

# "LEUR HISTOIRE EST NOTRE HISTOIRE" Immigrant Culture in France between Visibility and Invisibility<sup>1</sup>

Brigitte Jelen  
University of California, Irvine

---

On the leaflets announcing the opening in 2007 of a new Center for Immigration History in Paris, one can read the following sentence: "Leur histoire est notre histoire: la place des immigrés dans la construction de la France" [Their history is our history: the place of immigrants in the construction of France].<sup>2</sup> What may appear, initially, as a trivial opposition between "their history" and "our history" reveals in fact a great deal about the underlying assumptions of the project. On the one hand, the inclusion of this new institution in the national cultural space, as a permanent "lieu de mémoire," represents the first official recognition of the contribution to the construction of the nation of populations usually excluded from mainstream French historiography.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, rather than commemorate the "History of the People of France," this new Parisian center will institutionalize a specific space dedicated to the history of populations who came to France since the nineteenth century, thus explicitly confirming the existence of a symbolic gap between a population of "immigrants" and the "native French" population.<sup>4</sup> This double movement of inclusion/exclusion is at the heart of the present research.

This article explores the tensions inherent in the implementation of specific spaces dedicated to the celebration of immigrant cultures in a nation based on an assimilationist model of citizenship.<sup>5</sup> More specifically, it analyzes the possibilities for the recognition and visibility of cultural differences in a society where such differences are expected to remain socially invisible and limited to the private sphere. To illustrate this discussion in the historical context of post-colonial France, I will turn to the three most significant cultural projects implemented by the French government to acknowledge and make immigrant cultures visible: in 1977, *Mosaïque*, in 1984, *Les Enfants de*

*l'immigration*, and finally, in 2004, the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. All three projects stemmed from a willingness to offer immigrants and their descendants more widespread access to their historical and cultural roots, while encouraging the rest of the French population to develop a more positive and less stereotypical representation of these communities. All three projects were designed and implemented by a diverse group of people composed of government representatives, immigration specialists, and public figures from the immigrant community, who strongly believed that their work would serve to promote immigrant cultures in France. Yet, in each case, the determined effort to "make immigrant cultures visible" implied, paradoxically, the impossibility of truly recognizing the cultural contribution of immigrant populations to the French nation.<sup>6</sup>

### Mosaïque

*Mosaïque*, a weekly television show aired on French national television (FR3)<sup>7</sup> every Sunday morning from 10:30 a.m. to noon, was part of a series of measures taken in 1976 by the new secretary of state in charge of immigration, Paul Dijoud.<sup>8</sup> His governmental mission included two main objectives: on the one hand, limit the influx of foreigners into France by creating a moratorium on the introduction of labor migrants, on the other hand, develop new social and cultural tools that would officially acknowledge the presence of immigrants in France as individual subjects rather than anonymous workers. In 1977, Dijoud detailed this new policy in his governmental report, *La nouvelle politique de l'immigration*.<sup>9</sup> In this text, the secretary of state explained that immigration could no longer be considered simply as an economic fact but had become a "fait de société." For this reason, the government had decided to center the new policy on the "immigrant as a person who wishes to maintain his/her particularities and aspirations."<sup>10</sup> The immigrant should be seen as an individual with the right to "protect his/her identity and to remain, despite geographic distances, close to his/her home country."<sup>11</sup> A new institution, the Office national de promotion culturelle des immigrés, was created in 1975.<sup>12</sup> Its main goals were, on the one hand, to help immigrants stay in touch with their own culture through programs such as specific television and radio shows, foreign-language classes in public schools, or foreign-language books in public libraries, and on the other hand, to develop intercultural events where the native French population would be exposed to immigrant national cultures. This effort relied in great part on the participation of foreign governments in the organization of the social and cultural lives of their citizens in France.<sup>13</sup> Each country was expected to promote cultural events (such as concerts or theater shows by foreign artists), provide foreign-language books, films, or music, as well as send language teachers to teach immigrant descendants their parents' language in French public schools.<sup>14</sup>



Beyond its apparent generosity, this new recognition of cultural differences relied on an essentialist understanding of immigrant communities as homogeneous groups, ignoring potential sub-national divisions. Two examples illustrate the problems posed by this situation. Although explicit statistical data are not available, studies focusing on Algerian immigrants in the 1970s (and earlier) highlight the substantial presence of individuals from the rural region of "Kabylie" (north-eastern Algeria) whose cultural foundation was not Arabic but Berber.<sup>15</sup> When the Algerian government launched its widespread "Arabization" campaign in the late 1960s—early 1970s, Berber culture was condemned to silence—except in France.<sup>16</sup> The French government's choice to delegate the organization of Algerian cultural life in France to the Algerian government (and its affiliates, such as the Amicale des Algériens en Europe) necessarily created tensions and divisions within the Algerian immigrant community.<sup>17</sup> A second example can be found in the Moroccan community: during the 1960s, a number of Moroccan students and political activists fled the repressive regime of late King Hassan II and took refuge in France (particularly in Paris), where they organized opposition networks. Associated with the French Left, these young people strongly rejected the dominance of the monarchy and attempted (with very limited results) to spread Marxist and anti-monarchic ideas among the Moroccan immigrant population in France.<sup>18</sup> To these activists and their homologues in the Portuguese or Tunisian communities, the cultural representations produced by the countries of origin were closer to government propaganda than to popular culture.<sup>19</sup> According to them, folklore and idealized descriptions of the home country induced nostalgia and purposefully encouraged immigrants to leave France. The French government's effort to develop cultural activities in association with the governments in the various countries of origin ultimately submitted immigrants to a dual system of control designed to persuade them to *return home*.<sup>20</sup> By reinforcing the dependency of immigrant communities vis-à-vis their countries of origin, the French government also hoped to reduce the influence of leftist activists and trade-unionists on immigrant workers.<sup>21</sup>

Financed by governmental subsidies under the supervision of the National Office for the Cultural Promotion of Immigrants, *Mosaïque* aired every Sunday morning for ten years from January 2, 1977 until June 28, 1987.<sup>22</sup> Although it remained under strict government control (each program was pre-recorded and pre-viewed by the secretary of state's office), *Mosaïque* was produced by a relatively autonomous team composed mainly of immigrants of various origins under the direction of Algerian writer and film director Tewfik Farès.<sup>23</sup> Aimed primarily at an audience composed of immigrant families from all origins, it managed nevertheless to attract a significant number of native French viewers. This was the first program on French television dedicated explicitly to the presentation and widespread circulation of immigrant culture.<sup>24</sup> According to a study conducted for the television channel in June 1977, the show attracted several million viewers each week and nearly 60 percent of all immigrants.<sup>25</sup>

Most people watched it either at home with their family or with friends. *Mosaïque* became particularly popular with single men living in collective housing [*foyers*] for whom this represented one of the few opportunities to hear information in their native language and watch cultural performances from their ethnic community. A typical program might include news from immigrant home countries, a documentary on a specific aspect of immigrant life in France, a section announcing future cultural events and films, an everyday life section discussing problems faced by immigrants (in particular, problems with the French administration), and finally a long, forty-minute segment dedicated to cultural programs.<sup>26</sup> The variety show portion of *Mosaïque* presented performances by immigrant artists living in France, but also by foreign artists from the various countries of origin. Many amateur theater companies were also offered the opportunity to present their work, and *Mosaïque* quickly became the major promoter of immigrant cultural creation in France. According to the program's director, the show became a magnet for performers who were eager to finally gain some visibility on the French cultural scene; hundreds of immigrant artists performed on *Mosaïque* during the decade the program was aired.<sup>27</sup>

