

NATIVE TO THE REPUBLIC:
NEGOTIATING CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL WELFARE IN MARSEILLE
“IMMIGRANT” NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE 1945

by

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Kathryn and Opanyi Nasiali

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ABSTRACT

Native to the Republic:

Negotiating Citizenship and Social Welfare in Marseille “Immigrant” Neighborhoods
since 1945

by

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Chairs: Rita C-K Chin and Joshua H. Cole

This dissertation examines the intersections of modernization and decolonization at the local level in late twentieth century France. During the post World War Two economic boom, France implemented a comprehensive urbanism program intended to modernize and rationalize the nation by putting the city, the home, and the citizen in order. During this period, France was also working out the repercussions of decolonization as families from former French colonies in Africa and Asia migrated to the metropole. Municipal technocrats and central state planners had to decide how migrant families fit into an emerging national vision for a modern France. An important feature of this vision was developing a welfare state which included the mass construction of modern housing. Beginning in the 1960s, many migrant families moved

into these large, concrete, Le Corbusier influenced housing projects on the fringes of French cities including Marseille. Through my examination of housing debates in Marseille neighborhoods, I explore how concepts of ethnic and social difference have shaped the post-1945 French welfare state. I argue that difference is instituted through everyday negotiations between government authorities, neighborhood associations, and families from former French colonies.

As the 2004 ban on headscarves suggests, the recognition of cultural and racial difference remains a difficult and often taboo subject in France. While English language scholarship on post-colonial migration focuses on questions of race and ethnicity, French language studies tend to frame the immigrant question in terms of class inequalities. For example, recent French scholarship stresses that there are no racial problems in France, only social problems. I argue that only by illuminating how Republican discourse makes sense of the social question can we make sense of the unnamed politics of race in France. More specifically, I argue that the social question reflects a cluster of shifting common sense assumptions about class, culture, *and* race. Families from former colonies practice citizenship by asserting their right to social benefits—like housing or employment—as well as their right to cultural difference.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In 2000, Marseille residents formed an association called *Un Centre Ville Pour Tous* (A Downtown For Everyone) and framed a Declaration of Resident Rights: They claim a social right to housing, the right to a certain quality of life and a standard of living.¹ *Un Centre Ville Pour Tous* also advocates for resident participation in the renewal of their neighborhoods by collaborating with municipal authorities to improve public spaces, services, and housing. The organization was formed by residents living in rundown Marseille neighborhoods in the city center. According to the charter of the organization, “Residents of down town should benefit from a decent habitat and public spaces.”²

Most members of *Un Centre Ville Pour Tous* are either first, second, or third generation migrants whose families came from southern Europe, the Mediterranean region, or former French colonies in Asia and Africa. As an organization of mostly migrants, the association also frames their agenda in terms of the cultural and ethnic diversity of Marseille residents. For example, the charter of the organization states that

¹ http://www.centrevillepourtous.asso.fr/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=40 April 13, 2008

² Charter of Un Centre Ville Pour Tous, http://www.centrevillepourtous.asso.fr/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=40 April 13, 2008

“everyday, the downtown of Marseille is frequented by thousands of Marseillais who live here, work here, consume here. The richness of our city is forged through this cultural and social diversity and the presence of a diverse population.”³ The association describes Marseille and its neighborhoods as “a sort of *millefeuille*”—or a multi-layered French pastry—in terms of the “ethnic origins and historical moments of arrival of Marseillais which constitute the social thickness and layers” of the city.⁴

How do these residents, many from former French colonies, negotiate their diverse social and ethnic differences with each other in order to establish consensus on an agenda for local change? Why do members of *Un Centre Ville Pour Tous* frame their agenda in terms of the French welfare state and their social rights? What is the historical relationship between perceptions of ethnic and racial difference and citizenship practices? How have common sense assumptions about social and ethnic difference shaped the post-1945 French welfare state?

My dissertation seeks to answer these questions by interrogating the intersections of modernization and decolonization in late twentieth century France. During the post World War Two economic boom, France implemented a comprehensive urbanism program intended to modernize and rationalize the nation by putting the city, the home, and the citizen in order. During this period, France was also working out the repercussions of decolonization as families from former French colonies in Africa and Asia migrated to the metropole. Municipal technocrats and central state planners had to make sense of how migrant families fit into their national vision for a modern France.

³ Charter of Un Centre Ville Pour Tous, http://www.centrevillepourtous.asso.fr/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=40 April 13, 2008

⁴ Recherche-Action, Renouveau Urbain à Marseille: Centralité Populaire et Mobilisation Collective le Cas de la Rue de la République, Final Report, 2007, Jean-Stephane Borja, Martine Derain, Veronique Manry, Association Transvercité, 41 rue Jobin, 13003 Marseille, 2007. Pg. 176

An important feature of this vision was facilitating a welfare state which included the mass construction of modern housing. Many migrant families eventually moved into these large, concrete, Le Corbusier influenced housing projects on the fringes of French cities like Marseille.

Through my examination of housing debates in Marseille neighborhoods, I explore how concepts of ethnic and social difference have shaped the post-1945 French welfare state. I argue that difference is instituted through everyday negotiations between government authorities, neighborhood associations, and families from former French colonies. From my analysis of archival documents including urban planning reports, zoning maps, household demographic studies, and municipal memos, I explore the link between the home and citizenship, particularly how the state attempted to make Republican citizens through regulating domestic space and practices. From resident petitions, letters, and housing applications, I examine how migrant families practice citizenship: they assert the right to a certain standard of living by participating in neighborhood associations that advocate for decent housing.

THE PROBLEM OF DIFFERENCE IN FRANCE

In 2004, French President Jacques Chirac signed into law a ban on the display of “ostentatious religious symbols” in schools. Although supposed to apply to all students, the law was directed particularly at female French-Muslim students, prohibiting them from wearing headscarves in school. The new law justified the headscarf ban on the grounds that such religious and cultural symbols violated Republican principles of

secularism.⁵ Under the French constitution, citizens appear as abstract individuals without differentiation or particular identification. Defenders of the headscarf ban argued that claiming the right to cultural difference fundamentally violates what it means to be French. For example, republican scholars assert that “one enters this community dressed simply and solely in the garb of an individual citizen divested of all particularistic affiliations.”⁶ Others argue that France must protect a national culture that immigrants should assimilate into.⁷ Recent work has underscored how this narrow perception of French-ness is challenged by concepts of difference and multiculturalism. For example, the ongoing debates about the headscarf show how French Muslims argue that they can be both different *and* French.⁸

As the recent headscarf ban suggests, the recognition and discussion of cultural and racial difference remains a difficult and often taboo subject in France. While English

⁵ For discussion of the construction and imagination of *laïcité* (secularism) see: *Politique, Religion Et Laïcité*, (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'université de Provence, 2009), Jean Baubérot, "Histoire De La Laïcité En France," Presses universitaires de France, Jean Baubérot, Paul d Hollander, and Mireille Estivalezes, *Laïcité Et Séparation Des Églises Et De L'état : Histoire Et Actualité* (Limoges: PULIM, 2006), Françoise Duthu, "Le Maire Et La Mosquée : Islam Et Laïcité En Île-De-France," Harmattan, F. Frégosi, "Penser L'islam Dans La Laïcité : Les Musulmans De France Et La République," Fayard, René Rémond, "L'invention De La Laïcité : De 1789 À Demain," Bayard.

⁶ Jeremy Jennings, "Citizenship, Republicanism, and Multiculturalism in Contemporary France," *British Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 4 (2000). 578. For further discussion the Republican public sphere and the abstract citizen see : Dominique Schnapper, *La Communauté Des Citoyens : Sur L'idée Moderne De Nation* ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1994).

⁷ For literature arguing the relationship between assimilationism and republicanism: Alain Finkielkraut, *La Défaite De La Pensée : Essai* ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1987), Christian Jelen, *Les Casseurs De La République*, Tribune Libre (Paris: Plon, 1997), Christian Jelen, "La Régression Multiculturaliste," *Le Debat* 97 (1997), Christian Jelen and Ilios Yannakakis, *La Famille, Secret De L'intégration : Enquête Sur La France Immigrée*, Notre Époque (Paris: R. Laffont, 1993), Tzvetan Todorov, "Du Culte De La Différence À La Sacrilisation De La Victime," *Esprit* 212 (1996).

⁸ For discussion of the headscarf and cultural difference see : Saïd Bouamama, *L'affaire Du Foulard Islamique : La Production D'un Racisme Respectable* (Roubaix: Geai bleu, 2004), John Richard Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves : Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), Françoise Gaspard and Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Le Foulard Et La République* (Paris: Découverte, 1995), Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), Saïd Bouamama, *L'affaire Du Foulard Islamique : La Production D'un Racisme Respectable* (Roubaix: Geai bleu, 2004), Pierre Tévanian, *Le Voile Médiatique : Un Faux Débat, L'affaire Du Foulard Islamique* (Paris: Raisons d'agir, 2005), Bronwyn Winter, "Hijab & the Republic : Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate," Syracuse University Press.

language scholarship on post-colonial migration focuses on questions of race and ethnicity,⁹ French language studies often frame the immigrant question in terms of class inequalities.¹⁰ In other words, French scholarship stresses that there are no racial problems in France, only social problems.¹¹ For example, after the 2005 civil unrest when youth from rundown outskirts of French cities—or *banlieues*—looted stores and torched cars, social exclusion was often cited as the main reason for the violence. In

⁹ For discussions of race as a category of analysis in English language scholarship on France: *French Civilization and Its Discontents : Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, After the Empire : The Francophone World and Postcolonial France. (United States: Lexington Books, 2003), Herrick Chapman and Laura Levine Frader, *Race in France : Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Politics of Difference* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995), Sue Peabody and Tyler Edward Stovall, *The Color of Liberty : Histories of Race in France* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2003), Maxim Silverman, *Race, Discourse, and Power in France*, Research in Ethnic Relations Series (Aldershot, Hants, England Brookfield, Vt., USA: Avebury ; Gower Pub., 1991), Tyler Edward Stovall and Georges Van den Abbeele, *French Civilization and Its Discontents : Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, After the Empire (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003), Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home : France in the Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Elizabeth Ezra, *The Colonial Unconscious : Race and Culture in Interwar France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). For discussion of race as a category of analysis in english language scholarship on Europe: Rita C. K. Chin, *After the Nazi Racial State : Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), University of Birmingham. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies., *The Empire Strikes Back : Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, Hutchinson University Library (London: Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1982), Rita C. K. Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Rita Chook-Kuan Chin, "Rewriting The "Guest Worker" : Turkish-German Artists and the Emergence of Multiculturalism in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1961-1989" (Thesis (Ph D), s.n.], University of California, Berkeley, 1999., 1999), Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack' : The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, Black Literature and Culture (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991), Tina Campt, *Other Germans : Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich*, Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2004). Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler : Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ For french language studies on immigration as a social problem : François Dubet, *La Galère : Jeunes En Survie*, Mouvements (Paris: Fayard, 1987), François Dubet and Didier Lapeyronnie, *Les Quartiers D'exil*, L'épreuve Des Faits (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992), Milena Doytcheva, *Une Discrimination Positive À La Française : Ethnicité Et Territoire Dans Les Politiques De La Ville*, Alternatives Sociales (Paris: Découverte, 2007), Schnapper, *La Communauté Des Citoyens : Sur L'idée Moderne De Nation*, Sylvie Tissot, *L'état Et Les Quartiers : Genèse D'une Catégorie De L'action Publique* (Paris: Seuil, 2007), Dominique Schnapper, *Exclusions Au Coeur De La Cité*, Collection "Sociologiques" (Paris: Anthropos, 2001), Jacques G. Petit and Christine Bard, *Intégration Et Exclusion Sociale : D'hier À Aujourd'hui* (Paris: Anthropos, 1999)., Sylvie Tissot, *L'état Et Les Quartiers : Genèse D'une Catégorie De L'action Publique* (Paris: Seuil, 2007).

¹¹ Doytcheva, *Une Discrimination Positive À La Française : Ethnicité Et Territoire Dans Les Politiques De La Ville*, Finkelkraut, *La Défaite De La Pensée : Essai*.

contrast many banlieue youth—many of them children of post-colonial migrants—described their main concerns to be racial discrimination in employment, housing, and by the police.

Why does French scholarship tend to frame the immigrant question in terms of class inequalities? Why are many French republican scholars—particularly academics on the left—reticent to talk about race? One set of explanations stems, in part, from the French political landscape of the last thirty years and the rise of the radical right. In the years since the National Front rose to national prominence, talking about race has often been the territory of the right. Members of the radical right use arguments about racial and cultural difference to justify why post-colonial migrants should be excluded from the Republic. According to the right, post-colonial migrants are too culturally and ethnically different to ever completely assimilate into France. Therefore, the very presence of recent migrants in the nation threatens to undermine those cultural qualities thought by the right to be essentially French. The central place of race within the agenda of the radical right has made it difficult for politicians and scholars on the left to acknowledge how perceptions of race affect post-colonial migrants' access to French cultural, political, and social institutions.

Despite these recent trends, talking about race has not always been so taboo. For example, when the socialists came to power in 1981 under President Francois Mitterrand, they initiated sweeping reforms which included gestures towards recognizing a more multicultural France. However, as the National Front rose to prominence in the 1983 elections, the left backed-away from debates about the possibility of a multicultural France. Many on the left have thus retreated to the safe territory of traditional notions of

French assimilationism, drawing on arguments about social inequalities—rather than racial discrimination—to explain how post-colonial migrants could be included in the republic if they chose to assimilate. Following the logic of many republican scholars, if race does not exist in France, then racial discrimination must also not exist. The immigrant problem, therefore, must be a social one.

Some recent French studies of gender and ethnicity attempt to address these blind spots within French scholarship by arguing that race should be accepted as a viable category of analysis.¹² In *De la Question Sociale à la Question Raciale ?* (From the Social Question to the Racial Question?) Fassin et al insist that difference in France is both visualized and conceptualized and “it is now time to admit that discrimination exists, that it is moreover, racial, and remains an insurmountable difficulty.”¹³ Fassin argues that failing to name “race” as a category of analysis has led to the labeling of individuals and groups as foreigners, even though many are technically French citizens.¹⁴ In other words, youth living in banlieues, most of whom are born in France, or came from French overseas territories, are labeled “immigrants” even though they are citizens.

