the film) Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 4 –Page 57

Photo of an African street sweeper interrupted from his work by an elderly African man asking for a cigarette. (Screen Capture from the film) Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 5 – Page 59

Photo of the central African male student character seen laughing and talking with a young white French woman on a motorcycle. (Screen Capture from the film) Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 6 – Page 60

Photo of “worker” character represented by the street sweeper. (Screen Capture from the film) Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 7 – Page 67

An African immigrant street sweeper in 1963. (11 Juillet – Aout 7 1963, *Candide*) Image courtesy of the Archives Nationales. (Image captured by author)

Figure 8 – Page 88

A map of Paris and its outer suburbs. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 9 – Page 117

Photo of Madjiguène Cissé (pictured on the left) and Ababacar Diop (pictured holding the microphone) at a press conference on August 21, 1996. Image courtesy of the *Le Monde*. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 10 – Page 128

The 1998 French World Cup team pictured after their historic win. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 11 – Page 170

Kahi Lumumba photographed for an article in *Jeune Afrique*. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 12 – Page 176

Oumou Diasse (pictured in her official Conseillère municipale de Créteil photo). Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 13 – Page 182

Kady Mash pictured in his custom tie and suit jacket. (Image courtesy of Mash).

Figure 14 – Page 189

Patricia Lubelo pictured gathering materials for one of her events. (Image courtesy of Lubelo)

Figure 15 – Page 194

Christian Joao pictured before a business meeting. (Image courtesy of Joao)

Figure 16 – Page 225

Luc Saint-Éloy and Calixthe Beyala pictured during the 2000 *César* Awards. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 17 – Page 238

Omar Sy (pictured as Driss) during the police chase scene. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 18 – Page 252

Alice Diop pictured during the 2017 *César* Awards. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 19 – Page 261

Assa Traoré pictured during a “Justice for Adama” march on July 22, 2017. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

Figure 20 – Page 273

Paul Pogba (pictured left) and Kylian Mbappé (pictured right) after their World Cup Final win. Image believed to be in the Public Domain.

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VITA

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Education

Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York May 2019
Maxwell School of Citizenship, History, Ph.D.
Dissertation: “Beyond the Banlieue: French Postcolonial Migration & the Politics of a Sub-Saharan Identity”

M.Phil., History May 2016
M.A., History May 2016

Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York May 2013
Renée Crown University Honors Program, Magna Cum Laude
S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Television, Radio & Film, B.A.
School of Arts & Sciences, African American Studies, B.A.
Whitman School of Management, Strategic Management, Minor
Phi Beta Kappa

Awards, Prizes and Fellowships

Nelson Blake Research Prize 2017-2018
Roscoe Martin Research Grant 2017-2018
Ronald E. McNair Scholar Research Fellowship 2016-2017
French Ministry of Education Teaching Assistant Program 2016-2017
New York Council for Humanities Graduate Public Humanities Fellowship 2016-2017
The Moynihan Center for European Studies Graduate Research Grant 2016-2017

Articles

"Le Pouvoir Noir: The Politics of Identity, Pan-Africanism, and Social Justice"
(Under Review)

"Navigating the Quandary of African American Study Abroad Statistics: Representation, Gender and Geopolitics in Paris, France."
(Under Revision)

Barbara, S. Davis, *Black America Series: Syracuse African Americans. Syracuse Manuscript. Vol 1. N.2*
(Spring 2013)

Selected Presentations

“Doing Our Work’: Critical Community Engagement within Academic Institutions,” *National Association of African American Studies*, Dallas, Texas, February 2019.

"Le Pouvoir Noir: The Politics of Identity, Pan-Africanism, and Social Justice," *Africans, African Americans, Academia, and Activism Conference*, Bowie State University, April 2018.

“The Road to Independence: Somali Bantu Refugee Immigration to Syracuse,” *Humanities New York and Central New York Corridor*, Manhattan, New York, April 2017.

“The Politics of a Post-Colonial Diaspora: Contemporary African Immigration to the French Metropole.” *Syracuse University Future Professoriate Program Conference*, Syracuse, New York, April 2015.

“The Declension Narrative: Les banlieues défavorisée and the 2005 Parisian Riots.” *National Council for Black Studies Annual Conference*, University of Miami, March 2014.

Teaching Experience

Humanities New York, Reading & Discussion Program Facilitator July 2017-Present
The New York Council for the Humanities Reading & Discussion Program focuses on bringing together community members for a series of thematically-linked, text-based conversations. This position requires facilitating reading discussions for non-academic audiences.