The show was designed to cater to all major immigrant groups residing in France at the time, without privileging any specific community. Each individual program presented a combination of information and artistic productions from different countries according to the quality of the performances available that week. The goal was neither to turn *Mosaïque* into "the United Nations" nor to have individual shows dedicated exclusively to one specific community.<sup>28</sup> The main purpose, as the show's name suggested, was to highlight the diverse composition of the population living in France at the time, in the same way a mosaic represents a complex image through the combination of different colored tiles. This strategy also served an underlying political purpose: by combining ethnicities on the same television show, *Mosaïque's* production team encouraged viewers to watch the entire program and learn about cultures other than their own. In this way, the show participated in the government's effort to stimulate the exchange between individual cultures rather than promote the constitution of separate but distinct cultural enclaves (what is seen in France as the definition of Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism).<sup>29</sup> *Mosaïque* did have its critics: within the French population some resented the attention paid to immigrant culture on national television. Farès recalls receiving hate mail from viewers with comments such as "Instead of singing, they should return home."<sup>30</sup> Some immigrant communities found the show excessively focused on North African artists to the detriment of performers from other regions. Finally, the most virulent critiques came from the immigrant activist community and magazines such as *Sans Frontière* or *IM'Média Magazine*. *Mosaïque* was denounced for its lack of independence from the French government and its indifference to immigrant political activities.<sup>31</sup> For Farès, these critics did not understand the purpose of the show itself, as a representation of popular culture and not of partisan political opinions.<sup>32</sup>



In 1981, the newly-elected Socialist government asked experts to evaluate the need for specific shows representing immigrant culture in the French media, and in particular the role of the television program *Mosaïque*. Their 1982 report concluded that the show had become less popular among immigrants, and most importantly, that immigrant cultures should no longer be addressed by specific programs.<sup>33</sup> In accordance with the new government's approach to ethnic communities in France, this report considered that any specific television or radio show produced for an immigrant public condemned this public to a cultural ghetto. On the other hand, it suggested that significant efforts should be made to include elements of foreign cultures in the mainstream media, while promoting positive representations of immigrants who had assimilated into French society. Programs that catered specifically to immigrants as a separate group were seen as contradictory to this effort.<sup>34</sup> The report recommended the cancellation of *Mosaïque* and encouraged the development of culturally diverse shows on mainstream French television. Yet, as one journalist noted, all governmental attempts to require television channels to include more immigrant culture in their schedules remained unsuccessful.<sup>35</sup> *Mosaïque* survived a few more years but in October 1987, the plug was pulled: the show lost its funding and the production team was forced out of its offices overnight.<sup>36</sup> All personal archives, including letters from viewers, program descriptions, and documentation on artists, were destroyed. From one day to the next, ten years of immigrant cultural visibility were reduced to a few boxes of films forgotten in a storage room. Because the show had not been produced and was not owned by the public television channel FR3, but by an independent entity, it was not archived at the National audiovisual archives (INA). The systematic conservation of audiovisual archives only began in 1995 in France.<sup>37</sup> When the show was cancelled, the tapes were salvaged by the FAS, which donated them to an independent organization specialized in foreign films, La Médiathèque des Trois Mondes. These tapes are expected to be digitalized and made available to the public in the next few years through the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.

A reflection of the significance of a show like *Mosaïque* leads in two directions. On the one hand, this television program was the first major institutional effort to recognize immigrant cultures as an element of French society. For the first time, immigrants acquired a visibility in the French public sphere, not simply as laborers, but as bearers of rich cultural traditions that could be shared with French television viewers. On the other hand, as critics pointed out, representations of immigrant cultures in *Mosaïque* were not only somewhat stereotypical or simplistic, but they were also strictly controlled by both the French government and its homologues in the various countries of origin. In effect, this restriction on what should be made visible on French national television necessarily silenced many aspects of immigrant life in France but also of social and cultural life in the home countries. Yet, the most obvious expression of the dialectic of visibility/invisibility lies in the sudden termina-

tion of the show and the subsequent absence of similar immigrant variety shows on French television. The cancellation of *Mosaïque* also implied the absence of foreign language programs from French television. According to Tewfik Farès, the widespread turn to satellite television by immigrant families during the late 1980s and 1990s can be related to the disappearance of *Mosaïque* and foreign languages from French television. He calls this sudden turn away from French programs toward programs abroad in one's native language "La revanche des pères" [The Fathers' revenge]. In effect, the cancellation of a show such as *Mosaïque* is symptomatic of the generation gap that developed during the 1980s between immigrants and their descendants. The new policy of "integration," adopted during the Mitterrand years, was designed to address the new demographic reality posed by the hundreds of thousands of immigrant descendants who needed to be included into French society. The parents of these young people were no longer a governmental preoccupation and therefore disappeared from mainstream media. Françoise Gaspard's 1984 essay, "La fin des immigrés," perfectly captured the spirit of the time: immigrants were no longer an issue; the focus needed to be placed on their children and their integration into French society.<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to note that Françoise Gaspard was also the main author of the 1982 report suggesting the cancellation of *Mosaïque*. All subsequent television shows produced during the 1980s or 1990s presented immigrants and their descendants actively engaged in the process of integration. Their ability to participate in French activities and reproduce French social norms (in gender roles or parent/child relationships) were highlighted, while the "foreignness" of their culture was made invisible to the public.<sup>39</sup> Politically, the exclusive focus on integration was presented by the French Left as an answer to the rapid rise of the extreme Right during the 1980s.<sup>40</sup> According to Tewfik Farès, it became increasingly difficult to show foreign cultures on French television.<sup>41</sup> During this entire period, cultural projects related to immigration remained caught in the ambivalence between showing the integration of immigrants and their descendants, and promoting cultural diversity.

### Les Enfants de l'immigration

From 18 January to 23 April 1984, the Centre Pompidou in Paris hosted a large event entitled *Les Enfants de l'immigration*.<sup>42</sup> Organized as an artistic experience (rather than a traditional museum exhibit), it combined visual arts with live theater, dance, and music performances. Most of the exhibit (one entire floor of the Pompidou Center) was dedicated to artistic displays produced by immigrant descendants, such as photographs, paintings, videos, and sculptures, representing the daily life and social environment of young people of foreign origin growing up in France.<sup>43</sup> The curators intended to offer an overview of what it was like to be a "child of immigration" in 1984. These presentations



were organized around a circular stage where several performances took place each day. During the three-month period, twenty-nine theater companies, twenty-two music ensembles, and ten dance companies occupied the stage.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the exhibit hosted daily debates with the public on various themes related to immigration, and immigrant radio stations participated in live broadcasts from the museum. *Children of Immigration* attracted nearly 400,000 visitors during the time of the exhibit. The free entrance ticket, the variety of performances, and the combined participation of semi-professional and amateur artists encouraged many people who did not ordinarily visit museums (such as members of the immigrant community) to enter the Pompidou Center. For three months, the museum became a space truly dedicated to popular culture where a great diversity of people met to talk about immigration or discuss the performances. A report on the profile of potential visitors concluded that it was the first exhibit at the Pompidou Center where a large proportion of the public had returned for repeat visits.<sup>45</sup> As the largest cultural project ever organized in Europe on the topic of immigration, it also attracted the attention of the European Council in Strasbourg, which sent experts to Paris to meet both the curators and exhibit participants.<sup>46</sup>