While many English languages studies approach the problem of difference in France in terms of post-colonial migrants’ cultural citizenship, this dissertation approaches the problem of difference in terms of cultural *and* social rights. By focusing on social welfare, my project explicitly engages with Republican discourse and the problem of race in France. I argue that only by examining how Republican discourse

¹² For recent French language studies arguing the race should be taken as a viable category of analysis : Didier Fassin and Eric Fassin, *De La Question Sociale À La Question Raciale? : Représenter La Société Française* (Paris: Découverte, 2006).234. and Michel Wieviorka, "Is Multiculturalism the Solution?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 5 (1998).884.

¹³ Fassin and Fassin, *De La Question Sociale À La Question Raciale? : Représenter La Société Française*.256.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*.24.

makes sense of the social question can we illuminate the unnamed politics of race in France. More specifically, I argue that the social question reflects a cluster of shifting common sense assumptions about class, culture, *and* race. I demonstrate how the category “immigrant” is constructed over time and in relation to conceptions of social welfare and race.

THE SOCIAL QUESTION AND THE LEGACY OF EMPIRE

“The social question” has been described as a “catch-all phrase referring to an amalgam”¹⁵ of degenerative social problems like poverty, mental illness, and alcoholism.¹⁶ In *The Policing of Families*, Jacques Donzelot describes “the social” as an emerging sector aimed at solving the problem of the social question.¹⁷ According to Donzelot, in the nineteenth century, the social emerged as an object that could be worked upon—where particular categories, like the family—became important units of analysis integral to codifying and normalizing concepts of social welfare.¹⁸

¹⁵ Janet R. Home, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France : The Musée Social & the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).¹⁷

¹⁶For studies on late nineteenth century anxieties about disease, degeneration, and national decline see: Andrew Robert Aisenberg, *Contagion : Disease, Government, and The "Social Question" In Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), David S. Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease : Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), Louis Chevalier, *Classes Laborieuses Et Classes Dangereuses À Paris Pendant La Première Moitié Du Xixe Siècle* (Paris,: Plon, 1958), Ruth Harris, *Murders and Madness : Medicine, Law, and Society in the Fin De Siècle*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford New York: Clarendon Press ;

Oxford University Press, 1989), George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality : Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, 1st ed. (New York: H. Fertig, 1985), Robert A. Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France : The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration : A European Disorder, C.1848-C.1918*, Ideas in Context (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Cesare Lombroso, Mary Gibson, and Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Criminal Man* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ For discussions of governmentality and the family see: Jacques Donzelot, "The Policing of Families," Pantheon Books.

¹⁸ Recent studies have attempted to “rethink” the social by suggesting that identities, cultures, and concepts of belonging are also articulated in relationship to material well-being. See: Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History : What's Left of the Social?* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press,

While earlier studies of “the social question” have focused on reform efforts in mainland France, more recent studies of empire have discussed how metropolitan social reforms were developing within a larger imperial context. For example, the late nineteenth century was a key moment when Republican reformers established social programs like universal education and mandatory male conscription in the effort to create French citizens.¹⁹ These social programs were implemented as France acquired new territories in Africa and developed new methods for colonial management as part of what scholars have called “the civilizing mission.”²⁰ Other studies have argued that the colonies served as a laboratory for developing new modes of governance and urban planning which were later adopted in the metropole.²¹ Lastly, scholarship has described how colonial categories and perceptions of race have led to the production and classification of groups.²² This work in French colonial studies have followed Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler’s call to take the colonies and metropole in one analytic frame²³ and to show how the nation is constituted through and within empire.²⁴

2007), Margaret Somers, "Let Them Eat Social Capital," *Thesis Eleven* 81, no. May (2005). Other work has attempted to unpack the term itself, arguing against the social as a thing or domain, but as a process: a network of categories and associations. See: Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Floya Anthias and Michael P. Kelly, *Sociological Debates: Thinking About 'the Social'*, Greenwich Readers ; 13 (Dartford, England: Greenwich University Press, 1995).

¹⁹ Eugen Joseph Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977)

²⁰ See: James R. Lehning, *Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Judith Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen: Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

²¹ Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

²² Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria, Society and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (London New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed by St. Martin's, 1995).

²³ Burton, *After the Imperial Turn*, Cooper and Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and*

In addition to concerns about national decline and colonial management, historical debates about social rights are part of the legacy of the social question. Should citizens be guaranteed a certain standard of living? What role should the state play in facilitating quality of life? While such questions were posed as far back as the French Revolution, the late nineteenth century was a key moment for the development of nascent welfare institutions. Scholarship has discussed the role of charitable institutions, and later the state, in developing pro-natal and maternity programs for women.²⁵ In the early twentieth century, particularly during World War One, these programs developed into more comprehensive family allowance regimes. In addition to state initiated maternity programs, many French workers also paid into employer run insurance programs. These individually managed regimes typically covered workers against risks of accident and unemployment.²⁶

the Imperial World (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics : Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), Levine, *Gender and Empire*, Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

²⁴ Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire : Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*. Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2001).

²⁵ Fuchs and American Council of Learned Societies., "Poor and Pregnant in Paris Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century.", Elizabeth Harvey, *Youth and the Welfare State in Weimar Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), Home, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France: The Musée Social and the Rise of the Welfare State*, Seth Koven, and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain and the United States, 1880-1920," *American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (1990), Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State : Britain and France, 1914-1945*, Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social : The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*, Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender : Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). Jacqueline Ancelin, *L'action Sociale Familiale Et Les Caisses D'allocations Familiales: Un Siecle D'histoire* (Paris: Association Pour l'Etude de l'Histoire de la Securite Sociale, 1997).

²⁶ John S. Ambler, *The French Welfare State : Surviving Social and Ideological Change* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), Paul V. Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State : The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947*, New Studies in European History (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), François Ewald, *L'etat Providence* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1986), Philip G. Nord, "The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914," *French Historical Studies* 18, no. 3 (1994). Timothy B. Smith, *Creating the Welfare State in France, 1880-1940* (Montreal ; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

As scholars like Frederick Cooper and Gary Wilder have argued, efforts to develop welfare regimes during the interwar period in metropolitan France were occurring as colonial subjects began to agitate for greater access to political and social rights in Asia and Africa.²⁷ French colonial officials attempted to reconcile republican principles of equality with differentialist practices of governance central to the colonial project. They were forced to reconsider the meaning of citizenship and the degree to which colonial subjects were French.

THE POST 1945 WELFARE STATE

The social question took on new meaning following World War Two. During the period of reconstruction, local and national government officials and ordinary people were attempting to re-build, but also to re-think the relationship between citizen and state, metropole and colony, and what it meant to be French. They debated the possibility of a universal welfare state that would guarantee social rights to all citizens. As officials developed plans for a nationalized welfare state, social citizenship, or the right to a quality of life and a certain standard of living, formed a cornerstone of developing welfare policies.²⁸

²⁷ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society : The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, African Studies Series ; 89 (Cambridge, England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Frederick Cooper, *Struggle for the City : Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa*, Sage Series on African Modernization and Development ; V. 8 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Books on Demand, 2002), Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940 : The Past of the Present*, New Approaches to African History (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State : Negritude & Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

²⁸ For description of the three kinds of citizenship, including “social citizenship” according to T.H. Marshall see: T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays* (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1950).

Like many Western European countries after World War Two, France began to consider legislature for comprehensive social security. Reformers drew heavily on Britain's Beveridge Report²⁹ as a blueprint for a welfare regime which would include nationalized health care, family allowances, and pensions.³⁰ On October 4, 1945, the French provisional government introduced the ordinance for a *regime general*, which would be the basis for a national social security program.³¹ Almost immediately, however, this proposal for a universal system met with heavy opposition from existing worker compensation regimes. Established insurance based regimes hesitated to participate in a national program and risk losing some of their worker compensation and pension benefits. After ongoing negotiations, in 1947, the provisional government reached a compromise by passing a series of laws which established a system of individually negotiated contracts. While social reformers had envisioned a universal welfare state, what developed was a system that built on the existing guild-like insurance regimes. Each industry or union would negotiate a separate contract with the state.³²

²⁹ For studies of the British welfare state see: M.J. Daunton, "Payment and Participation: Welfare and State-Formation in Britain 1900-1951," *Past and Present* 150, no. February (1996), Geoffrey B. A. M. Finlayson, *Citizen, State, and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford [England] New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1994), David Gladstone, *British Social Welfare : Past, Present, and Future* (London ; [Bristol, Pa.]: UCL Press, 1995), Rodney Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945*, 3rd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), Robert M. Page and Richard Silburn, *British Social Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire New York: Macmillan Press ; St. Martin's Press, 1999).

³⁰ Smith, *Creating the Welfare State in France, 1880-1940*.32

³¹ Daniël Beland and Randall Hansen, "Reforming the French Welfare State: Solidarity, Social Exclusion and the Three Crises of Citizenship," *West European Politics* 23, no. 1 (2000).52

³² For example, one of the first laws passed recognized the already established insurance regimes and liberal professions. A 1948 law recognized the self-employed and in 1951, farmers established their pensioners contract. Smith, *Creating the Welfare State in France, 1880-1940*.32

Welfare scholars have criticized the French “corporatist” system³³ for maintaining income within groups, rather than encouraging a system of distribution and greater equity across classes and demographic groups.³⁴ According to this critique, what developed in France was a welfare system based on “separate and unequal pension systems.”³⁵ As Smith argues: “in the French system, benefits are indeed widespread but not universal in nature; different occupations have bargained (and gone on strike) for more favorable deals within the welfare state.”³⁶ In other words, the French system of occupational solidarity protects those who pay into the system, providing insurance and pensions for workers and their families. Other studies have argued that the French corporatist system has led to a late twentieth century “crisis” of the welfare state by producing rigid socio-economic inequalities: it is easier to maintain a job than get a job, leading to a stagnant labor market and high levels of unemployment among youth and recent migrants.

In addition to scholarship critical of the corporatist French social security system, recent studies have also interrogated the gendered aspects of the welfare state.³⁷ These

³³ For sociological categorization of welfare states see: Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 1990). Esping-Anderson differentiates between the social-democratic welfare state epitomized by Scandinavian states, the Corporatist-Statist model characterized by Germany, and finally the liberal welfare state, or the American model.

³⁴ Jet Bussemaker, *Citizenship and Welfare State Reform in Europe*, Routledge/Ecpr Studies in European Political Science ; 8 (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999), Hansen, "Reforming the French Welfare State: Solidarity, Social Exclusion and the Three Crises of Citizenship.", Timothy B. Smith, *France in Crisis : Welfare, Inequality, and Globalization since 1980* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³⁵ While social security regimes were insurance based—employees paid into a retirement fund—other elements of the developing welfare state were tax based—including the health system. Therefore, much of the French welfare system is corporatist, while some elements, like health care, are nationalized and more universal. Smith, *Creating the Welfare State in France, 1880-1940*.³¹

³⁶ ———, *France in Crisis : Welfare, Inequality, and Globalization since 1980*.²¹

³⁷ For discussion of the gendered welfare state: Lynne A. Haney, "Engendering the Welfare State. A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 4 (1998), Jane Lewis, *Women's Welfare : Women's Rights* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), Jane Lewis, *Gender, Social Care, and Welfare State Restructuring in Europe* (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Ashgate, 1998), Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State." Ann Shola Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States," *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 3 (1993), Lynne A. Haney, "Engendering the Welfare State. A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in*

studies are part of a larger critique that welfare states have historically favored a “male breadwinner model.” According to gender historians, the French welfare state “reinforced [the] model of the *femme au foyer*” or the role of the housewife and mother in the domestic, private sphere.³⁸

While recent scholarship has discussed the ways in which welfare regimes have produced and institutionalized gender differences, this dissertation examines how the French welfare state has produced and institutionalized ethnic differences. The French metropolitan welfare state developed out of a larger imperial context. More specifically, post World War Two welfare regimes were implemented while France worked out the repercussions of decolonization. As former colonies became independent, France continued to cultivate ties with these new nations by encouraging labor migration to the metropole. Families from former colonies settled in France as government officials, social reformers, and ordinary people visualized a comprehensive welfare state that would guarantee a certain standard of living to all French. Common sense perceptions of social and ethnic difference were instituted through everyday negotiations between government authorities, neighborhood associations, and post-colonial migrants.

Society and History 40, no. 4 (1998), Laura Levine Frader, *Breadwinners and Citizens : Gender in the Making of the French Social Model* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), Laura Levine Frader and Sonya O. Rose, *Gender and Class in Modern Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), Gail Lewis, *Citizenship : Personal Lives and Social Policy*, Personal Lives and Social Policy (Bristol: Policy Press, 2004), Bernard Lewis and Dominique Schnapper, "Muslims in Europe," Printer Publishers : Distributed in the U.S.A. and Canada by St. Martin's Press, Gail Lewis, 'Race', *Gender, Social Welfare : Encounters in a Postcolonial Society* (Cambridge, UK Malden, MA: Polity Press ; Blackwell, 2000), Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Policies in Europe : Work, Family and the State* (Aldershot, England ; Brookfield, Vt.: Edward Elgar, 1993), Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945 : Women, Family, Work and the State in the Post-War Years*, Making Contemporary Britain (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: B. Blackwell, 1992), Jane Lewis, "Women's Welfare : Women's Rights," Croom Helm.
³⁸ Amy Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*, Pitt Series in Policy and Institutional Studies (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995).