- Partnering with Syracuse University's African American Studies Department and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, this program explores the work of Audre Lorde and James Baldwin bringing together the Syracuse University community and local Syracuse residents.
- Partnering with Refugee and Immigrant Self- Empowerment (RISE) Community Center in Syracuse, New York, this program entitled “Serving” brought together refugees, immigrants and various other community members to explore how to better support civic engagement within the city.

Syracuse University Study Abroad, Teaching Associate June 2015-August 2017
Paris Noir: Literature, Art and Contemporary Life in Diaspora is an internationally recognized five-week summer study abroad course hosted by Syracuse University.

- Mentoring and assessing the seminar coursework, research proposals and presentations of 13-17 undergraduate and graduate students.
- Managing the budget for all program/operational activities and reporting business transactions to the University Study Abroad Office, African American Studies Department and College of Arts & Science.

-Producing digital content for the University highlighting components of the program and its impact on the students including: a weekly blog and social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Syracuse University, History Department Graduate Instructor August 2014-Present
100 Level Courses: Early Modern European History, American History before 1865, American History after 1865, and Global History before 1750.

-Producing a range of teaching materials that meet the learning objectives of the above courses at the undergraduate level.

-Assessing the coursework of 40-60 students using a variety of methods and techniques to provide effective feedback that supports their learning. -Providing select lectures on course material.

-Engaging in professional development to update subject-related knowledge bases.

Executive Education Graduate Assistant December 2017-February 2018
Course: PAI 763: NGO Management in Developing Countries

- Assessing the coursework of 38 graduate students using a variety of methods and techniques to provide effective feedback that supports their learning. -Relevant Professional Coursework including: Log frames Analysis, Letter of Inquiries, Case Study memos and NGO Grant Project Proposals

Professional Experience

Program Coordinator, Transnational NGO Initiative, Maxwell School March 2017-Present
The Transnational NGO Initiative focuses on the governance, leadership, and effectiveness of transnationally operated NGOs and advances our understanding of TNGOs as significant players in global affairs through research, education, and practitioner engagement.

-Supervise three undergraduate research teams examining leadership development, diversity & inclusion strategies and transnational NGO case studies.

-Manage correspondence and curriculum development for the Senior Leadership Development Program in collaboration with Amnesty International, Greenpeace, CIVICUS, ActionAid and Oxfam International.

-Facilitate public talks from NGO leaders and researchers within the Moynihan Institute.

- Monitor research development for the annual TNGO Fellow and coordinate the fellow's public presentations.

WellsLink Intern, Syracuse University Office of Multicultural Affairs August 2011-May 2013
The WellsLink Leadership Program is an academic excellence and leadership program for first-year undergraduate students giving them the tools necessary to achieve their academic goals, develop professionalism, and expand their awareness of valuable resources and opportunities.

-Operated as an administrative assistant to the Office of Multicultural Affairs and WellsLink Leadership program.

-Greeted and assisted all office visitors via walk-ins, phone and email.

- Functioned as a Student Liaison for program participants.
- Organized communication between program staff and students.
- Assisted with event planning and execution of all WellsLink programming.
- Coordinated filing, data management, drafted and edited short memos.

Campus and Community Service

Play for Peace: Communications Contributor October 2016-Present

- Contributors conceptualize, write, edit and promote the content of the organization and its global activity.
- Contributors interview local trainers and NGO leaders stationed throughout the world to provide updates for the PlayforPeace blog and Annual Report.

RISE (Refugee Immigrant Self-Empowerment): Consultant May 2016-Present

- Customize curriculum for the Young Women's Empowerment Program -Mentor school-aged immigrant and refugee girls (ages 12-17) on a weekly basis.
- Develop proposals and grants with accompanying program budgets
- Organize annual youth conference panels on college preparedness and essential study skills

The Conflict Management Center: Associate September 2017-Present

- Co-lead training workshops on Conflict management and resolution as well as outreach events which are open to both the University and the greater Syracuse community.
- Engaging in professional development to update knowledge bases in Conflict Management training.

Skills

Languages: Professional Working Proficiency in French, Conversational Haitian Kreyol and Spanish

Technical: Microsoft Office, Research Databases, Social Media Platforms, Adobe Photoshop, Raiser's Edge, Final Cut Pro

Certifications

Institutional Review Board Certification in Human Subject Education Research

Future Professoriate Program Certificate in University Teaching