*Children of Immigration* had been imagined by the director of the Center for Industrial Creation (a division of the Pompidou Center), Paul Blanquart, as a way of showcasing the creative potential of the children of immigrant workers at a time when tensions between young people of North African origin and the French police were particularly high, and the extreme Right party was gaining political momentum. Many immigrant descendants lived in derelict housing projects on the outskirts of France's largest cities, experienced difficulties in school, high unemployment rates, violence, and racism. Between the months of May 1982 and October 1983, a total of fifty-four people, mostly teenagers, were either killed or seriously injured in racist incidents.<sup>47</sup> In response to this societal violence, these young people were expressing their revolt through innovative artistic creations, in music, amateur theater, dance, literature, and film. It was this dynamic urban expression that Blanquart wanted to capture. One question was at the origin of this unusual project: "how are these young people going to change French society?" In other words "[...] which values, which cultural transformations, which social practices, which relationships with space, do the Children of Immigration represent?"<sup>48</sup> From its inception, the main purpose of the exhibit was not simply to present artistic creations produced by the descendants of immigrants, but rather to capture and display the development of a new socio-cultural context in 1980s France. On December 3, 1983, just a few weeks before the inauguration of the exhibit, France's first March against Racism had arrived in Paris, welcomed by more than a hundred thousand people.<sup>49</sup> Led primarily by Franco-Algerian young men and women living in housing projects in Lyon, Marseille and Paris, the March was seen as a major step forward in the reconciliation between these youth and the greater French population. The Pompidou Center exhibit rode the wave of this

exceptional moment and attracted a great number of visitors who had been sensitive to the message of the March. However, one could not ignore the political ambiguity surrounding the project: although *Children of Immigration* was officially sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture, which provided 50 percent of the budget, the political context in 1984, marked by the rapid rise of the extreme Right in local elections, kept the exhibit from being truly embraced as a national cultural event. While the very popular Minister of Culture Jack Lang, who had participated in the March, appeared at the opening of *Children of Immigration*, he refrained from pronouncing a speech that would have officially sanctioned the role of immigrants, their descendants, and their culture in French society.<sup>50</sup>

Another significant ambiguity resided in the definition of the population included under the title *Children of Immigration*. While a majority of immigrant descendants had obtained French nationality because of their birth in France, many were still foreigners. They had either arrived in France as children and were therefore immigrants themselves, or had chosen not to adopt French nationality.<sup>51</sup> In 1980, there were 1.5 million foreigners who were less than twenty-seven years old in France. Out of this number, 28.5 percent were Portuguese, 27.4 percent were Algerian, 10.5 percent were Moroccan and the rest were divided among a dozen other nationalities.<sup>52</sup> Statistically, there is no precise count of how many individuals were French nationals of immigrant parents, most probably several million if all origins are included. Despite these statistics, and the large number of young people of Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish origin living in France at the time, the exhibit focused mainly on artists of Algerian descent.<sup>53</sup> Overall, it was an event representing "Beur" (Arab) culture, just as the March Against Racism had been nicknamed the *marche des Beurs* by the media.<sup>54</sup> This situation can be seen as an expression of the specific post-colonial relationship between French society and individuals whose parents had experienced the Franco-Algerian independence war. Emotionally torn between a society that violently rejected them, through urban segregation, racism, or simply indifference, and parents who often refused to talk about their traumatic past, young people of Algerian descent constructed an original multifaceted cultural environment.<sup>55</sup> As the curators of the exhibit traveled through France during the fall of 1983 to seek out young artists who would participate in the January event, they noticed that young Franco-Algerians were much more active culturally than any other group at the time, and much more eager to present this original culture to the rest of French society. According to the curators, it was difficult both to find Portuguese, West-African, or Asian young performers, and to persuade them to participate. In the end, as one organizer put it, "the priority was given to artists who had something to say about their relationship with French society."<sup>56</sup> For this reason, *Children of Immigration* focused on a very specific segment of urban culture, produced mainly by young people who lived in ghetto-like neighborhoods around Paris, Lyon, or Marseille. The exhibit certainly did not represent



immigrant descendants in general, and in particular not populations who resided in smaller provincial towns, villages, or rural areas.<sup>57</sup>

Many observers at the time saw the focus on immigrants of North African origin as one of the major weaknesses of the event.<sup>58</sup> Although a number of artists from other backgrounds also participated, their performances were rarely cited by the national media. Reinforcing the symbolic link between the March Against Racism and the exhibit, the press mainly described *Children of Immigration* as a event dedicated to "Beur" culture. The most distasteful example of this tendency can be found in a February 8 *Libération* article, entitled "Les jeunes immigrés exposent à Beaubourg" [Young immigrants exhibit their work at Beaubourg].<sup>59</sup> The distinction between artists by national (or ethnic) background also penetrated the internal organization of the event. According to participants, the curators did not create enough opportunities for different groups to meet around common themes, and the exhibit did not allow the development of lasting ties between artists of different origins: "The Blacks didn't meet the Beurs, who didn't meet the Viets, who didn't meet the Thos."<sup>60</sup> Another limitation came from the exhibit's eclectic combination of socio-cultural displays of everyday life, housing projects, or discrimination, with authentic works of art. Several semi-professional artists who had allowed their work to be shown in the exhibit and had been eager to participate at first, regretted having been regarded simply as "immigrant children" and not as true artists.<sup>61</sup> The case of Algerian sculptor Mohand Amara can be seen as a perfect example of some of the ambiguities at the heart of this event. The first work of art pictured in the show's catalog was Amara's imposing sculpture *Le Cavalier* [The Rider], representing a large menacing man sitting on a fallen and dying horse. The caption next to the image read:

Sculpture created by Mohand Amara, born in 1952 in Bougie (Algeria). An Algerian national who came to France in 1953, he is a member of ANGI (Association for a New Immigrant Generation) in Aubervilliers.<sup>62</sup>

While this short text informed the reader about Amara's nationality and affiliation with an immigrant youth organization, it said nothing about his work as a sculptor, or about his training at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, or even about the sculpture itself. In this text (and in the exhibit more generally) Amara did not exist as an artist but as an Algerian who came to France as a child, as a "child of immigration." Similar examples abound in the catalog and the press articles covering the exhibit. In the rare cases when an artist's name was mentioned, it was to discuss his or her biography and never the quality of the work itself.<sup>63</sup>

Despite their initial intention to show "how these young people were going to change French society," the organizers of *Children of Immigration* were not able to overcome the objectification of the exhibit's participants as members of a vaguely defined population related to "immigration" (not all

immigrants and not only immigrants) and thus external to mainstream French society. As Franz Fanon once explained about the situation of the Black man in France, the "children of immigration" became "responsible for their bodies, for their race, for their ancestors."<sup>64</sup> The foreignness of their parents both included them in the exhibit while marking them as radically different from the rest of the French population. Developed out of a desire to show a positive image of young people of immigrant descent and present a response to the stereotypes circulating in the media at the time, *Children of Immigration* never really managed to offer participants genuine visibility. Rather, it presented the different strategies (including cultural) used by young people of foreign origin to integrate into French society. In their effort to put the "children of immigration" on display, the organizers of the event unwittingly expanded the gap between them and the native French population. While the descendants of immigrants, in particular young people of Algerian origin, did acquire a certain visibility through their mere participation in an exhibit organized in a prestigious national art museum, one must question the limits of this visibility. The over-determination of their identity, first as "different" (foreign or born of foreign parents), then as members of a homogeneously defined group (children of immigration) where individual talents were not recognized, obscured the subjectivity of the participants and their specific contribution to French society. True visibility, however, requires self-determination.<sup>65</sup> *Children of Immigration* did not (could not?) offer this opportunity, and despite its social impact on the "Beur" community (it motivated several young artists to continue their creative activities), the exhibit did little to change the perception of immigrants, their children, and their cultures by the rest of the French population.