MODERN HOMES AND CITIES

While recent welfare state studies have focused on social security and the labor market, this dissertation argues that the mass construction of housing was also an important part of the vision for a comprehensive welfare state.³⁹ Social reformers and urban planners believed that the rational organization of urban and domestic space would help create a modern France. Modernization was thus an important way to facilitate the post war welfare state. As the first minister of Reconstruction and Urbanism, Raul Dautry wrote:

³⁹ For french studies on modernization and the construction of housing see: Rémy Butler and Patrice Noisette, *Le Logement Social En France, 1815-1981 : De La Cité Ouvrière Au Grand Ensemble* (Paris: La Découverte/Maspero, 1983), Rémy Butler and Patrice Noisette, "De La Cité Ouvrière Au Grand Ensemble : La Politique Capitaliste Du Logement Social, 1815-1975," F. Maspero, Sabine Effosse, *L'invention Du Logement Aidé En France : L'immobilier Au Temps Des Trente Glorieuses*, Histoire Économique Et Financière De La France. Etudes Générales, (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 2003), Christian Legrand, Krzysztof Kazimierz Paw*owski, and Bruno Voisin, "Le Logement Populaire Et Social En Lyonnais, 1848-2000," Editions aux Arts, Jean-Marc Stébé, *Le Logement Social En France : 1789 À Nos Jours*, 2e. ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002), Rosemary Wakeman, *The Heroic City : Paris, 1945-1958* (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), Rosemary Wakeman, *Modernizing the Provincial City : Toulouse, 1945-1975* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). For public housing and planning in Britain: Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth, *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950* (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), Patrick Dunleavy, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945-1975 : A Study of Corporate Power and Professional Influence in the Welfare State* (Oxford New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1981), Anthony D. King, *Buildings and Society : Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment* (London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), Joseph Melling, "Rent Strikes : Peoples' Struggle for Housing in West Scotland, 1890-1916," Polygon Books, Stephen Merrett, "State Housing in Britain," Routledge & Kegan Paul, Mark Swenarton, *Homes Fit for Heroes : The Politics and Architecture of Early State Housing in Britain* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981), P. J. Waller, *The English Urban Landscape* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For studies of city planning and housing in the United States: John F. Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal : Urban Planning in Philadelphia, 1920-1974* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), Robert B. Fairbanks, *Making Better Citizens : Housing Reform and the Community Development Strategy in Cincinnati, 1890-1960*, Greater Cincinnati Bicentennial History Series (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), David M. Freund, *Colored Property : State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), Ann Durkin Keating, *Building Chicago : Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), Edward K. Spann, *Designing Modern America : The Regional Planning Association of America and Its Members*, Urban Life and Urban Landscape Series (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), Stanley K. Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture : American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920*, Technology and Urban Growth (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream : A Social History of Housing in America*, 1st MIT Press paperback ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).

“It’s necessary to conceive of and realize the modern organization of life. Since ‘rationalizing’ signifies the coordination of efforts, avoiding waste, establishing a solidarity of interests, the distribution of natural riches, the increase of general prosperity, the time has come to ‘rationalize’ the city.”⁴⁰

Urban planners and architects believed that the Fordist principles of rationality directing industrial enterprise could also be applicable to the production and management of space. Technical progress would ensure social progress.⁴¹ As social reformer and later head of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism, Eugène Claudius-Petit wrote in 1950:

“Urbanism is the putting in order of the city... Urbanism is the combined action of all administrators, all architects, all those who are builders in various ways in order to model the city of tomorrow... the justification of our mechanized civilization is not only to drive machines, it’s to put machines and their capacities at the service of men... We will overturn the anarchy that accumulated during the century and a half of industry and mechanization... Before, city urbanism and architecture was principally directed toward palaces, the palaces of the powerful; today urbanism is directed by administrative bureaucracies. Before, cities developed over the long term by the installation of a bridge, later a cathedral, later a large industrial complex. Now, we design cities in their entirety, in new neighborhoods we have to construct housing for the greatest number which requires a new politics of habitation... In this great enterprise, urbanism is not the work of single architects or solitary urbanists, no longer the task of mayors in their cities, but it’s the action of all those devoted to the city.”⁴²

Claudius-Petit distinguished between an antiquated urbanism, and the post war urbanism. The old urbanism, characterized by the Haussmannization of Paris, was the work of great men for great men, a kind of trickle-down approach where the people would benefit remotely from the building of a palace or public work. For Claudius-Petit, the post-war urbanism benefitted the people themselves by putting the city itself in order. Urbanists like Claudius-Petit conceived of the city in its entirety, as a problem to be solved by a

⁴⁰ Jean-Paul Flamand, *Loger Le Peuple : Essai Sur L'histoire Du Logement Social En France*, Textes À L'appui. Série Histoire Contemporaine (Paris: La Découverte, 1989), 203.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁴² Claudius-petit, *Urbanisme*, no. 5-6, 1950

network of planners and bureaucrats who worked together to systematically re-organize the city. More equitable access to modern living would occur through establishing networks of administrators, planners, and technical experts dedicated to a new politics of habitation and city planning.

Many urban planners were influenced by the modernist visions of architects and designers like Le Corbusier and Bauhaus. Le Corbusier, for example, envisioned new architectural forms that would simplify and rationalize domestic space and forever solve urban problems like slums. For example his *Immeubles Villas* (1922) featured cubicle-like single apartments stacked vertically in large blocks, each apartment equipped with a living room, kitchen, bedroom, and terrace. He also designed entire cities. His *Villa Contemporaine*, for example, was designed around the notion that the future city would be defined by skyscrapers, with the automobile becoming the privileged method of transportation. Between 1931 and 1942 Le Corbusier also developed plans for the reorganization and redevelopment of the casbah in Algiers.⁴³

After world war two, several countries commissioned Le Corbusier to design and construct a series of experimental buildings.⁴⁴ In Marseille, Le Corbusier was commissioned to build an experimental housing project, the *Unité d'Habitation*, intended as a prototype for modern living and a possible solution to the housing crisis paralyzing France after World War Two. As Le Corbusier wrote in *L'Homme et l'architecture*:

“the *Unité d'Habitation de grandeur conforme* is being built in Marseilles... This is the outcome—a prototype set up at the crossroads of architectural revival. It

⁴³ Zeynep Celik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism," *Assemblage* 17, no. April (1992).61

⁴⁴ For studies of Le Corbusier's global projects and influence see: Vikramaditya Prakash, *Chandigarh's Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India*, Studies in Modernity and National Identity (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), Irena *Zantovská Murray, Julian Osley, and RIBA Trust., "Le Corbusier and Britain: An Anthology," Routledge, Gérard Monnier et al., "Le Corbusier Et Le Japon," Picard, Mardges Bacon, *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), Alejandro Lapunzina, "Le Corbusier's Maison Curutchet," Princeton Architectural Press.

represents people's efficient mode of living in the machine age. It represents the fundamental reform of modern city planning. By grouping in one harmonious block a natural social group—a community—it provides a 'vertical garden city' solution... The Marseille project will have a worldwide impact."⁴⁵

Le Corbusier's *L'Unité*, and many of his other designs, contributed to a modernist vocabulary and method for urban planning that would influence the efforts of urban planners in France and abroad.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Le Corbusier, from *L'Homme et L'Architecture*, quoted in Jacques Sbriglio, *Le Corbusier : L'Unité D'habitation De Marseille Et Les Autres Unités D'habitation À Rezé-Les-Nantes, Berlin, Briey En Forêt Et Firminy = the Unité D'habitation in Marseilles and the Four Other Unité Blocks in Rezé-Les-Nantes, Berlin, Briey En Forêt and Firminy*, Bilingual original ed., 1 vols. (Paris Basel; Boston: Fondation Le Corbusier; Birkäuser, 2004). 148

⁴⁶ For studies of modernist architecture and city planning: M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City : The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983), John Robert Gold, *The Experience of Modernism : Modern Architects and the Future City, 1928-53*, 1st ed. (London ; New York: E & FN Spon, 1997), Ross King, *Emancipating Space : Geography, Architecture, and Urban Design*, Mappings (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), Christopher Wilk, *Modernism, 1914-1939 : Designing a New World* (London New York: V & A Publications ; Distributed in North America by Harry N. Abrams, 2006).

Figure I.1 Le Corbusier's *L'Unité d'Habitation* or *Cité Radieuse* in Marseille, France⁴⁷



This twelve story concrete building, suspended on large columns includes 337 apartments as well as shops, a hotel and restaurant, sporting, medical and educational facilities. The *unité* was meant to represent a contained and almost self-sufficient community.

While Le Corbusier's principles for rationalizing urban space are visible in much of the mass housing constructed from the 1950s through the 1970s in France, his notion of modern living was also met with opposition, particularly from local residents. For example, although Le Corbusier's L'Unité d'habitation was hailed as the prototype for modern living and the future of domestic and urban life, many Marseille residents opposed the project: "Le Corbusier is monstrously indifferent to the elementary life

⁴⁷ Photo by author, April 2007.

needs of families.”⁴⁸ A headline in the Marseille regional paper *Le Provençal* asked, “Corbusier, should he be condemned?” and continued:

“Le Corbusier chose the most uncomfortable habitat model. The apartments in the ‘*cit  Radieuse*’ are in the fashionable style. But they are also inconvenient with rooms with insufficient sunlight, kitchens in half-light ... The housekeeper will pass the days by ascending and descending those stairs... The kitchen to the side of the common room is poorly ventilated and disperses odors. Is that the hundred percent comfort that M. Le Corbusier pretends to offer?”⁴⁹

Monsieur Vergnolles, president of a local housing association was also quoted in the article:

“The thing that displeased me, it’s that the Le Corbusier building presents itself like an official attempt to direct how we live. One of the collaborators of Le Corbusier declared ‘that we wanted to teach the French how to live’ ... *La Cit  Radieuse* is, actually, an attempt to dehumanize; the man who lives there will be separated from the exterior world, will live in an artificial atmosphere without contact with nature. This is why we protest against the edification of this building... The dream of each Frenchman is the villa, with a small garden. Instead of that, they want to contain him in this blind and monstrous building”⁵⁰

Although Le Corbusier claimed to understand the domestic and spatial needs of ordinary people, Marseille residents argued that the *Unit * may have looked fashionable, but was impractical and even indifferent to their needs. According to them, most French wanted to live in single family homes, but were being “taught how to live” in large, concrete apartment buildings. Resident contestations about Le Corbusier’s *L’Unit  d’Habitation* point to the ways in which local debates about modernization are an important part of the developing post war welfare state. The debate over the *Unit * also points to the

⁴⁸ *Le Monde Ouvrier*, October 10, 1946, quoted in Bruno Duriez, Michel Chauvi re, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L’invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, Les Cahiers Du G.R.M.F., (Villeneuve d’Ascq [France]: Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux, 1992). 31

⁴⁹ clipping from *Le Provençal*, date, author unknown, in Le Corbusier dossier, Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 64

⁵⁰ clipping from *Le Provençal*, date, author unknown, in Le Corbusier dossier, Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 64

importance of locality and how residents participated in government plans for modernization.

MAKING SENSE OF MARSEILLE: DIFFERENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Because of its geographical position as a port city on the Mediterranean sea, Marseille has been a key node between metropolitan France and overseas colonies and territories. As a gateway between metropole and colony, Marseille is an important site for making sense of how post-1945 national debates about the meaning of citizenship were always occurring within a larger imperial context. For example, after World War Two, France renegotiated the relationship between citizen and state and developed a framework for a comprehensive post war welfare state. Many of these debates were worked out at the local level, in neighborhoods and through everyday negotiations between families and municipal officials. As a city of historical migration, post-war debates about social citizenship in Marseille often occurred between families from former colonies and local officials. My attention to these local debates thus highlights how the legacy of empire has shaped French understandings about who has the right to citizenship and the degree to which residents should have access to social rights like a certain standard of living.

By focusing on local debates, I show how everyday life is an important realm for making sense of the larger themes of modernization and decolonization. Scholarship on everyday life has discussed the importance of locality, or the situatedness of individuals in their quotidian worlds: “everyday life is above all *situated*. It always occurs in

relation to a person's immediate locality."⁵¹ In my conversations with Marseille residents, the city itself, i.e. its geography, history as a port city, and the ways in which difference is an important feature of everyday life, shape residents' sense of belonging.

For example, during the 2005 civil unrest, violence in Marseille was relatively minimal—a few cars were torched, a few stores were looted. Many residents invoked Marseille's history of migration as one explanation for the lack of rioting, explaining that Marseillais were used to living with different kinds of people. They often speak of how Greek sailors first settled Marseille in 600 B.C. after which the city developed into an important center of trade through the medieval and early modern period. Many Marseille residents also trace their roots to the nineteenth century, when migrants came to Marseille from Southern Europe, including Spain, Italy, and Corsica. After the First World War, a sizeable population of Armenians fleeing the genocide in Turkey also settled in Marseille.⁵² Finally, in the 1960s, during decolonization, Marseille's population nearly

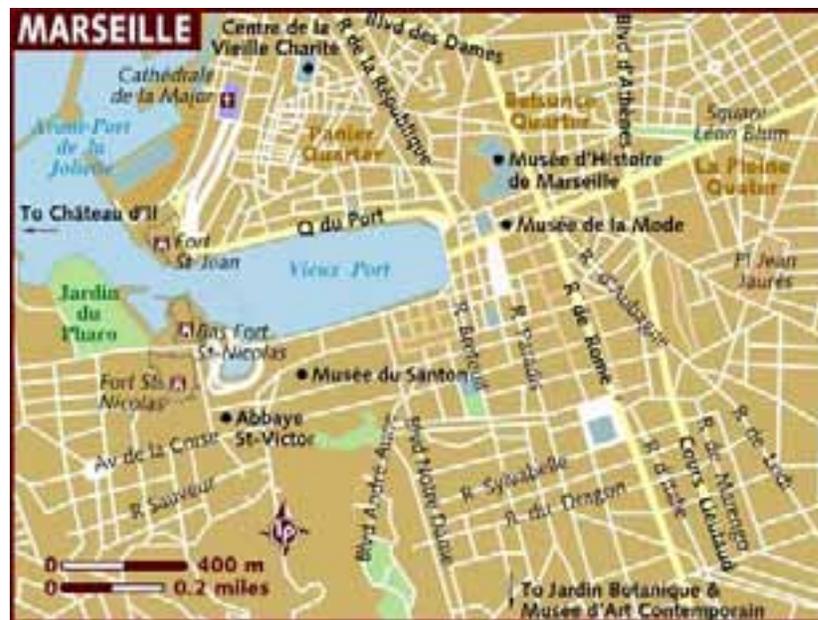
⁵¹ Agnes Heller quoted in Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country : The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985).8. For discussion of the transformative potential within everyday life and practices see: Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, Special ed. (London ; New York: Verso, 2008). For recent discussion of major themes in everyday life studies see: Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory : An Introduction* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002), Ben Highmore, *The Everyday Life Reader* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁵² For studies of the history of migration to Marseille: Emile Témime, *Histoire Des Migrations À Marseille* ([France]: Editions Jeanne Laffitte, 2007), Pierre Echinard and Emile Témime, *Histoire Des Migrations À Marseille* (La Calade, Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1989), Emile Témime, *Histoire De Marseille* (Marseille: Laffitte, 2006), Emile Temime, *Histoire De Marseille : De La Révolution À Nos Jours* ([Paris]: Perrin, 1999), Jean-Jacques Jordi and Emile Témime, *Marseille Et Le Choc Des Décolonisations : Les Rapatriements, 1954-1964* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1996). For studies of contemporary local politics in Marseille : Claude Bertrand, *Illusions Et Réalités De La Vie Politique À Marseille* (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 1998), André Donzel, and Jacques Guilhaumou, " Les Acteurs Du Champ De L'exclusion À La Lumière De La Tradition Civique Marseillaise," in *Exclusions Au Coeur De La Cité*, ed. Dominique Schnapper (Paris: Economica, 2001), André Donzel, *Métropolisation, Gouvernance Et Citoyenneté Dans La Région Urbaine Marseillaise* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001), Marcel Roncayolo, *Les Grammaires D'une Ville : Essai Sur La Genèse Des Structures Urbaines À Marseille*, Civilisations Et Sociétés, (Paris: Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1996), Marcel Roncayolo, *L'imaginaire De Marseille : Port, Ville, Pôle*, Collection "Histoire Du Commerce Et De L'industrie De Marseille Xixe-Xxe Siècles", ([Marseille]: Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Marseille, 1990), Marcel Roncayolo,

doubled as post-colonial migrants fled to the metropole for political reasons, or in search of work. In my conversations with young people who lived in my neighborhood in Marseille, teenagers seemed to embrace a local identity as Marseillais, but also invoke their ethnic and cultural heritage. As one young man explained to me when I asked him where he came from: “I am Marseillais, but my parents came from the Comores.” Another described himself as Algerien-Francais.⁵³

When explaining why they feel a sense of belonging as Marseillais, residents also invoke the city’s geography. Much of Marseille’s historical development has been oriented around the Old Port. Geographically and in local imagination, Marseille is organized along a north-south divide.

Figure I.2 Map of Downtown Marseille



Marseille : Les Territoires Du Temps, 1re éd. ed., Collection "Patrimoine Et Territoires," (Paris: Editions locales de France, 1996).

⁵³ Oral histories with F.H. and I.K. December 2007.

Northern neighborhoods have historically been associated with working class, migrant areas, while neighborhoods south of the Vieux Port have been more affluent. In the late nineteenth through mid twentieth centuries, these northern neighborhoods were inhabited by Italian, Spanish, and Corsican families. In the late twentieth centuries, these neighborhoods have been associated with post-colonial migrants from north and sub-Saharan Africa, even though many Italian and Spanish descendants still live in these areas. Like the banlieues in other French cities, the neighborhoods north of the Old Port, are often imagined as dangerous areas, with high levels of unemployment, crime, and foreigners.

Unlike other French cities, some of Marseille's most rundown neighborhoods are located downtown. In cities like Paris and Lyon, the urban areas that erupted into violence in 2005 were located on the outskirts of these cities, or the *banlieues*. Historically, working class and migrant families have been pushed toward the peripheries of French cities, while affluent families remain at the center. In contrast, in Marseille, the poorest neighborhoods descend into the center of the city. Many Marseille residents thus discuss having a place at the center of the city as an important part of their sense of belonging.⁵⁴

In addition to the ways in which the geography of the city shapes residents' sense of belonging, Marseille neighborhoods are also important localities. When I arrived in Marseille in 2007 to begin my archival research, I moved to the *Panier* neighborhood,

⁵⁴ See, in particular, the *Bloq Quartier Noailles*, a blog where residents and merchants discuss local concerns, the importance of the Noailles Market, and how residents can find the kinds of ingredients, products and foodstuffs not easily available in more traditional groceries: <http://quartiermoailles.over-blog.com/>, last accessed by author on May 6, 2010. For scholarship on local merchants in the Noailles Market see: Sylvie Bredeloup, "Marseille, Carrefour Des Mobilités Africaines," in *Cabas Et Containers: Activités Marchandes Informelles Et Réseaux Transnationaux À Marseille Et Istanbul*, ed. Michel Peraldi (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larsoe, 2001), Marie Sengel, "Nana-Benz De Noailles," *Hommes et Migrations* 1224, no. Mars-Avril (2000).

located just above the old port. When asked about the Panier, many residents discuss its importance as an historic site, as Marseille's oldest neighborhood where Greek sailors first settled in 600 B.C. As one resident told me, "This is an historic neighborhood."⁵⁵ As another resident explained: "the Greeks came to this area because it is a hill, and one of the few places in the area with potable water underground. There's still water here, that's why our houses are so humid and there are mosquitoes everywhere."⁵⁶

Residents also remember World War Two as an important part of the Panier's history. In 1944, the Germans, in collaboration with local speculators, dynamited roughly half of the Panier. The Germans were convinced that the Panier's narrow, dank streets, and dense buildings made hiding Jews and resistance members easier, and local real estate speculators had long eyed the prime real estate beneath the tenements:

"the evacuation was done by the Germans, but it was the French who gave the authorization. They did it so they could build new houses... They said there were terrorists, murderers, and thieves in there, but they were just people like us. Laborers, dockers, fisherman, you know, Marseillais."⁵⁷

After World War Two, the city reconstructed most of the dynamited portion of the neighborhood, building new, modern apartments. As one resident recalled:

"the new buildings were for the rich, they were too expensive for us. We had outhouses, for example, you had to descend three flights of stairs just to use the toilet... toilet paper? No, we used newspaper. You buy the morning paper, read it, and then use it in the outhouse"

Panier residents also describe the importance of migration to their neighborhood:

⁵⁵ Oral history, E.L. November 2007

⁵⁶ Resident interview in *Le Panier et Ses Histoires*, a film by 6 children who live in the Panier, produced by Atelier Vide. Bibliotheque Alcazar

⁵⁷ Resident Interview in *Le Panier et Ses Histoires*, filmed by 6 children who live in the Panier, produced by Atelier Vide. Bibliotheque Alcazar

“the history of the Panier? It’s the oldest neighborhood in Marseille. It’s also the history of immigration. We come from other countries and are first, second, and third generation. Like me, I’m from Croatia, but I’ve been here for a while and married a French woman. I found a job. Then there’s my friend, here, with his mother, who are of Algerian origin. Many came for economic reasons. From Algeria, Yugoslavia, Armenia, Morocco, Tunisia. Here we *mélange*. There are a lot of Comorians. People from the Maghreb. There are Vietnamese, Chinese.”⁵⁸

When asked why they like the Panier, several residents describe the diversity of their neighborhood:

“Me, I love the Panier, I’ve lived here for a long time. There are a lot of people who came from elsewhere and settled in the Panier. And all these people give me recipes which I use in my restaurant...”⁵⁹

As another resident described, “I like the Panier because it’s like a village in the city ... You sit in the sun, drink a coffee... *voilà quoi*”⁶⁰

Residents also articulate what they don’t like about the Panier. With its narrow, winding streets and steep staircases, the Panier is difficult to access, except on foot. As one resident protested: “There are too many stairs which is hard for old people.”⁶¹

Because apartments are very small, most children play outside, on the narrow streets. As one young girl explained: “we want stuff for kids. Because there’s nothing. No football field, nothing.”⁶²

Many of the old buildings were not retrofitted with indoor running water and plumbing until the 1980s, others have fallen into gross disrepair: “We need to fix the

⁵⁸ Resident Interview in Ibid.

⁵⁹ Resident Interview in Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *Messages Personnels*. Uploaded to TabascoVideo.com on Sunday, March 19, 2006. Viewed by author on April 19, 2010. <http://www.tabascovideo.com/pages/video.php?vidId=101>

⁶² Resident interview, Ibid.

really old buildings that threaten to collapse on the people who live there.”⁶³ Squatters live in some of the most unsound tenements, and landlords take advantage of recent and undocumented migrants by charging exorbitant rents for rundown apartments: “we need decent housing... there is also a lot of unemployment. It’s a well known neighborhood, but here, people suffer. There is no work, no decent housing. We live in tiny apartments. The problem is the question of housing.”⁶⁴

Crime is another key concern for Panier residents. As one young man explained: “The inconveniences of the neighborhood? Not enough security. You see fights, brawls all the time.” Another spoke of the problem of drugs.⁶⁵ Yet another explained, “Me, I began with small things (*des conneries*). Stealing bicycles mostly. And then hid them in my basement. Then I did all sorts of stuff—stole all sorts of things—from apartments, stores... I even stole the *carte bleu* (debit card) from one of my teachers... then I stopped going to school.”⁶⁶

Cleanliness is also a central concern for Panier residents: “It’s not clean!”⁶⁷ As an elderly gentleman asserted: “Citizens should understand in their heads that it’s better to live on a clean street than in filth. You have a trash heap, there [pointing behind him and up the narrow street] that for two days has been like that.”⁶⁸

In the Panier, many embrace the history of migration to the neighborhood at the same time they speak of recent migration as a local problem and concern: “me, I was

⁶³ Resident interview, *ibid.*

⁶⁴ Resident interview, *ibid.*

⁶⁵ DJ DEL interview for www.streetlive.fr. Uploaded by author on May 8, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mq8OeSaoJEw&feature=related>

⁶⁶ Oral history with R.L. March 2008

⁶⁷ Oral history with E.L. conducted by author, November 2007.

⁶⁸ Resident interview, *ibid.*

born in the Panier, there were a lot of Italians, we were always outside, it was lively. Now, there are different people living there.”⁶⁹

During the year I lived in the Panier, I observed several sites in the neighborhood to be important meeting places for Panier residents where they often discussed many of the concerns outlined above. The front step of my building on the Rue du Refuge was a daily meeting point for many of the women in the neighborhood. From this vantage point, they could see to each end of the long narrow street, particularly the front entrance of the elementary school on one end as their children were dismissed from school. From my front step they could also see down several side streets and could watch their children as they played outside. These women spoke French with the Marseillais twang interspersed with a few Arabic phrases and local slang. They mostly *tchatche*—or chewed the fat—however they also discussed neighborhood problems, like what to do about a noisy neighbor, or what to do about a recent slew of eviction notices distributed by the city.

Another important rialto in my neighborhood was the local bar-café, L’Equivoque. Here leathery male laborers would gather after a day’s work. Many were single workers who sent money home to families in Algeria. Many spoke to each other about *le bled*, or their hometown villages where they left their families to work in France. Many lived in dilapidated squats, while some roomed in shabby hotels. By 8pm, the bar was packed as other Panier residents gathered to sip Pastis or tea from small glasses.

L’Equivoque was also an important meeting place for residents concerned about the future of their neighborhood, particularly about the city’s efforts to redevelop

⁶⁹ Resident interview, *Le Panier et Ses Histoires*, filmed by 6 children who live in the Panier, produced by Atelier Vide. Bibliotheque Alcazar

downtown. For most of these residents, the issue was not that the city planned to rehabilitate the neighborhood, but that the city seemed to be excluding existing residents from future renovation plans. Panier residents wanted to participate in the rehabilitation of their rundown neighborhoods rather than be forced to move because of raised rents. From these informal meetings at the Equivoque, residents established more formal organizations, notably the organization Un Centre Ville Pour Tous.

What can the everyday experiences and concerns of Panier residents tell us about the larger themes of modernization and decolonization? For Patrick Wright, everyday life is the place where “society [is] lived and put into action,” where contingency and agency overlap.⁷⁰ For scholars like Karel Kosik, “the everyday is a world whose dimensions and potentialities an individual can control and calculate with his abilities and resources.”⁷¹ Other scholars, notably Agnes Heller, have discussed everyday life in terms of a “heterogeneous complex of lived relationships.”⁷² In other words, Panier residents develop and negotiate a complex and layered set of relationships, and those relationships are situated in time in place.

For Heller, the situatedness of these relationships develops out of what she calls the need to “make sense” of the contingencies and particularities of everyday life. Quotidian patterns—going to L’Equivoque, gathering with neighbors on the front stoop—gain meaning by becoming ritualized and part of a daily narrative: “stories play a prominent part in the everyday activity of *making sense*. They help bring things into the order of *our* world...Making sense is a fundamental activity of everyday life.”⁷³ In

⁷⁰ Wright, *On Living in an Old Country : The National Past in Contemporary Britain*.7. For

⁷¹ Karel Kosik quoted in *Ibid.* 6

⁷² *Ibid.* 7

⁷³ Wright, *On Living in an Old Country : The National Past in Contemporary Britain*.15

this sense, the making of narratives, the forming of communities, and the ritualization of everyday practices are part of the “making sense” of everyday life and the ways in which everyday life becomes “taken-for-granted.”

In the field of British cultural studies, members of the Birmingham school, particularly Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, discuss common sense ideologies of race and ethnicity in terms of taken for granted assumptions about difference.⁷⁴ For example, Gilroy argues that common sense ideologies are “storehouse[s] of knowledge which [have] been gathered together historically.”⁷⁵ Common sense ideologies are constantly being articulated even though they are perceived to be static. In particular, Gilroy argues that common sense ideologies naturalize difference by naturalizing the social order “by obscuring the historical struggles that have produced the present configuration of social forces.”⁷⁶

This dissertation examines how Marseille residents have made sense of difference in their everyday lives.⁷⁷ I explore how urban planners and local authorities encountered and attempted to put-in-order the messiness of everyday life, and how the experiences, concerns, and claims of families shaped debates about welfare and state modernization

⁷⁴ For Gramsci’s writings on cultural hegemony see: Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). For the Birmingham school’s work on subcultures, race and ethnicity see: Stuart Hall, *Culture, Media, Language : Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79* (London [Birmingham, West Midlands]: Hutchinson ; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1980), Stuart M. Hall, *Policing the Crisis : Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978), Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London; Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage, 1996), Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals : Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London ; Boston Unwin Hyman,: 1989), Stuart Hall, David Morley, and Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Stuart Hall : Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Comedia (London ; New York: Routledge, 1996), Stuart Hall et al., *Without Guarantees : In Honour of Stuart Hall* (London ; New York: Verso, 2000).