Paradoxically, the late 1980s and 1990s were marked by both the increasing ethnicization of minority organizations and a reformulated focus by public institutions on the "integration" of immigrants and their descendants into the common *creuset* [melting pot] of French society.<sup>66</sup> The political emphasis of the Mitterrand years can be summarized in the following way: prevent further immigration in order to guarantee the integration of those who are already living in France, and in particular the descendants of immigrants.<sup>67</sup> With the continuous rise of the extreme Right and the return of the conservatives to the government in 1986, the accent was no longer placed on promoting minority cultures, but rather on reinforcing the cultural cohesion of the nation. This was also a period marked by grandiose commemorations (such as the festivities for the bicentennial of the French Revolution in 1989), the expansion of European integration, and new interrogations about French national identity. In 1986, Jacques Chirac, prime minister of the first "cohabitation" government, defined his mission in the following terms: "The government is determined to take firm measures in order to reinforce the security of the population, fight terrorism, and preserve the identity of our national community."<sup>68</sup> It is not until the very end of the 1990s that cultural



pluralism became once again a national preoccupation.<sup>69</sup> A perfect example of this new dynamic was the incredible explosion of national pride caused by the victory of the French soccer team in the 1998 World Cup. The multiethnic team, described as "Black, Blanc, Beur," was suddenly presented to the world as the symbol of both a united, and culturally diverse French society. This new recognition of the plurality of the French nation was followed a few years later with the opening of the historical debate on the Franco-Algerian past and in particular on the role of the French military in Algeria.<sup>70</sup> As discussions about the colonial past developed in the media, the place of immigration history in the greater historiography of the French nation progressively became a topic of national interest. In 2001, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, elaborating on a report produced by the organization *Génériques* (in collaboration with historians and numerous community-based organizations throughout France), suggested the future opening of a Museum of Immigration in Paris. This project was reinstated by his successor, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, who decided in 2003 to launch a "Mission de Préfiguration" in charge of evaluating both the contents and location of the future institution. Presided by Jacques Toubon (former minister of culture and mayor of Paris), and composed of academics, immigrant representatives, and government administrators, the Mission presented its final report to the government in the spring of 2004.

### **Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration**

On July 8, 2004, the prime minister announced the official opening in 2007 of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, which will be located in the Palais de la Porte Dorée in Paris.<sup>71</sup> This new institution will include permanent and temporary exhibits on immigration history, facilities enabling genealogical research on immigration records (naturalization documents and residency cards), and a multimedia resource center for academic research on immigration studies.<sup>72</sup> The team in charge of the feasibility report had initially suggested another name: "Centre de ressources et de mémoire de l'immigration". Raffarin's decision to change the name from "Centre" to the stronger "Cité nationale" confirms the government's insistence on the role of this new institution as a national marker of French citizenship. Etymologically, the term "cité" stems from the Latin "civitas" meaning at the same time "community of citizens," "the territory where citizens live," and "town."<sup>73</sup> The prime minister had rejected the denomination "museum" for two reasons: first, because the new institution is intended as a dynamic and evolving space; second, because the project is not funded or directly sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, officially in charge of French museums. Before turning to a discussion of the projected contents of the new Cité or the location chosen, it is important to reflect on the prime minister's goals for this institution.

From the very beginning, in Raffarin's initial letter to Toubon in 2003, the new institution is presented as an instrument meant to help "renew the bonds of national cohesion" which have been challenged in recent years by tensions between the French state and certain elements of the Muslim community.<sup>74</sup> The increasing cultural segregation of certain immigrant communities encouraged a strong symbolic response from the government. For Raffarin, the very image of France and its ability to assimilate foreign populations are at stake in this new project:

The main ambition of this new resource center will be to make mentalities evolve regarding immigration, both for immigrants themselves, their close descendants, and for the host society. Through the definition of this project, it is 'a certain idea of France' and of the Republic that is at stake.<sup>75</sup>

For the French government, this new institution must develop new representations of immigration and immigrants. Its purpose is first and foremost pedagogical: a typical visitor should come out of an exhibit having learned about immigration history, but most importantly, having changed his or her perception about immigration and immigrants.<sup>76</sup> The Cité should also be an "identity marker for twenty-first century France."<sup>77</sup> According to Toubon, the political and cultural significance of such an institution is considerable, both for the French and immigrant population, but also for the very definition of French national identity:

This project will constitute, for all French citizens and for all those who live in France, an instrument of knowledge, of tolerance, and integration, that will reinforce national cohesion in a country whose identity is more than ever based on tradition, openness, and diversity.<sup>78</sup>

What comes across in these declarations is the government's intention to significantly reinforce the bonds between immigrant communities, their descendants, and the rest of the French population, through the *incorporation* of immigration history into the national history of France. The troubling sentence discussed in the introduction: "Their history is our history" finds here its entire justification. The message is clearly: "Despite their ethnic, religious, or cultural differences, all of these people have become French." It is not: "France is a multiethnic society, let's celebrate the historical construction of this diversity." As the report suggests, the new institution "must make [people] want to be French, share a common destiny, [and it must] show the generosity and openness of France."<sup>79</sup> For a historian, a sentence such as this sounds remarkably similar to nineteenth-century declarations about "the great civilizing mission" of the French nation. Just as the Third Republic sought to transform "Peasants into Frenchmen," the Fifth Republic appears to want to celebrate its ability to transform "Immigrants into Frenchmen."<sup>80</sup>

The initial conclusions regarding the contents of the future Cité were presented in a recent international conference in Paris on immigration muse-