⁷⁵ Gilroy, ‘There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack’ : *The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. 49

⁷⁶ Ibid. 50

⁷⁷ For a study on the importance of narrative in invoking the particularities of everyday working class life see: Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman : A Story of Two Lives* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), Carolyn Steedman, *The Tidy House : Little Girls Writing* (London: Virago, 1982).

efforts. I also examine how residents have understood who belongs in their neighborhoods and made claims about who deserves social rights based on their perceptions of social and ethnic difference. By focusing on these local negotiations about social rights and welfare, I demonstrate how common sense perceptions of racial and social difference became institutionalized in the post-1945 French welfare state.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Part One of the dissertation examines efforts to modernize France during *les trente glorieuses*, or the roughly thirty year period following World War Two. I focus, in particular, on slum-clearance and re-housing practices in Marseille, France. During this period, France relied heavily on labor from former colonies to help rebuild and modernize the nation. Although most French officials assumed that post-colonial migrants were a temporary presence and served a purely economic function, many families from former colonies began to settle and make homes in France.

Chapter two “Citizens, Squatters, and Asocials” explores the postwar housing crisis and squatters’ movement in the context of French reconstruction and everyday life in Marseille. During this moment of possibility, reconstruction was not just about re-building but also re-working the relationship between citizen and state, and metropole and colony. The squatters’ movement began in Marseille and mushroomed throughout France between 1946 and 1950. Squatters debated and helped codify new notions of social welfare with both local and national authorities. In particular, they argued that housing was both a human and social right. As local and national authorities began to affirm citizens’ right to housing, they implemented a detailed re-housing system and a new category “asocial” emerged in distinction from squatters. In the attempt to regulate

and re-house the homeless, many squatting families—especially “Gypsies” and colonial subjects from Africa—were labeled in government discourse as “asocial nomads” and were singled out for re-housing in provisional camps rather than permanent housing. From my examination of municipal memos, national reports, and letters from the squatters’ campaign, I argue that the classification “asocial” was based on a cluster of assumptions about race, culture, and domestic norms. The emerging “asocial” category was based on common-sense notions of French-ness and domesticity even though these very concepts were up for debate.

Modernization and quantitative methods were viewed as a key way to solve social problems after World War Two. Chapter three “Ordering the Disorderly Slum: ‘Standardizing’ Quality of Life in Marseille Shantytowns, 1953-1962” explores the role of local *techniciens* (technocratic experts like urban planners and public health officials) as mediators between everyday life and state redevelopment policies. Local *techniciens* were charged with classifying particular people and places with the goal of codifying a universal standard of human need. They conducted standardized “Individual Household Studies” for each slum-dwelling family in Marseille. Families received a score between 0 and 2.5 and this number corresponded with their level of “adaptation” to modern French domestic practices. Based on this empirical work, local *techniciens* consistently scored “north African” families as the most civilized. In contrast, in their written reports, “north Africans” were often described as the most “degenerate” and uncivilized. The ways in which local *techniciens* imagined the slum contrasted their own empirical work. By introducing local *techniciens* as important intermediaries between local families and the central state, I argue that these officials are a key way to make sense of shifting

notions of social and racial difference: In the early 1950s, the social problem was understood in terms of working class French families, immigrants, and colonial subjects living in slums around France. With the escalating colonial wars of independence—and rising anxieties about colonial subjects living in the France—by the late 1950s, the slum problem was increasingly understood in terms of the specter of “north Africans.”

While chapter three focuses on the modernization efforts of local *techniciens*, chapter four “Modernizing the Metropolis, 1954-1962” examines how Marseille residents imagined and debated the future of a modern Marseille. During the boom years of *les trente glorieuses*, the municipal government initiated a vast program to bulldoze slums, develop downtown, and construct new housing. While urban planning and modernization are often framed in terms of state efforts “from above,” this chapter emphasizes local debates about planning and urbanism “from below.” From city council meeting minutes, resident letters of complaint, and housing applications, I examine how local residents experienced, contested, and participated in modernization. Resident ideas about public good and social welfare often interacted in ambivalent ways with their conceptions of class and ethnicity. They imagined modern living in terms of roads, schools, and who did or did not belong. For example, in a series of letters to city hall, residents of the working class *Belle de Mai* neighborhood complained about families squatting in an abandoned building. They distinguished between the poor squatting Italian and French families, and the “gypsy and north African” families. *Belle de Mai* residents petitioned the municipal government to move the squatting Italian and French families into newly constructed public housing *in the same* neighborhood. In contrast, they requested the city to move the “gypsy and north African” families *out of* their

neighborhood. Residents did not discuss “the public good” in universal terms, but in local ones; their debates about modernizing Marseille centered on their neighborhoods.

While part one explores modernization during the post war boom, part two of the dissertation examines the trope of decline since 1962. After decolonization and the economic recession of the 1970s, public discourse began to increasingly associate the “crisis” of the welfare state with the “immigrant problem.”

Chapter five, “From Colonial Subjects to Immigrant Workers: Continuity and Change in Social Welfare Institutions from 1962-1979” discusses the ambiguous status of post-colonial migrants in France after decolonization. While recent scholarship has discussed *changes* in the political definition of Frenchness after decolonization, this chapter examines key *continuities* in social welfare regimes for former colonial subjects. While colonial subjects were stripped of their legal political standing, they were nonetheless still granted limited welfare allowances. Moreover, the same institutions that administered social welfare programs for colonial subjects during empire continued to do so for “immigrants” after. By showing continuities in social welfare programs, this chapter traces the crystallization of a social welfare hierarchy from the end of empire through the economic downturn of the 1970s. During this period, French metropolitan institutions developed in increasingly racialized terms as “immigrants” were allocated some social rights—like the right to housing—but were denied political rights on the basis of their “foreignness.”

Chapter six “Neighborhoods in Crisis and the New Dangerous Classes, 1973-1989” examines how state officials, researchers, and the media constructed certain urban areas as “in crisis” and how problems like unemployment and crime were associated in

changing ways with the specter of the “immigrant.” Beginning in the late 1970s, degraded urban areas were increasingly linked with the problem of “immigrant juvenile delinquents,” and the state initiated urban rehabilitation projects at the local level. By examining the urban renewal programs of the mid-1980s, I demonstrate how perceptions of racial and ethnic differences were integral to how the state constructed “citizens” and “immigrants” despite the formal taboo of recognizing such difference. Although national discourses stigmatized the recognition of difference in the public sphere, local policies targeted racial difference or “immigrant populations” as one way to label degraded urban areas. Beginning in the early 1980s, “immigrant youth” from around France began to mobilize, arguing that their neighborhoods were indeed in crisis. For these activists, a key solution to social problems was to embrace multiculturalism. They argued for a break with the outdated model of French Republicanism that only recognized citizens as abstract individuals. For these young activists, the way to fulfill the French republican promise of equality was to embrace the reality that France was multi-cultural: they advocated for political and cultural recognition within the French nation, and for the rehabilitation of their neighborhoods.

Recent discourse has focused on debates about the headscarf, and French scholarship often contrasts a “western” vision that defends women’s equality, with a “Muslim” paradigm that subjugates women. Chapter seven “*Autonomie, Egalité, Dignité: National and Neighborhood Campaigns for Women’s Rights from the Glass-ceiling to the Headscarf*” refocuses the debate by examining the period before the first 1989 headscarf affair when the socialist government under Mitterrand established the Ministry of the Rights of Women. This new ministry sought to challenge the old “male

breadwinner model” of the French welfare state by championing women as the new head of the family (*chef de famille*). This chapter examines the ministry’s effort at challenging systemic sexism, and the conflicting ways they imagined “immigrant” women as part of this second wave for women’s liberation.

My conclusion discusses how Marseille families from diverse backgrounds participate in the local association *Un Centre Ville Pour Tous* (A Down Town for Everyone). As the Marseille Municipal government attempts to revitalize downtown by renovating rundown buildings and raising rents, *Un Centre Ville Pour Tous* mobilizes against gentrification and argues for the right for residents to participate in their neighborhood renovations. I argue that perceptions of racial and cultural difference influence how residents negotiate with each other and how they understand social problems. Moreover, notions of ethnicity influence how municipal authorities understand the social question and who should be relocated to the outskirts of the city. Although euphemistically described in national discourse as an “immigrant” or “foreign” problem, I argue that race figures in compelling ways in ongoing disputes about citizenship and social welfare in France.

PART ONE. *Les Trente Glorieuses*: Modernizing the Metropolis in the Age of Decolonization

CHAPTER II

**Squatters, Citizens, and Asocials:
Debating Social Welfare and the Right to Housing during France's Reconstruction,
1944-1957**

“In Marseille the Squatters Occupy!” announced the headline of the *Monde Ouvrier* in 1946 after six families illegally occupied a vacant house in Marseille, France.¹ After 1944, France began post-war reconstruction amidst a crippling housing shortage. During the housing crisis, homeless families sought shelter in bombed buildings, under bridges, or in rapidly growing shantytowns. Many squatting families were from metropolitan France; some were colonial subjects from north and sub-Saharan Africa. Other families had migrated from Italy or Spain before the war, or were displaced refugees from central and eastern Europe. As the provisional government deliberated comprehensive plans for reconstruction, many desperate families began to mobilize. While many families had been illegally occupying abandoned buildings out of necessity, squatting developed as a political strategy. From their experiences of everyday life during the immediate post-war period, squatters began to argue that housing was both a human and social right.

¹ *Le Monde Ouvrier*, September 16, 1946

The housing crisis shaped and gave a sense of urgency to debates about the meaning of social welfare during post-war reconstruction.² During this period, local and national government officials and ordinary people were attempting to re-build, but also to re-think the relationship between citizen and state, and what it meant to be French. After the occupation, many called for national renewal through a comprehensive restructuring of social and political institutions. For example, for many participants in the resistance, the Liberation was more than a victory over the Germans, but a vital chance to revolutionize the nation's social and political systems.³ Throughout France, groups known as *Comités de Liberation* called for *autogestion*, or increased workplace autonomy and political participation. Some *Comités* also established soviets in factories around France. They imagined a new kind of citizenship based on the central role of the worker in facilitating direct democracy.⁴

² For discussion of post war reconstruction: Hubert Bonin, Sylvie Guillaume, and Bernard Lachaise, *Bordeaux Et La Gironde Pendant La Reconstruction, 1945-1954 : Actes Du Colloque De Talence Tenu Du 16 Au 18 Novembre 1995*, La Mémoire De Bordeaux (Talence: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine, 1997), James A. Huston, *Across the Face of France : Liberation and Recovery, 1944-63* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), Joseph Louis Nasr, "Reconstructing or Constructing Cities?: Stability and Change in Urban Form in Post-World War II France and Germany," (University of Pennsylvania, 1997), Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France : Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946* (Oxford, [Oxfordshire] New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1989). Cecil O Smith, Jr., "The Longest Run: Public Engineers and Planning in France," *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 3 (1990). Dominique Barjot et al., *Les Reconstructions En Europe 1945-1949* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1997), Bonin, Guillaume, and Lachaise, *Bordeaux Et La Gironde Pendant La Reconstruction, 1945-1954 : Actes Du Colloque De Talence Tenu Du 16 Au 18 Novembre 1995*.

³ For studies of the immediate postwar and debates about national renewal during the Liberation see : Philippe Buton, *La Joie Douloureuse : La Libération De La France* (Bruxelles: Complexe : IHTP, CNRS, 2004), Philippe Buton and Musée des deux guerres mondiales (France), *La France Et Les Français De La Libération, 1944-1945 : Vers Une France Nouvelle? : Catalogue* ([Paris]: Musée des deux guerres mondiales, Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine, Universités de Paris, 1984), H. R. Kedward and Nancy Wood, *The Liberation of France : Image and Event*, Berg French Studies, (Oxford [England] ; Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1995).

⁴ After the war, most resisters organized into local *Comités de Libération*. These committees played a central role in resistance insurgency during the liberation. As part of his re-structuring of the Provisional Government, De Gaulle also maneuvered to limit these potentially subversive committees by encouraging the re-establishment of national political parties. For example, the Communist Party (PCF) backed de

On the right, political parties that emerged after the Liberation similarly rejected the status quo and called for a major overhaul of the government. For example, the social catholic party, the *Mouvement Republicain Populaire* criticized the collaborative practices of catholic institutions during Vichy⁵ and instead advocated for a progressive Catholicism⁶ that emphasized solidarity and social security.⁷ For the MRP, the Liberation meant a renewed commitment to protecting the family through welfare reforms that would guarantee basic standards of living and guard against poverty.⁸

Gaulle, instead of the *Comités de Libération*, opting for national rather than local recognition. Shennan, *Rethinking France : Plans for Renewal, 1940-1946*, 2. See also: Adam Steinhouse, *Workers' Participation in Post-Liberation France* (Lanham [Md.]: Lexington Books, 2001).

⁵ For discussions of the Vichy Regime and collaboration with the Third Reich see: Peter Davies, *France and the Second World War : Occupation, Collaboration, and Resistance*, Introductions to History (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), H. R. Kedward, *Occupied France : Collaboration and Resistance, 1940-1944*, Historical Association Studies (Oxford [Oxfordshire] ; New York, NY, USA: B. Blackwell, 1985), Michael Robert Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France : Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women : Gender and Punishment in Liberation France*, English ed. (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2002).

⁶ For literature on Social Catholicism see: Peter J. Bernardi, *Maurice Blondel, Social Catholicism, & Action Française : The Clash over the Church's Role in Society During the Modernist Era* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), Jay P. Corrin, *Catholic Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democracy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), Stefan Kaczorowski, *History of Social Catholicism in Poland* ([Washington,; 1953), Judith A. Merkle, *From the Heart of the Church : The Catholic Social Tradition* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004), Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe : From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), Don O'Leary, *Vocationalism and Social Catholicism in Twentieth-Century Ireland : The Search for a Christian Social Order* (Dublin, [Ireland] ; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2000), Mary Ignatius Ring, *Villeneuve-Bargemont, Precursor of Modern Social Catholicism, 1784-1850* (Milwaukee,: Bruce Publishing Co., 1935), Alexander Roper Vidler, *A Century of Social Catholicism, 1820-1920* (London,: S. P. C. K., 1964), Robert Wattebled, *Stratégies Catholiques En Monde Ouvrier Dans La France D'après-Guerre*, Eglises/Sociétés (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1990).

⁷ Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy : The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). 290

⁸ For a study of the Mouvement Populaire de Famille in northern France as well as the role of the Monde Ouvrier in promoting the MPF agenda during the postwar period: Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *Monde Ouvrier, 1937-1957 : Une Presse Libre Pour Des Temps Difficiles*, Les Cahiers Du G.R.M.F., (Forest-sur-Marque: Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux, 1986), Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *Vingt Ans De Luttés Ouvrières Et Familiales, 1940-1960 : Le Mouvement Populaire Des Familles Dans Le Nord Pas De Calais : Espoirs Et Réalisations* (Forest sur Marque: Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux, 1988).

At the national level, officials worked to distinguish the provisional government's plans for reform from Vichy's previous agenda for social and national renewal.⁹ After the Liberation, government officials framed the rebirth of the nation in terms of the political unity fostered by the resistance. The provisional government discussed reforms which would include a planned economy, the nationalization of key industries, and renewing ties with French colonies. They also debated the possibility of a universal welfare state that would guarantee social rights to all citizens. As officials developed plans for a nationalized welfare state, social citizenship, or the right to a quality of life and a certain standard of living, formed a cornerstone of developing welfare policies.¹⁰

The immediate postwar period was a key moment of possibility for debates about social welfare in both the metropole and colonies. The colonies had played a key role in liberating the mainland, and as Frederick Cooper argues, "the colonial establishment proclaimed...that the significance of 'greater France' would have to be rethought."¹¹ In particular, the growing African labor movement began to argue for greater social rights. In a series of strikes in late 1945, Senegalese workers protested poor wages, calling for

⁹ For discussion of gender and social reform programs during Vichy see: Michel Chauvière and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *L'action Familiale Ouvrière Et La Politique De Vichy : Monde Ouvrier Et La Presse Des Mouvements Familiaux Populaires : Être Femme, Être Militante Au Mouvement Populaire Des Familles : Journées D'étude Des 28-29 Novembre 1984* (Forest-sur-Marque: Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux, 1985), Francine Muel-Dreyfus and Kathleen A. Johnson, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine : A Contribution to a Political Sociology of Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), W. Brian Newsome, *French Urban Planning, 1940-1968 : The Construction and Deconstruction of an Authoritarian System* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), Paxton, *Vichy France : Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*, Miranda Pollard, *Reign of Virtue : Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France*, Women in Culture and Society (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹⁰ For discussion of social citizenship: T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class, and Other Essays* (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1950).

¹¹ Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940 : The Past of the Present*, New Approaches to African History (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 4

“equal pay for equal work.”¹² In addition, labor unions also advocated for the allocation of family allowances to African civil servants.¹³ By claiming increased welfare benefits as a social right, Senegalese workers “implied that the needs of an African family were those of any French family.”¹⁴

In 1944, Charles de Gaulle met with colonial officials in Brazzaville to discuss the future of the French empire. One of the key outcomes of this conference was the limited extension of voting rights to certain “western educated” colonial subjects. As a result, twenty African representatives— notably Leopold Senghor, Lamine Gueye, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, and Aimé Césaire—were elected to the French national parliament. As members of the provisional government, these representatives participated in debates about the future of Greater France, and the necessity of developing comprehensive plans for national insurance for French citizens.

In addition to the colonial labor movement that claimed increased social rights for African workers, African leaders also called for a re-working of the legal and political status of colonial subjects. Most importantly, these African deputies pushed two key pieces of legislation that would make citizenship in the colonies more imaginable: the Houphouet-Boigny law abolished forced labor in all colonies, and the Lamine Gueye law eliminated the distinction between subject and citizen.¹⁵ While this new status was an important reimagining of the relationship between colonizers and colonized, it also reinforced existing hierarchies as colonial nationals were still relegated to a separate legal system, notably customary laws. While the colonized may have had new statuses as

¹² Ibid. 43

¹³ Ibid. 32

¹⁴ Ibid. 42

¹⁵ Ibid. 41-42

citizens, they did not have full access to the political and legal rights of (white) French citizens.

In the immediate postwar period, the theme of renewal, and the necessity of fixing a broken France, created a moment of possibility when new voices and political actors advocated for social change. As a major Mediterranean port city, and gateway between metropole and colonies, Marseille is a key site to situate local debates about social welfare within the larger context of nation and empire. By focusing on the squatters' movement, I argue that postwar welfare institutions developed through complex negotiations between metropolitan residents from diverse background and the state at the local level.

During the first years of the squatters' movement, from 1944-1949, government authorities tended to defend property rights, evicting squatters in frequent—and often violent—police raids. Squatters protested these violent evictions, claiming that the right to housing trumped the right to property. They also acknowledged that homeless families were a diverse population of recent migrants, colonial subjects, and metropolitan families. As squatters continued to invoke their right to housing, the movement began to achieve national prominence, gaining support from social catholic and communist organizations including the *Mouvement Populaire de Familles*. By appealing to the universality of the right to housing, squatters began to downplay ethnic and cultural differences within the movement. In dialogue with government officials, social catholic and communist organizations, squatters also advocated for social benefits in terms of their rights as French citizens. By the late 1940s, state officials and government

technocrats began to incorporate the idea that all French citizens deserved the social and human right to housing into their plans for reconstruction.

From 1949 to 1957 officials from the newly created Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism (MRU) began to implement the right to housing. While discussions of ethnic and cultural difference dropped out of squatters' agenda for the right to housing, perceptions of ethnic difference did figure into early state efforts at establishing housing programs. For example, the MRU decided to shelter squatting families in temporary holding camps. Once new housing was constructed, these families would be relocated from the camps to permanent housing. However, local and national officials were confronted with the messiness of re-housing a diverse population of squatting families. In the attempt to regulate and re-house the homeless, many squatting families—especially “gypsies” and colonial subjects, including “north Africans”—were labeled in government discourse as “asocial nomads.” While many squatting families were moved into permanent housing, many of the families labeled “asocial” stayed for many years in what were supposed to be temporary camps. These families were singled out as distinctly un-French and therefore not fully eligible for the right to housing, although the very concepts of “French-ness” and “social welfare” were seemingly up for debate. Paradoxically, many of these “asocial” families actually had French nationality because they were colonial subjects. While squatters defended the homeless in terms of their social and human right to housing, in implementing this right, state officials distinguished squatting families in terms of ethnic differences.

For much recent literature on the welfare state, gender has been an important category of analysis for examining how welfare regimes produce and institutionalize

difference.¹⁶ Studies of late nineteenth century metropolitan France discuss developing ideas about the relationship between worker rights and family security; employers established mutual insurance programs which protected male breadwinners and their families against risks like accidents and unemployment.¹⁷ Scholarship on the early twentieth century examines French pronatalist initiatives to establish family allowances and maternity aid with the goal to promote strong families and national growth.¹⁸ This work has been important for examining how social reform imposed standards for male and female social behavior and limited access to citizenship rights based on these distinctions.

While many welfare state studies focus on metropolitan France, recent scholarship on welfarism and empire has discussed how social reforms produced and institutionalized racial and ethnic differences in overseas colonies.¹⁹ This scholarship builds on Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler's *Tensions of Empire* to argue that reform

¹⁶ For discussion of gender and the welfare state see: Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice : Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class, and Citizenship* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005). Jane Lewis, "Women's Welfare : Women's Rights," Croom Helm, Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Policies in Europe : Work, Family and the State* (Aldershot, England ; Brookfield, Vt.: Edward Elgar, 1993). Carole Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State," in *Democracy and the Welfare State*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton: Princeton, 1988).

¹⁷ For studies of nineteenth century welfare regimes and instituting male and female social behavior: Janet R. Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France : The Musée Social & the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002). Judith Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen : Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

¹⁸ For studies of French and comparative twentieth century welfare regimes see: Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 1990). Philip G. Nord, "The Welfare State in France, 1870-1914," *French Historical Studies* 18, no. 3 (1994), Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State : Britain and France, 1914-1945* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Timothy B. Smith, *Creating the Welfare State in France, 1880-1940* (Montreal ; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

¹⁹ For literature on empire and reform see: Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society : The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, African Studies Series ; 89 (Cambridge, England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Paul Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State : Negritude & Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

was always “instituted within the framework of a broader and prior colonial empire.”²⁰

While scholarship has examined how early welfare programs were instituted in the colonies in the early twentieth century, this chapter discusses how the post-1945 welfare state developed within a larger colonial context, and was shaped by interactions with diverse populations in the metropole. Studies of empire discuss how perceptions of ethnic difference created racialized hierarchies in colonial administration practices. In distinction, I examine how perceptions of cultural and ethnic difference shaped the ways in which nascent social welfare institutions guaranteed the human and social right to housing in metropolitan France.

THE HOUSING CRISIS AND EVERYDAY LIFE

The post-war housing crisis²¹ was not only a result of wartime damages, but also due to fragmented and poorly funded urban planning and public housing programs dating from before World War One.²² Prior to World War Two, most families undertook new construction themselves, adding haphazard rooms and lean-tos to existing structures.²³ Many of these families built homes in the *terrains vagues*—or no man’s land—that

²⁰ Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State : Negritude & Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars*. 4

²¹ For post war discussion of the housing crisis: *Libre Artois*, June 9, 1949 ; Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 76

²² For studies of late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban planning and social reform see : Louis Chevalier, *Classes Laborieuses Et Classes Dangereuses À Paris Pendant La Première Moitié Du Xixe Siècle* (Paris,: Plon, 1958), Jacques Donzelot, "The Policing of Families," Pantheon Books,; Elsie Canfora-Argandoña, Roger-Henri Guerrand, and Plan construction (France), *La Répartition De La Population : Les Conditions De Logement Des Classes Ouvrières À Paris Au 19e Siècle* (Paris: Centre de sociologie urbaine, 1976), Roger-Henri Guerrand, *Les Origines Du Logement Social En France* (Paris,: Éditions ouvrières, 1966), Ann-Louise Shapiro, *Housing the Poor of Paris, 1850-1902* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

²³ Rosemary Wakeman, "Reconstruction and the Self-Help Housing Movement: The French Experience," *Housing Studies* 14, no. 3 (1999): 356.

fringed most large French cities.²⁴ In the late nineteenth century, these unregulated areas drew the attention of local public health officials and urbanists concerned with the degenerative effects of slum-living.

Despite the concerns of social reformers, the two World Wars severely limited the efforts of hygienists and urban-planners to effectively combat the slum problem. For example, during World War One, the state froze rent prices in an attempt to discourage landlord speculation, but did not un-freeze rents during the sporadic post war reconstruction. As a result, landlords had little incentive to build new housing or maintain existing buildings and the housing market became increasingly stagnant.²⁵ In 1939, a state report noted that the French housing market needed an additional 1.5 million new houses to achieve a relative equilibrium.²⁶ During World War Two, an additional two million houses and apartment buildings were destroyed which exacerbated an already critical situation.²⁷

The increase of France's population was also a factor in the housing crisis. In one effort to quell anxieties about France's infamous low birth rate, the state pursued an aggressive open door immigration policy from the late nineteenth through the interwar period. In Marseille, for example, the population grew from 491,000 residents in 1901 to 636,000 in 1946.²⁸ In the early twentieth century, most immigrants to Marseille came from Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. After World War One, Marseille was a haven

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Jean-Paul Flamand, *Loger Le Peuple : Essai Sur L'histoire Du Logement Social En France*, Textes À L'appui. Série Histoire Contemporaine (Paris: La Découverte, 1989), 147.

²⁶ Bruno Duriez, Michel Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L'invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, Les Cahiers Du G.R.M.F., (Villeneuve d'Ascq [France]: Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux, 1992), 12.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 219.

for Armenians fleeing genocide in Turkey. During the two World Wars and interwar period, colonial subjects from Africa and Asia migrated to the metropole to work on the docks and in factories. Internal labor migration from the country to the city further strained the housing market; there was simply not enough housing to accommodate this surge in the urban population.

In the first years after the Liberation, France continued to struggle to implement an effective housing construction policy. In 1948, in all of France, fewer than 40,000 houses were constructed, and only 55,000 were built in 1949.²⁹ Slums and *bidonvilles* (or shantytowns) continued to mushroom on the fringes of French cities.³⁰ Those who did live in apartment buildings or houses had little or no amenities. A 1946 census revealed that 63 percent of French homes did not have running water and only five percent had indoor toilets.³¹ By 1954, 48 percent of households were still without running water, 26 percent had indoor toilets, and only ten percent had central heating.³² Those buildings with proper amenities were typically very expensive and unaffordable to most working class families. The result was that many houses with expensive rents stood empty, while overcrowding became endemic in the old, dilapidated apartment blocks.³³

²⁹ Wakeman, "Reconstruction and the Self-Help Housing Movement: The French Experience," 357.

³⁰ *Ibid.*: 358.

³¹ Duriez, Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L'invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, 16.

³² Marion Segaud, Jacques Brun, and J. C. Driant, *Dictionnaire Critique De L'habitat Et Du Logement, Dictionnaire* (Paris: Colin, 2002), 11.

³³ Duriez, Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L'invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, 16.

In Marseille between 1945 and 1946, approximately 32,000 families were homeless³⁴ and sought refuge under bridges or in bombed buildings. As one resident remembered:

“Families, children, and the elderly lived where they could: in bombed houses, in caves, in public wash-houses, in blockhouses, and in infectious slums. Children were the most susceptible to disease...Families shared a single ‘room,’ parents and children together. Rats ran through these shacks, over the blankets of families who slept on the bare earth.”³⁵

The homeless of Marseille were local residents as well as displaced persons from France and other countries.³⁶ As another resident remembered, in an abandoned building “eight nationalities lived together which often strained mutual understanding...A Russian family, the wife an aristocrat and painter, the husband an ex-legionnaire alcoholic, lived next door to a Corsican shepherd who kept his goats inside the building at night.”³⁷

According to this resident, displaced families had to learn to cohabitate. Although there was often “generosity and cooperation... [there was] also meanness and conflict.”³⁸

Some of the Marseille homeless were French colonial subjects brought to the metropole to work during the war, or fight during the liberation, others were stateless refugees and

³⁴ Jacques Sbriglio, *Le Corbusier : L'unité D'habitation De Marseille Et Les Autres Unités D'habitation À Rezé-Les-Nantes, Berlin, Briey En Forêt Et Firminy = the Unité D'habitation in Marseilles and the Four Other Unité Blocks in Rezé-Les-Nantes, Berlin, Briey En Forêt and Firminy*, Bilingual original ed., 1 vols. (Paris

Basel; Boston: Fondation Le Corbusier; Birkäuser, 2004), 120.

³⁵ Duriez, Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L'invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, 220.

³⁶ For discussion of displaced persons after World War Two see: Atina Grossmann, "Victims, Villains, and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. 1/2 (2002), Anna Holian, "Displacement and the Post-War Reconstruction of Education: Displaced Persons at the Unrra University of Munich, 1945–1948," *Contemporary European History* 17 (2008).