ums.<sup>81</sup> The main museum space will likely be divided into a permanent exhibit, located in the central hall of the Palais de la Porte Dorée, and several temporary exhibits, located in rooms on the sides of the central hall and on the first floor.<sup>82</sup> A multimedia resource center as well as computerized access to genealogical documents is planned. Finally, the Cité is supposed to serve as a hub in a network of regional centers and museums interested in immigration history. The permanent exhibit is currently the most debated and controversial aspect of the project. For the moment, it has been suggested that a multimedia display entitled "*Repères*" and covering approximately 1,500 square meters will represent chronologically the different stages and important events of the history of immigration from the nineteenth century until today.<sup>83</sup> At different moments in this linear progression, thematic displays will be inserted, around themes such as "immigrants and sports" or "artists and intellectuals."<sup>84</sup> A preview of the permanent exhibit was produced as a documentary film and presented at the December conference. Using archival documents (pictures and films) and a rather monochord voice commentary, the film presented, in chronological order, the arrival of the different "waves" of immigrant populations, from Germans and Belgians in the nineteenth century to Eastern Europeans and Asians today.<sup>85</sup> Beyond the troubling manner in which the film "glided" through majors themes such as wars, colonization, and decolonization, it is the chronological method that many viewers questioned. By describing immigration history as a seamless process whereby one foreign population is successively replaced by another as it integrates into the host society, the chronological presentation conceals the complexity of the migration process. First, it does not take into account the fundamentally transnational dimension of emigration/immigration: the majority of immigrant workers and their families (regardless of their nationality) did not suddenly arrive and remain in France. Many of them traveled back and forth between their homeland and France, sometimes for decades. Many immigrants (the Portuguese are a case in point) maintain homes in both countries, and organize their lives across national borders rather than within them. Second, the chronological presentation tends to reinforce the widespread idea that previous immigrants were easier to assimilate than more recently arrived populations. Finally, the chronological presentation is historically inaccurate, as it overlooks the individual experiences of people who came to France at a different time than their national community. For instance, North African traders visited France as early as the nineteenth century, both before and during the colonial era, and some even began businesses in Paris or Marseille. These pioneers, who came to France before the mass-migration of their community, will most probably be absent from the permanent exhibit as it is currently imagined.<sup>86</sup> The same could be said of European migrants moving to France today, decades after their compatriots initially immigrated to France. This chronological vision of history tends to assimilate population movements to a geological process, where successive strata (immigrant communi-

ties) construct the human matter of the host society. It does not take into account individual experiences or non-linear transnational journeys, while artificially creating homogeneous population groups by nationality.

One of the central problems with this approach lies in the very idea of a Center for *Immigration* History as opposed to a Center for *Migration* History. The denomination "immigration" naturally creates a gap between individuals whose families emigrated from foreign nations into France and individuals whose families have been in France for many generations. It pre-supposes that a culturally homogeneous French nation existed in the nineteenth century and that foreigners came from abroad to assimilate into this society.<sup>87</sup> Creating a gap between "French" and "foreigners" also seems to go against the effort to construct an inclusive history of a multiethnic French population. Indeed, the new institution's denomination created a number of problems for the committee in charge of selecting its contents.<sup>88</sup> What criteria should curators choose when selecting potential exhibits? Should nationality or place of birth determine whether a population is included or not? Two complex examples were discussed and left unresolved: the case of citizens born in the French Caribbean and the case of the Harkis (Algerian Muslims who collaborated with the French military during the Franco-Algerian war). Both communities are French, yet for ethnic or racial reasons they are often thought of as immigrants and are victims of similar instances of discrimination and racism. Hence, their social history closely resembles that of other Black or North-African immigrants.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, because of their French nationality, both groups strongly resent being confused with immigrants or foreigners, and would most probably dislike being included in a Center for Immigration History.<sup>90</sup> If the Cité had focused on the more general topic of population movements, it would have been possible to include the histories of foreigners and citizens, of people from abroad but also of internal migrants. It would have made a lot of historical sense to compare the adaptation experiences of a Corsican worker and an Algerian worker coming to Paris in the 1920s. Individuals from both communities would probably have found out, in such an exhibit, that many of their ancestors' initial difficulties (with housing, discrimination, urban life) were similar, while other circumstances (ethnicity, religion) had made their lives evolve differently. Finally, such an approach would also have allowed a more complex comparison of situations within ethnic groups: it is probable that there are more differences between an Algerian man moving to Paris in the 1920s and an Algerian man moving to Paris today, than between that first Algerian and a French peasant fleeing rural life at the beginning of the twentieth century. A Center for Migration History would have had the advantage of normalizing the process of migration. Rather than presenting immigration as a process by which foreigners set foot on a well-defined and culturally homogeneous nation, it would have been more interesting to approach population movements as one of the central features of modern industrial development.



Finally, it is important to reflect on the choice of the building that will host the new Cité. As the prime minister confirmed, the new institution will be located in the Palais de la Porte Dorée, in eastern Paris.<sup>91</sup> This building has a complex history. Built as the only permanent edifice of the 1931 International Colonial Exposition in Paris, it was supposed to "symbolize the entire work realized in the colonies by the French genius, in the past and the present."<sup>92</sup> Extensively decorated with colonial art, its ceilings and walls are covered with large painted frescoes and sculptures representing (mainly half-naked) native colonial populations from Africa and Asia in various tropical settings. By its general structure and its interior design, this building constitutes a classic example of art deco style. Closed at the end of the exposition in November 1931, it was reopened four years later as the Museum of Overseas France. Both an art museum and a "Musée de Société," this institution displayed the official representation of colonial ideology to French and foreign visitors.<sup>93</sup> After decolonization, it became the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts, which has now been moved to the new museum opening on the Quai Branly. Classified as a historical monument, its general architecture and interior design cannot be modified.



Palais de la Porte Dorée, entrance. Photograph by author.



Palais de la Porte Dorée, central hall, fresco detail. Photograph by author.

Although several participants in the feasibility committee strongly objected to this location, arguing that the French public would easily confuse colonial representations with the stereotypes used to describe post-colonial immigrants today, the choice has officially been made. It is now up to historians and the artistic directors of the new Cité to redefine the symbolic representations of this particular space. According to Toubon's report, in order to implement a Center for Immigration History in a building dedicated to the promotion of colonial history, it will be necessary to "deconstruct the imagery inherited from colonization, and turn these symbols inside-out like a glove."<sup>94</sup> The report suggests focusing the first major temporary exhibit on European immigration, in order to show "that the page of colonial history is definitively turned" and that immigration does not necessarily mean post-colonial immigration.<sup>95</sup> With this project, and the choice of this specific "Lieu de Mémoire" of French colonialism, the government is offered an unexpected opportunity to begin rewriting national history through the construction of cultural bridges between colonial and post-colonial times. Although the history of immigration should not be reduced to the history of post-colonial migrants, contemporary debates about immigration remain centered on the management of ethnic and religious diversity.<sup>96</sup> The colonial question of how to incorporate Islam into the French religious sphere has yet to be resolved in post-colonial France.<sup>97</sup> The implementation of this new institution might be a



chance for the French government to finally confront the history of colonialism and its legacies. The chosen location, Le Palais de la Porte Dorée, could be seen as a palimpsest, a space where successive layers of meaning, respectively colonial and post-colonial, have been and will be inscribed. To fully appreciate and understand this particular place and the contents of future exhibits, the visitor will have to "read" through these different narratives in order to reconstitute a more general history of French society. While this may seem a difficult challenge for the Center's curators, it could offer formidable pedagogical possibilities. In recent years, historians of colonialism have been developing more complex and subtle narratives of colonial relationships. Histories of everyday life, of cultural exchanges, and of multifaceted power networks, have replaced earlier narratives based on a strict dichotomy between colonizer and colonized.<sup>98</sup> Those who will be in charge of the design and contents of the future Center for Immigration History will face the challenge of addressing the complexity of the colonial/post-colonial relationship while remaining vigilant to any explanatory shortcuts seeking to obscure the less glorious elements of France's recent past.

## Conclusion

In comparing three different cultural projects, *Mosaïque*, *Les Enfants de l'immigration* and the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, this article has sought to highlight continuities and discontinuities in the way immigrant culture has been perceived in France for the past thirty years. While the main difference lies in the creation of a national center for immigration history (an unthinkable project ten years ago), the core discourse about immigration, integration, and cultural difference, remains quite similar throughout time.<sup>99</sup> *Mosaïque* had been created, in 1977, as a television program for immigrants, presenting immigrant culture as explicitly foreign and external to French society. The show had two main objectives: allow immigrants to stay in touch with their cultural roots while presenting foreign cultures to the French public. Because of its reliance on foreign institutions for some of its programming and its lack of independence from the French government, *Mosaïque* presented a very polished and rather superficial image of immigrant social and cultural life. While it made foreign cultures visible on French public television, it carefully avoided any discussion about the role of immigrants and their culture in an increasingly multi-ethnic French society. When the show ended and was not replaced, foreign cultures (and their bearers) disappeared from French television.

During the 1980s, immigrants were replaced in the French public sphere by their (mostly French-born) children. The political activism of young men and women of immigrant descent, the development of new hybrid cultural forms, as well as the increasing visibility of urban violence, significantly desta-

bilized commonly held assumptions about French national identity. New questions regarding the visibility of ethnic, cultural, and religious differences came to the forefront.<sup>100</sup> They engendered constructive reactions, such as the exhibit *Les Enfants de l'immigration*, but also violent rejection movements from the extreme Right. The tremendous visibility of the "Beur" phenomenon in the media also had the consequence of making all other minorities invisible. Who remembers today that young people of Vietnamese, Portuguese, and West African origin organized and participated in the second march against racism (Convergence) in 1984? Individual recognition remained a problem throughout this period, and many young artists and activists were unable to overcome the "Beur" stereotype.<sup>101</sup> At the national level, the political fixation on the question of integration made it difficult to address the changing nature of French society. A telling example of the dominant discourse of the time, Michèle Tribalat's government-sponsored study, *Faire France*, explicitly sought to quantify the integration level of different immigrant (or immigrant-origin) populations in France according to criteria such as language used in the home, friendship networks, and culinary habits.<sup>102</sup>

An initial analysis of the goals and contents of the future Cité reveals the historical permanence of the debate between integration and the visibility of cultural differences in contemporary France. While the creation of a new institution dedicated explicitly to immigration history will put immigrants and their descendants in the spotlight, this new visibility might also attract significant negative reactions. In 1999, the organization of an exhibit on North African immigration in Grenoble triggered a violent demonstration by the extreme Right as well as strong reactions from local pied-noirs organizations; similar incidents could take place in Paris if nothing is done to inform the French population about the significance of this new institution.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, despite what had been announced in the feasibility report, no widespread consultation of the immigrant community and no collection of testimonies or objects for the Cité have yet been organized. Without the involvement of the main protagonists, the Cité risks being a lifeless institution, developed by immigration specialists, about immigrants, but without immigrants. Yet, this new space could also be a tremendous opportunity to move beyond a simple description of the transformation of "immigrants into Frenchmen" and address the question of multiple allegiances and identities in twenty-first-century France. This new institution should make it possible to finally reverse the gaze and ask: How have immigrants and their descendants changed France? Only then will the new Cité truly play its role as a universal community of citizens.



## Notes

1. An initial version of this text was presented in November 2004 at the conference "Commemorating Migrants and Migrations," organized in Paris by the Network Migration in Europe. I would like to thank the conference participants for their useful comments, as well as the two anonymous reviewers of this journal.
2. Leaflets produced for the "Mission de préfiguration du Centre de ressources et de mémoire de l'immigration" (ADRI, Paris, 2003). Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this text are the author's.
3. In reference to Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-1992).
4. A counter example is the Museum of Civilizations in Quebec, which is explicitly dedicated to the history of all the people of Quebec, regardless of their national or ethnic origin and regardless of their date of arrival in the province. See <http://www.mcq.org/mcq/index.html>.
5. For a description of the French model of citizenship and its specificity, see Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Patrick Weil, *Qu'est-ce qu'un Français?* (Paris: Grasset, 2002). The French Ministry of Work and Solidarity defines "assimilation" as the expected outcome of the integration process, while "integration" is defined as "the active participation in a society united around equal rights and common duties." Ministère de l'emploi et de la solidarité, *Les Mots de l'immigration et de l'intégration*, 1998. See <http://www.social.gouv.fr/htm/modedemploi/vocab.htm>.
6. The paradox can be found in any situation where policies are developed to target a specific community or group. For a discussion on gender differences in the French context, see Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).
7. In 1977, French television was limited to three public television channels: TF1, Antenne2, and FR3. FR3 was more generally dedicated to public service or educational programs, similar to PBS in the United States.
8. The implementation of a new immigration policy and the creation of a new ministerial position (Secrétariat d'État à l'Immigration) was one of President Giscard d'Estaing's first decisions in May 1974. It was the first time since 1938 that immigration had a dedicated secretary of state. The first person nominated to the position, André Postel-Vinay, quit after a couple of months considering the budget insufficient for the job to be done. Paul Dijoud took over in July 1974 and remained until April 1977 when he was replaced by Lionel Stoléru.
9. Secrétariat d'état aux travailleurs immigrés, *La Nouvelle Politique de l'immigration* (Paris: 1977).
10. *Ibid.*, 39.
11. *Ibid.*, 41.
12. Dijoud chose a diplomat, Stéphane Hessel, as President of the Office and the contact person for foreign governments, a famous theater director, Silvia Montfort, as the vice-president in charge of cultural events, and a public servant specialized in immigration issues, Yvon Gougenheim, as the main interface with immigrant and nonprofit organizations.
13. In 1975, there were 3.5 million foreigners in France, 6.5 percent of the total population. The main nationalities were: Portuguese (22 percent), Algerian (20.6 percent), Spanish (14.5 percent), Italian (13.4 percent), Moroccan (7.6 percent), Tunisian (4.1 percent). *Annuaire Rétrospectif de la France 1948-1988* (Paris: INSEE, 1990).

14. The Moroccan and Portuguese communities were particularly effective in pressuring their governments to obtain Arabic and Portuguese language classes for their children in French public schools.
15. The preponderance in France of Algerians from Kabylie can also be seen as a product of the colonial "Kabyle myth," according to which Berbers were more docile and cooperative with Europeans than Arabs. The construction and consolidation of the Kabyle myth during the colonial era is described in Patricia Lorcin, *Imperial Identities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995).
16. Algerian President Boumediène accelerated the pace of the education reform in 1970. "L'Arabisation: objectif révolutionnaire," *L'Algérien en Europe*, vol.102, 14 May 1970.
17. During the 1990s, a broad network of Berber cultural organizations developed in France at the same time as this minority was violently repressed in Algeria. The Berber language is now taught in a number of French public schools.
18. The main opposition movement in the Moroccan community was the AMF (Association des Marocains de France) created in 1961 and politically close to opposition leader Mehdi Ben Barka. Zakya Daoud, *Travailleurs marocains en France: Mémoire restituée* (Casablanca: Tarik Editions, 2003).
19. It is important to remember that most of these countries were led by authoritarian regimes. (Portugal experienced great political turmoil during the two years following the end of the dictatorship in April 1974.) The cultural products distributed to outside audiences were therefore highly formatted and controlled.
20. Abdelmalek Sayad, *Les Usages sociaux de la "culture des immigrés"* (Paris: CIEEM, 1978); Patrick Weil, *La France et ses étrangers* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1991), 90-91; C. Humblot, "Plus de deux millions d'immigrés regardent "Mosaïque": divertissement sans politique," *Le Monde*, 12-13 March 1978. It is important to remember that during the 1970s, governments in the countries of origin, the French government, as well as most immigrants themselves, expected immigration to be a temporary process.
21. Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, 96. Dijoud's new immigration policy was launched at a time when immigrant activists, with the help of elements in the French Left, were particularly active through rent-strikes, hunger-strikes, and street demonstrations. For more details about these political activities, see Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, *Les Immigrés et la politique: Cent cinquante ans d'évolution* (Paris: PFNSP, 1988).
22. *Mosaïque* was financed by the FAS (FASild, today) and was owned by the National Office for the Promotion of Immigrant Culture, which became OCEI in 1977, ADRI in 1982, which has now become the new "Cité Nationale."
23. According to Tewfik Farès, *Mosaïque* was never directly censored by the government. However, he was asked to remain politically neutral and to focus exclusively on cultural programming (Interview with Tewfik Farès, 21 July 2004). Another participant in the show from 1977 to 1978, Manuel Madeira, remembers that government-related personnel were infiltrated at all levels of the production team making indirect censorship a constant occurrence (Interview with Manuel Madeira, 4 May 2005).
24. Another show, entitled *Immigrés parmi nous*, preceded *Mosaïque* from October 1976 to December 1976. Its purpose was more pedagogical (explaining French institutions to immigrants) than cultural. In addition to these shows and beginning in December 1975, FR3 aired from 10:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. a foreign-language program produced alternatively by the Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian or Portuguese television under the name *A écrans ouverts*, which became *Images de...* in April 1978. INA, *Télérama* archives.