³⁷ Duriez, Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L'invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, 10.

³⁸ Ibid.

foreign Jews. Many others had lived in Marseille for generations, but traced their families to Italy or Spain.

As families continued to take shelter illegally in abandoned buildings, local and national authorities searched for some kind of short term solution to the crisis. Confronted with widespread homelessness and in the effort to meet the immediate needs of a destitute population, the national provisional government passed the ordinance of October 11, 1945 granting homeless families the right to requisition unoccupied buildings. Families could submit formal requests to local municipal offices for the right to take shelter in vacant buildings. The intent was to help homeless families circumvent outdated housing bureaucracies. In application, however, the ordinance required cities to establish a new bureaucracy out of older stagnant and often corrupt housing offices. Most often, municipal housing offices were simply swamped with housing requests and extreme understaffing lead to hopeless back-ups. After the October 1945 ordinance, more than 10,000 requisition applications were filed at the Marseille housing office. 7,500 were refused. Of the 2,500 approved, very few families were actually able to move into requisitioned housing due to legal protests by landlords. Moreover, many requisitioned apartments and houses were often war-damaged and un-inhabitable.³⁹

THE SQUATTERS' MOVEMENT AND THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

In this moment of the escalating housing crisis, struggling Marseille families began to organize meetings. Some met with Henri Bernus, a local resistance leader, and petitioned the prefect to streamline the right to requisition process. Others turned to the

³⁹ Ibid.77

Catholic Church, especially the Archbishop of Marseille who appealed to “the public authorities to act quickly to resolve the problem...[of] more than 100,000 people living in Marseille in war damaged buildings [and] slums.”⁴⁰

Squatting families also began to form their own associations, including the *Association des Sinistrés* (or Association of Disaster Victims), as well as appealed to larger organizations, especially the national organization, the *Mouvement Populaire des Familles* (the Popular Movement for Families). The *Mouvement Populaire des Familles* (MPF) initially developed out of the Catholic social reform movement and promoted charitable organization against social problems like poverty.⁴¹ Created in 1939, the association was originally called the *Ligue Ouvrière Chrétienne* (LOC). The LOC was comprised of mostly working class women, and was the counterpoint to the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (JOC), or the Young Catholic Workers. In 1941, the LOC became the *Mouvement Populaire des Familles*.⁴² Founded on the defense and promotion of the family, the MPF’s vision fit in with Vichy familial policies, and the MPF was able to operate relatively freely under the regime, providing food and other domestic goods to needy families during the war. However, after the war, MPF members participated in Liberation demonstrations and many joined the communist party. For the national MPF, the housing crisis and plight of displaced families were key working class issues in the post-war settlement.

⁴⁰ Sermon of Monseigneur Delay, archbishop of Marseille, 12 December 1948, quoted in *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴¹ For studies of social catholicism : Bruno Duriez, *Chrétiens Et Ouvriers En France, 1937-1970* (Paris: Atelier : Ouvrières, 2001), Bruno Duriez, *Les Catholiques Dans La République, 1905-2005* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2005).

⁴² Memo from Commissaire de Police, Direction General de la Sureté Nationale, Ministry of Interior, to the Chef du Service Départemental des Renseignements Généraux, Marseille. Signature illegible. February 17, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

Locally, membership in the MPF grew as families joined Marseille branches of the association and attended meetings organized by local leaders. Other local associations, including the *Fédération Provençale des Sinistrés* (Provençal Federation of Disaster Victims), *Association des Prisonniers de Guerre* (Association of Prisoners of War), and the *Evacués et Réfugiés* (Evacuated and Refugees) also began to participate in these meetings. In 1945, these organizations joined to form the *Comité d'Entente de Squatters* (The Committee for the Alliance of Squatters).

Initially, the *Comité d'entente de squatters* attempted to work within the bureaucratic apparatus but with little success. In keeping with the earlier efforts of Henri Bernus, the *Comité* offered legal counseling to families applying for the right to requisition unoccupied buildings, as well as met with local government officials about the ongoing housing crisis. Marius Apostolo, secretary of the Marseille MPF and one of the emerging leaders of the movement, described the growing frustration within the *Comité* as discussions with the prefect and housing authorities stalled: “During our meetings with the prefect, he would make notes of some addresses and promise to act within the week. The days passed, and despite our formal reminders, nothing happened.”⁴³ The *Comité* began to debate alternative strategies to the problem. As Apostolo recounted: “After a meeting on September 29, 1946 of several housing associations, we decided on the need for direct action... At some point in 1946, we had heard of a British news item about an Englishman who tried to illegally occupy Buckingham Palace in London. The idea hit us like lightning: squatting!”⁴⁴ While many homeless families were already

⁴³ Duriez, Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L'invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, 79.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

illegally occupying buildings in Marseille neighborhoods out of necessity, the *Comité* began to view squatting as a political strategy.

The *Comité* occupied their first strategically organized squats in October 1946, including a brothel, a mansion, and an unused portion of a monastery. As one member described moving into the monastery: “The Brother Superior couldn’t believe his eyes. Here we came, a caravan of old trucks, with women (what scandal!) and children, setting up house next to the poor retired monks.”⁴⁵ While many squatting families continued to live where they could, the *Comité* set up new squats in tactical locations, targeting chateaus and vacant mansions. By choosing buildings associated with government officials and wealthy businessmen the *Comité* extended their critique of the housing shortage. For the *Comité*, the housing crisis stemmed in part from ineffective post-war policies, like the problematic right to requisition. Like the *Comités de Liberation*, the *Comité d’entente de squatters* also critiqued the social and political institutions that produced these policies, especially those with a longer history rooted in the 1930s and the Vichy Regime.

Initially, the families in these first squats were able to negotiate quietly with the prefect and property owners for the right to requisition the abandoned buildings they were already occupying. However, squats continued to mushroom in Marseille, and the movement began to take root in other French cities including nearby Aix-en-Provence, as well as Anger, Arles, Lyon, Nice and Gap.⁴⁶ Government officials began to grow

⁴⁵ Duriez, Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L’invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, 79.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

increasingly anxious about squatters. Authorities were especially concerned with the movement's seeming disregard for public order and private property.

In an attempt to curb the wave of squatter occupations in Marseille, the central Ministry of Interior began to order police raids to expel families from their unlawful occupation of private property and to dissuade new squats from forming. In 1947, police raided the *Chateau Fallet* during the night, forcefully evicting the eight families squatting in the mansion. Many were wounded and most were turned out on the street without their belongings. In a letter to the prefect, the *Comité* condemned these violent police raids:

“Monsieur le Préfet, on the night of February 23, 1947, eight families were thrown out into the street by police methods that can be called neither French, nor even humane: One does not chase families out of their homes at night, one does not throw their furniture out of the windows, or refuse a blanket to a pregnant woman, who, denied the right to shelter herself in an empty chateau, was forced, along with the other homeless, to shiver in the night.”⁴⁷

The letter compared these tactics to Nazi practices, invoking the recent Vichy past: “One must admit that these evictions resemble too closely certain Nazi methods.”⁴⁸ The *Comité* also criticized the insufficient efforts of housing authorities: “If the public housing authorities would do their jobs, the homeless would have no reason to squat.”⁴⁹ Lastly, this letter to the prefect reveals an important theme in the squatters' movement: the tension between property rights and human rights: “They take no pleasure in creating public disorder and simply desire to live in more humane conditions. It's their human

⁴⁷ Letter from Henri Bernus, leader of *Comité d'Entente "Squatters"* to the Prefect, February 27, 1947, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378, underscore in original.

⁴⁸ Letter from Henri Bernus, leader of *Comité d'Entente "Squatters"* to the Prefect, February 27, 1947, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378, underscore in original.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

right, even if they don't possess the deed."⁵⁰ The *Comité* argued that families had *the human right* to occupy vacant buildings even if they did not have the *legal right* to the property.

The *Comité* began to invoke the Declaration of the Rights of Man to justify the illegal occupation of buildings: "Squatters definitively respect the Constitution of the Republic, and it's the government that violates our liberties and rights... The right to property cannot be exercised contrary to social utility or social good."⁵¹ For the *Comité*, protecting the social good was guaranteeing certain basic needs, like shelter. They argued that if the state failed to protect the rights of its citizens, citizens had a right to act to insure their own needs. In other words, the *Comité* began to argue that homeless families had the human right to housing, and this natural right should be guaranteed prior to any legal claim to private property.

However, in the early years of the squatters' movement, the courts did not define the public good in terms of the right to housing, but in protecting the constitutional right to property. As police raids continued and squatting families were evicted for illegal occupation, arrests frequently lead to criminal and civil proceedings in court. While judges were often sympathetic to the plight of squatting families, they nonetheless ruled in favor of the right to property. As one magistrate in the Ministry of Justice stated: "I understand the reasons for your squatters' movement, but we are obliged to condemn them in application of the law that protects private property."⁵² During this period the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *Le Monde Ouvrier*, #191, January 1950

⁵² *Le Monde Ouvrier*, #139, June 1949

courts convicted squatters—especially leaders of the movement—and repeatedly sentenced them to short jail terms and heavy fines.⁵³

While squatters attempted to root their claims within the longer legacy of human rights, the French revolution and Declaration of the Rights of Man, the state's defense of property rights reflected more immediate concerns about the post war period. As *comités de liberation* and *soviets* sprang up spontaneously around France during the months following the Liberation, a key concern for officials in the provisional government was to re-establish order by re-centralizing power in Paris. Many government officials, particularly Charles de Gaulle, viewed these impulsive expressions of direct democracy as anarchic threats to the still fragile provisional government. While government authorities understood that major social and political reform was necessary, they also believed that these efforts should be managed through the central state. Therefore, in the early phase of the squatters' movement, protecting property rights was viewed as an important way to uphold public order and affirm state power.

While the *Comité* began to frame their agenda in terms of the universal right to housing, members also acknowledged that homeless families were from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.⁵⁴ In their descriptions of everyday life, *comité* members refer to the diverse “nationalities” or ethnic backgrounds of squatters and homeless families. For example, as one member described in the early days of the Liberation, “Life wasn’t easy... We lived in a wooden shanty in one of the poor neighborhoods of the city. People were living in bidonvilles and many were from places like Italy and Belgium...”

⁵³ Wakeman, "Reconstruction and the Self-Help Housing Movement: The French Experience." 360

⁵⁴ For discussion of role of worker priests on Marseille docks and politics of race and class: Yale Simpson Fletcher, "Catholics, Communists and Colonial Subjects: Working-Class Militance and Racial Difference in Postwar Marseille," in *The Color of Liberty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

Algerians also.⁵⁵ In addition to the diverse families that the *comité* claimed to represent, several leaders of the movement were children of recent migrants. For example, Marius Apostolo, the secretary of the local branch of the MPF and a rising leader in the movement, was born in Marseille in 1924 to parents who had emigrated from Greece.

Although Apostolo and other members made reference to the diverse backgrounds of homeless families and participants in the movement, they did not include difference in their emerging agenda for the universal right to housing. As they sought to legitimate their movement, the *comité* did not defend homeless families in terms of their ethnic differences, but in terms of their social needs and universal rights. By appealing to the Declaration of the Rights of Man to justify the illegal occupation of private property, the *Comité* attempted to establish a moral authority for the squatters' movement.⁵⁶ In framing their agenda, they used the language of universality. Although members of the *comité* were from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, they attempted to legitimate the movement by appealing to universal human rights.

As police raids and criminal proceedings continued, squatters began to receive national attention from the press. For example, the *Monde Ouvrier*, a socialist paper affiliated with the national branch of the *Mouvement Populaire de Familles*, condemned police brutality in violent evictions, and criticized court rulings in favor of property rights. The press helped publicize squatters' claims for a human right to housing.

⁵⁵ Geneviève Dermenjian, Françoise Villiers, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *Femmes, Famille Et Action Ouvrière : Pratiques Et Responsabilités Féminines Dans Les Mouvements Familiaux Populaires, 1935-1958*, Les Cahiers Du G.R.M.F. : (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux, 1991), 71-3.

⁵⁶ For discussion of how marginal groups establish a moral authority from which to make claims based on arguments about citizenship and civic virtue see: Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed : Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*, University Seminars/Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

In addition to claiming housing as a universal right, the *Comité* also began to participate in larger national debates about the post-war settlement and social protection by asserting that the state was responsible for guaranteeing citizens' basic needs. For the squatters movement, housing was also a basic citizenship right. While government officials tended to defend property rights as a way to uphold public order, squatters began to affirm the right to housing as integral to promoting public good.

The national squatters' movement began to address government authorities' concerns about the anarchic implications of squatting by explicitly affirming the movement in terms of their duties as citizens.⁵⁷ They argued that helping to secure the well-being of some, would contribute to the well-being of the nation as a whole. In a pamphlet circulated by the *Monde Ouvrier*, the national MPF asserted that the right to housing is also "the ideal that permits the family to thrive normally and in the best conditions to assure the continuation and progression of the Nation..."⁵⁸ Good families in decent homes made for the good of the nation. In this moment of possibility, as France reconsidered the relationship between citizen and state, the language of rights was a powerful rhetoric for legitimating the squatters' movement. Squatters claimed housing as both a universal right and as an important affirmation of a new relationship between citizen and state. For the squatters' movement, the government was also obligated to guarantee the basic social needs of citizens.

As the press cultivated a wave of populist sympathy for squatters, government authorities became increasingly concerned about the impact of the socialist press on

⁵⁷ *Des logements pour le peuple*, quoted in Duriez, Chauvière, and Groupement pour la recherche sur les mouvements familiaux (France), *La Bataille Des Squatters Et L'invention Du Droit Au Logement, 1945-1955*, 30.

⁵⁸ *Des logements pour le peuple*, quoted in Ibid. 30

public opinion. Moreover, as the squatters' movement achieved national prominence—working closely with national organizations—they increasingly framed their claims for housing in terms of human and citizenship rights.