25. Ibid., and Publimétrie, *Contrôle d'audience et appréciation de l'émission T.V. Mosaïque* (Paris : 1977).
26. During the first years, several hosts presented the show, alternatively speaking in French, Arabic, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, etc. in an effort to relate directly to their multicultural public.
27. Interview with Tewfik Farès, 21 July 2004.
28. Farès explains how each community would constantly complain to him about their lack of visibility on the show. He claims that he did his best to include a diversity of artists while maintaining the quality of the programming.
29. For an introduction to debates on multiculturalism in France see Michel Wieviorka, "Is Multiculturalism the Solution?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, 5 (1998).
30. Interview with Tewfik Farès, 21 July 2004.
31. For example, see Mogniss Abdallah, "Gros plan sur l'émission Mosaïque," *IM'Média Magazine* 5 (Spring 1987).
32. Tewfik Farès notes that, ironically, the same people who complained about *Mosaïque* at the time are those who are fighting to create a Centre for Immigration History today, in which tapes from the show will be included (mainly the team of people from *Sans Frontière* who are part of the organization *Génériques* today).
33. Françoise Gaspard, *L'Information et l'expression culturelle des communautés immigrées en France: Bilans et propositions* (Paris: 1982), 34. It appears that the opinion poll used to show the decreasing popularity of the show was flawed since it took into account the entire French population rather than focusing on the immigrant population. Catherine Humblot, "Les programmes radio-télévisés pour immigrés: abandon ou reconnaissance?" *Hommes et Migrations* (November 1982).
34. Gaspard, *L'Information*, 6.
35. Catherine Humblot, "Les programmes radio-télévisés," 1-15.
36. *Mosaïque* was expensive to produce, mainly because it had to purchase two hours of weekly airtime from the public channel FR3 who refused to contribute financially to a show dedicated to foreigners. During the 1980s, the government decided to apply the budget of the FAS to other activities, Gaspard, *L'Information*, 42.
37. The "dépôt légal" [mandatory deposit] of television and radio shows at l'INA began on January 1st 1995. Any show produced by a private entity (individual or institution) would have to be purchased by l'INA in order to enter their archives. Therefore, their archives (prior to 1995) contain mostly national public television and radio shows.
38. Françoise Gaspard and Claude Servan-Schreiber, *La Fin des immigrés* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984).
39. Richard Derderian analyzes the rhetoric of integration in several television shows produced during this period in *North Africans in Contemporary France: Becoming Visible* (London: Palgrave, 2004), Chapter 5.
40. In March 1983 during the municipal elections, the National Front of Jean-Marie LePen obtained its first major victory as many of its anti-immigrant themes were appropriated by more traditional parties on the right. Pascal Perrineau, *Le Symptôme Le Pen* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), 32.
41. Interview with Tewfik Farès, 21 July 2004.
42. Hosted by the Centre Pompidou, the curators for the event were Josée Chapelle and Véronique Baux. Centre de Création Industrielle, *Brochure de l'exposition: Les enfants de l'immigration* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1984), 1.
43. A more detailed presentation of the museum space and displays can be found in Derderian, *North Africans*, Chapter 4, and in Angéline Escafre-Dublet, *Culture et immigrés: Les tentatives de politiques spécifiques, 1974-1986*, mémoire de DEA à l'Institut d'études Politiques de Paris, 2003, 94-98.
44. Ibid., 48.

45. A section of the public (mostly young North-African men) actually appropriated the space of the museum during these three months and turned it into a sort of meeting place and public forum; more than 10 percent of the public came more than twenty times and 25 percent more than five times. Philippe Coulaud, *Les Enfants de l'immigration et les honneurs de la cimaise: Radiographie d'une exposition* (Paris: CCI, 1985), 54.
46. Antonio Perotti, *Étude de cas, l'exposition: "Les enfants de l'immigration"* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1984), 12. The European Council was interested in the potential reproduction of such an event in other European cities with large foreign populations.
47. Tahar Ben Jelloun, *Hospitalité Française* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), 27-32. This detailed list shows a majority of crimes against teenagers, either by police officers or neighbors shooting from their apartment windows.
48. Centre de Création Industrielle, *Brochure de l'exposition: Les enfants de l'immigration* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1984), 1.
49. The most vivid description of the March is the journal kept by one of the participants, Bouzid, *La Marche, traversée de la France profonde* (Paris: Sindbad, 1984). From 15 October 1983 until 3 December 1983, a group of youth men and women of immigrant descent (mainly Algerians) crossed France on foot, from Marseille to Paris. They stopped in different towns along the way to discuss immigration, racism, and discrimination with the local population. They were inspired by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.
50. Interview with Josée Chappelle, 13 November 2003.
51. In certain communities (Portuguese and Moroccan in particular), some parents refused French nationality for their children born in France, in part for patriotic reasons, but also because they did not expect to stay in France indefinitely. One should also not forget the case of Algerian descendants born in France before or during the Algerian war, who were dispossessed of their French nationality in 1962.
52. Centre de Création Industrielle, *Brochure de l'exposition: Les enfants de l'immigration* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1984), 9.
53. Statistically, young people of Algerian origin were older than their homologues with Moroccan, Tunisian or Portuguese parents, because these populations (in particular women and children) came to France more recently.
54. The term "Beur" is the reversal (verlan) of the term "Arabe" widely used in France during the 1970s to (incorrectly) designate people from the Maghreb and their descendants. First used by the latter to designate their group, this term was abandoned in the mid-1980s when it was used by the media and became stigmatizing. It has now somewhat been re-appropriated through the use of the term "Rebeu" which is the reversal of "Beur." Ironically, many of those who called themselves or were called "Beur" (Arab) in the 1980s were of Berber origin.
55. A more thorough discussion of this question can be found in Alec Hargreaves and Marc McKinney, *Post-Colonial Cultures in France* (London: Routledge, 1997).
56. Véronique Hahn in Derderian, *North Africans*, Chapter 4.
57. Although the majority of immigrants (58 percent) live in or near Paris, Lyon, and Marseille, approximately 42 percent live in smaller towns around the country. INSEE, *Portrait de la France: Le recensement de 1999* (Paris: INSEE, 2001), 18.
58. Sylvie Bassenet and José Chappelle in Derderian, *North Africans*, Chapter 4. It appeared to be an exhibit "by immigrants for immigrants." Most observers at the time did not differentiate "immigrants" from "North Africans" or North Africans by nationality. In actuality, participants were mainly of Algerian origin.
59. "Les jeunes immigrés exposent à Beaubourg," *Libération*, 8 February 1984. Beaubourg is the popular name for the Pompidou Center.



60. The term "Viet" designates individuals of Vietnamese descent, "Thos" of Portuguese descent. Paulo Moreira, *Les Enfants de l'immigration: Le New Deal à Beaubourg* (Paris: IM'Média, 1984).
61. Derderian, *North Africans*, chapter 4.
62. Centre de Création Industrielle, *Brochure de l'exposition*, 3.
63. One is reminded here of André Breton's declaration regarding the work of the poet Aimé Césaire: "Et c'est un Noir qui manie la langue française comme il n'est pas aujourd'hui un Blanc pour la manier." (This is a Black man who uses the French language like no White man today.) Introduction to the *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (page 14), cited in Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952), 31.
64. *Ibid.*, 90.
65. For a more thorough discussion of the relationship between visibility and self-determination see David Theo Goldberg, "In/Visibility and Super/Vision," in D. T. Goldberg, *Racial Subjects* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 81.
66. In reference to Gérard Noiriel's work, *Le Creuset français: Histoire de l'immigration, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 1988). Following the disillusion of the "Beur" years, many immigrant descendants either turned to religion or rediscovered their ethnic roots (with the development of Berber organizations, for instance).
67. Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, *Histoire de l'immigration* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), 85.
68. Jacques Chirac, 10 March 1986, cited in Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, *Les Immigrés et la politique: Cent cinquante ans d'évolution* (Paris: Presse de la FNSP, 1988), 371.
69. On a smaller scale, at the municipal level, many initiatives related to immigration history developed during the 1990s. More details can be found in Driss El Yazami and Rémi Schwartz, *Rapport pour la création d'un centre national de l'histoire et des cultures de l'immigration* (Paris: Génériques, 2001). Available at <http://www.generiques.org>.
70. The debate initiated by Benjamin Stora with *La Gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991) developed considerably in 2001 with the trial of General Aussarresse and the commemoration of the October 1961 massacre in Paris.
71. "Lieu de mémoire et d'éducation, la Cité de l'immigration ouvrira ses portes en 2007," *Le Monde*, 10 July 2004. The official declaration of the new institution was published in the *Journal officiel* on 1 January 2005.
72. The complete report is available at <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/accueil.html> as well as the most recent developments regarding the project.
73. Larousse, *Dictionnaire de poche de la langue française étymologique* (Paris: Larousse, 1971), 169. There are two other Cités/Museums in Paris: the "Cité de la Musique" and the "Cité des sciences et de l'industrie."
74. Letter from M. Raffarin to M. Toubon, 10 March 2003, in Jacques Toubon, *Rapport au Premier ministre: Mission de Préfiguration du Centre de Ressources et de Mémoire de l'Immigration* (Paris: 2004), 5.
75. Jacques Toubon, *Rapport au Premier ministre: Mission de Préfiguration du Centre de Ressources et de Mémoire de l'Immigration* (Paris: 2004), 6.
76. "A visitor must come out of the exhibit with answers to the question: why do I think [about immigration] the way that I do?" Toubon, *Rapport au Premier ministre*, 55.
77. *Ibid.*, 10.
78. *Ibid.*, 11.
79. *Ibid.*, 13.
80. In reference to Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

81. Last December, Jacques Toubon presided over an international conference dedicated to immigration museums around the world, including the future Cité. Colloque International, *Musée et histoire de l'immigration, un enjeu pour toutes les nations*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 9 and 10 December 2004.
82. Temporary exhibits will be produced two or three times a year and will focus on a theme: the first exhibit planned for 2006, in collaboration with the city of Paris, should present the history of foreigners in different neighborhoods of the city (it is entitled "Les étrangers à Paris: histoire de quartiers"). "État des lieux de la Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration," in *Musée et histoire de l'immigration, un enjeu pour toutes les nations* (Paris, December 2004), 3.
83. Ibid.
84. Jacques Toubon, *Rapport au Premier ministre*, 52.
85. A description of the contents of the permanent exhibit is available on the website of future Cité: <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/exposition/>.
86. The same could be said about European migrants arriving in France today: Does a Polish or Spanish worker today have anything in common with Polish or Spanish immigrants who came decades ago?
87. The very idea of a unified French nation is extremely recent. According to Weber, the majority of the French population did not speak French language until the advent of universal education in 1881-1886. Ibid., 309. For a study of the complex tensions between local and national identities in the French historical context, see Peter Sahlin, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
88. Toubon, *Rapport au Premier ministre*, 139.
89. In France, the denomination "immigrant" combines social, national, and ethnic characteristics. For instance, an American businessman will not be identified as an "immigrant" while a maid from Guadeloupe will be (despite her French citizenship). Étienne Balibar has highlighted the ambivalence of the "immigrant" category in the French context in "Racisme et crise" in Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, nation, classe: Les identités ambiguës* (Paris: La Découverte, 1988), 289-302.
90. Toubon, *Rapport au Premier ministre*, 228.
91. This building was chosen primarily because it was available and corresponded to the project's budget.
92. Patricia A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 274.
93. "Un lieu central à l'identité forte, emblématique et chargé d'histoire." Document found on the official site for the new Center for Immigration History (<http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/accueil.html>).
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. The visibility of Muslim immigrants in France has rendered invisible all other immigrants. In 1999, foreigners from European (except Turkey) or Asian nations represented more than 40 percent of the total number of foreigners in France. INSEE, *Portrait de la France: Le recensement de 1999*.
97. For a discussion of Islam in the colonial era, see Julia Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) or Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*.
98. For instance, see Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (Berkeley:



University of California Press, 1997); and Daniel Rivet, *Le Maghreb à l'épreuve de la colonisation* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2002).

99. Beyond any critiques one might have about the new institution, its goals, or its contents, one must acknowledge nonetheless the political courage of M. Toubon in supporting a project opposed by many in his own party. This Cité is also a work in progress and is expected to develop gradually over the course of the next ten years.
100. 1989 also marks the beginning of the debate on the Islamic veil in French public schools. For an analysis of this debate, see Miriam Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship: The Politics of Nationality Reform and Immigration in Contemporary France* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).
101. Derderian, *North Africans*, Chapters 1 and 2.
102. Michèle Tribalat, *Faire France: Une grande enquête sur les immigrés et leurs enfants* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1995). Her methods are criticized by Hervé Le Bras in *Le Démon des origines: Démographie et extrême-droite* (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 1998).
103. Presentation by Jean-Claude Duclos, Director of the Musée dauphinois in Grenoble, at the international conference *Musée et histoire de l'immigration*, Paris 9-10 December 2004.

Copyright of French Politics, Culture & Society is the property of Berghahn Books and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.