As press reports about the squatters' movement and police brutality increased, government correspondence reveals internal deliberations about “the problem of evictions...which [are] very delicate.”⁵⁹ As squatters argued that their human right to housing trumped property rights, state officials also weighed the tension between “the written and incontestable right to property, and the natural right that all humans be treated with a maximum of dignity.”⁶⁰

Moreover, correspondence between the Bouches du Rhone prefect and the Ministry of Interior demonstrate that not only were state officials concerned about managing public opinion they were also—to a certain degree—sympathetic to the situation of the squatters:

“In the particular case of squatters, eviction from illegally occupied buildings further compromises their interests because they are further prevented from definitively resolving their unstable situation by finding permanent housing. Chased from their houses, the only other option for these homeless families is often to simply find another squat.”⁶¹

In particular, internal correspondence reveals how local authorities often cited how their “proximity to the reality of everyday life”⁶² gave them a special vantage point from

⁵⁹ Letter from Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to the Ministry of Interior, March 14, 1947, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378; see also: Report to the Ministry of Interior, circa 1950, signature illegible, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁶⁰ Report from the Office of the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, September 26, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁶¹ Report from the Office of the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, September 26, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁶² Letter from Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to the Ministry of Interior, March 14, 1947, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

which to examine the squatters' movement. As one prefect wrote: "chasing squatters from the houses they occupy does not resolve the problem, in contrast, these actions merely increase the number of homeless and helps fuel the movement."⁶³ He described how court decisions ordering evictions had "thrown a great number of families into the street."⁶⁴ In other words, departmental prefects argued that harsh police tactics helped fuel the movement and the legal protection of property rights contributed to the problem of homeless families. Although the central Ministry of Interior pursued an official no-tolerance position on squatting, between 1946 and 1950, local and national authorities increasingly questioned the effectiveness of these policies in internal memos.

Such communication between various levels of the administration contributed to a slowly emerging consensus about the human and social right to housing. As early as 1947, local officials began to discuss the need to re-house squatting and homeless families: "Evicted families without means find themselves in brutal conditions and we are therefore obliged to find some solution to re-house them."⁶⁵ From 1949, reports from the prefect's office analyzing the squatter situation began to emphasize that any eviction for unlawful occupation must be accompanied by re-housing: "Evictions must be more humane and the possibility of re-housing must be offered to a displaced family."⁶⁶ From 1950, officials at the central Ministry of Interior began to acknowledge that "roughly

⁶³ Letter from Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to the Director of Sureté Nationale in the Ministry of Interior, August 1949, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Letter from Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to the Ministry of Interior, March 14, 1947, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁶⁶ Report to Prefect regarding the Marseille Squatter Problem, September 26, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

evicting squatters will do nothing to solve the problem”⁶⁷ For local and national authorities, an essential step in the amelioration of the housing crisis could no longer be mass evictions: “The only real and efficacious solution lies in...the construction of new buildings.”⁶⁸ In these discussions about the construction of housing as the only lasting solution to the housing crisis, local and national authorities also began to acknowledge the legitimacy of the claims of the squatters: “The leaders of the squatters movements have been advocating for this kind of solution.”⁶⁹ As state officials began to uphold the legitimacy of squatters’ claims, they acknowledged that the movement was participating in debates about a new social and political order in France.

Although the squatters’ movement began as a “spontaneous and desperate” response to the post-war housing crisis, many participants in the movement drew from their wartime experiences and resistance activities.⁷⁰ The Liberation signaled an important moment of possibility where squatters participated in national debates about the future of France by redefining the relationship between citizen and state and “by restructuring the terms of everyday life.”⁷¹ As the central state began to consider lasting solutions to the housing crisis, the squatters’ appeal for the basic right to shelter continued to resonate in internal debates among local and national authorities. From 1946-1950, about 20,000 people, or 5,000 families found shelter as part of the squatters

⁶⁷ letter from Prefect to Ministry of Interior, 14 March, date illegible, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁶⁸ Letter from Prefect to Ministry of Interior, circa 1949, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁶⁹ Report to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône regarding the Marseille Squatter Problem, September 26, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁷⁰ Wakeman, "Reconstruction and the Self-Help Housing Movement: The French Experience." 360

⁷¹ Ibid. 359

movement around France.⁷² However, as local and national authorities began to recognize the claims of squatters' the movement began to break apart. The local *Comité d'entente de Squatters*, which had originally formed in Marseille from several organizations, split into two factions in 1950. Henri Bernus broke with the members of the *Comité* allied with the MPF and joined the emerging Castors Movement. The Castors, who were affiliated with social Catholicism, remained dedicated to housing poor French families, and between 1950 and 1954, constructed about 8,000 houses for families in Marseille, Lille, and Lyon. Local members of the MPF, particularly Marius Apostolo, joined the ranks of the national organization. The national MPF, although initially affiliated with social Catholicism, officially broke with the Catholic church in 1949. In the early 1950s, the MPF also disbanded, as members became more active in the Communist party and trade unions.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONSTRUCTION AND URBANISM: IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

From 1946-1950, squatters participated in debates about social welfare by lobbying for the human and social right to housing. After the movement began to splinter in the early 1950s, a few break-away groups, notably the Castors, began to construct housing as part of a small "self-help movement." However, the bulk of the responsibility for implementing the social right to housing fell on the state.⁷³ In 1944, the provisional

⁷² Ibid. 360

⁷³ For the history of public housing and state housing construction : Rémy Butler and Patrice Noisette, "De La Cité Ouvrière Au Grand Ensemble : La Politique Capitaliste Du Logement Social, 1815-1975," F. Maspero, Segaud, Brun, and Driant, *Dictionnaire Critique De L'habitat Et Du Logement*, Canfora-Argandoña, Guerrand, and Plan construction (France), *La Répartition De La Population : Les Conditions*

government created the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism (MRU) and mandated the institution to reconstruct France after the damages of the war and to resolve the housing crisis.⁷⁴

The MRU was the metropolitan face of a broader reconstruction initiative that the government would implement in Greater France. In the metropole, the MRU was part of a plan for sweeping social reform. In the colonies, the provisional government established programs like the Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development (FIDES) in 1946, to initiate social reform and streamline colonial management in overseas France. France's goal to "to expand empire resources while legitimizing colonial rule" entailed re-thinking the relationship between colony and metropole. As Frederick Cooper has argued, France "would regain control through their new concept 'development.'" ⁷⁵ At work in this new approach to post war colonial control was a logic of gradualism "officials believed that the slow admission of Africans into the category of citizen would preserve the unity of the French empire."⁷⁶ If modernization in the metropole was intended to revolutionize the everyday lives of French citizens by

De Logement Des Classes Ouvrières À Paris Au 19e Siècle, Christian Legrand, Krzysztof Kazimierz Paw*owski, and Bruno Voisin, "Le Logement Populaire Et Social En Lyonnais, 1848-2000," Editions aux Arts, Jean-Marc Stébé, *Le Logement Social En France : 1789 À Nos Jours*, 2e. ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002), Didier Cornuel and Bruno Duriez, *Le Mirage Urbain : Histoire Du Logement À Roubaix* (Paris: Anthropos, 1983), Guerrand, *Les Origines Du Logement Social En France*, Sabine Effosse, *L'invention Du Logement Aidé En France : L'immobilier Au Temps Des Trente Glorieuses*, Histoire Économique Et Financière De La France. Etudes Générales, (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 2003), Flamand, *Loger Le Peuple : Essai Sur L'histoire Du Logement Social En France*.

⁷⁴ Flamand, *Loger Le Peuple : Essai Sur L'histoire Du Logement Social En France*, 135.

⁷⁵ Cooper, *Africa since 1940 : The Past of the Present*. 36

⁷⁶ Ibid. 39

improving living standards, development in the colonies “would take place slowly and prudently.”⁷⁷

If a logic of gradualism—or the notion that the colonized were not-yet-ready for the full benefits of citizenship—was at work in colonial programs for social reform, an incrementalist logic was also at work in metropolitan plans for modernization. In this section, I juxtapose the MRU’s far reaching goal to rationalize modern life through the comprehensive reordering of urban and domestic space, with the reality of post war reconstruction. Early efforts of the MRU to implement the right to housing reveals how perceptions of ethnic and racial difference shaped how families were allocated social rights. By juxtaposing the idealism of making a modern France, with the everyday messiness of bureaucratic efforts to implement social rights, I show how the right to housing—one cornerstone of the post-1945 welfare state—developed in hierarchical terms: some families were not-yet-ready for full access to social citizenship because of perceptions of cultural and racial differences. In other words, while the squatters’ movement had downplayed cultural and ethnic differences in order to make a universal claim to the right to housing, perceptions of ethnic difference became an integral part of how state institutions implemented the right to housing.

Although the MRU developed out of earlier urban planning initiatives, notably the mid nineteenth century Haussmanization of French cities, and late nineteenth century efforts at slum clearance, the MRU was the first large bureaucratic institution created to explicitly tackle urban problems. One major goal of the Ministry of Reconstruction and

⁷⁷ Ibid. 41. For discussion of discourses of development see also : Frederick Cooper and Randall M. Packard, *International Development and the Social Sciences : Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

Urbanism was not just to repair war damaged buildings, but to modernize, rationalize, and organize cities. As Raul Dautry, the first head of the MRU wrote: “It’s necessary to conceive of and realize the modern organization of life... the time has come to ‘rationalize’ the city.”⁷⁸ For Dautry, “Urbanism is an essential part of France’s renaissance.”⁷⁹ The MRU would manage urban space to facilitate a new vision of modern life. The MRU would also revitalize the nation from within, by improving domestic life and insuring that every family had standardized amenities, like indoor plumbing. The mass construction of new housing with modern amenities would solve the housing crisis as well as create a new, efficient, modern urban life-style.

Despite the far reaching goals of the MRU, in the early years of its formation, the institution struggled to fulfill its mandate. The post-war chaos, the stagnant and antiquated housing market, and the rapid succession of ministers and governments stalled the MRU’s efforts to solve the housing problem. As the MRU imagined a new and modern France, they also had to deal with the problem of homeless and destitute populations displaced by the war. Although the MRU was developing plans for the mass construction of housing, any significant increase in housing was still years away. If homeless families could not illegally occupy private properties, but were also entitled to the right to housing, how could the MRU address the immediate needs of these families? In 1951, correspondence between local and national authorities began to discuss establishing temporary camps to house evicted and displaced families.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Raul Dautry, quoted in Flamand, *Loger Le Peuple : Essai Sur L'histoire Du Logement Social En France*, 203.

⁷⁹ Raul Dautry, quote in *Ibid.*, 135.

⁸⁰ Report to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône regarding the Marseille Squatter Problem, September 26, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

In Marseille, the MRU, in cooperation with the municipality,⁸¹ chose two sites for temporary transit and holding camps: Grand Arenas in the south of the city, and Grand Bastide, in the north. Both camps were already being used to house World War Two refugees and colonial soldiers and workers.⁸² Grand Arenas, for example, was located in a nearly uninhabited area, bordered by hills, and between the sea and the road to Cassis. Before its development, the land was mostly used for grazing goats and sheep.⁸³ Initially called the Baumette Prison, Grand Arenas was constructed in the 1930s and was first intended as a penitentiary for criminal offenders. However, it never kept inmates; instead the Germans used Grand Arenas as a detainment camp for captured Jews and members of the resistance prior to their deportation to concentration and death camps.⁸⁴ After the war, French officials housed colonial soldiers and workers in Grand Arenas.⁸⁵ Just following the Liberation in 1944 there were about 25,000 colonial soldiers and 15,000 colonial workers held in camps like Grand Arenas.⁸⁶ Displaced persons of all origins, often in a state of total destitution, also passed through the camp including Holocaust survivors, prisoners from German prisoner of war camps, and Jews on the way to

⁸¹ Memo from Feron, Director of Construction in the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism to the Departmental Delegate of the Bouches-du-Rhône in Marseille, December 1, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378; Memo from Director of Territory Management in the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism (signature illegible) to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, November 22, 1952, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

⁸² Emile and Nathalie Deguigne Temime, *Le Camp Du Grand Arénas, Marseille 1944-1966* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 2001), 18.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 21. For discussion of multiple uses of concentration camps after World War Two see : Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau : The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁸⁵ At the onset of the War in Indochina, a large number of Vietnamese laborers were detained in Grand Arenas as potential enemy combatants to the state. Temime, *Le Camp Du Grand Arénas, Marseille 1944-1966*, 34.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Palestine. Following the independence of Syria and Lebanon in 1946, exiles from this first wave of decolonization also landed in Grand Arenas.⁸⁷

Although this camp was already being used as a detainment and transit camp, officials expanded the function of the camp to house squatting families. Camps like Grand Arenas would be a temporary holding center—a roof overhead—until the MRU could move them into newly constructed public housing. In 1950, local authorities began moving squatting families into already overcrowded camps.

LIVING IN CAMP GRAND ARENAS

For those who had never before experienced life in a provisional camp, first impressions of Grand Arenas were often incredulous: “There was the first shock with the shanties...It was hideous, a court of miracles.”⁸⁸ Most families were housed in sheet metal, shanty-like barracks. A typical barrack was divided into sections and shared by about 35 people.⁸⁹ As a former Grand Arenas resident recalled: “We lived in barrack 89; it was shaped like a half-barrel. The room was cut in two and there were two bedrooms. We put 10 children in one bedroom, and the parents in another, and there remained a common room we shared.”⁹⁰ The interiors often did not have any real partition for separating families. As another resident described: “The families (which were often large) were hoarded in, and each family tried to isolate themselves and their cots by hanging makeshift curtains out of blankets.”⁹¹ Camp life was organized around certain

⁸⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁸⁸ Interview: MB quoted in Ibid., 84.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 110.

⁹⁰ Interview: CT quoted in Ibid., 86.

⁹¹ Interview: PP quoted in Ibid.

routines—including mealtimes—and common meeting points—like the communal showers. At mealtime, for example, camp residents each presented a card, and camp employees distributed rations through small ticket windows.⁹² There was no running water in the barracks; showers and toilets were collective and outdoors: “But there was no real sewer, only a kind of sewage pit which was a fiefdom for the rats.”⁹³ Most washed their clothes in a large common basin and hung their laundry from rope suspended between the doors of the barracks. In the winter, each barrack was given an allotment of coal. As another former resident remembered: “there was between 10 and 15 tons of coal which would last most of the winter. We were more or less warm but there wasn’t any ventilation in the barracks.”⁹⁴

Conditions were often poor in these makeshift shelters, and exacerbated by bad weather: “There were terrible moments of deluges...When there were enormous thunderstorms there were always people who lost their barracks.”⁹⁵ Rain would transform the earth around the barracks into a swamp, or the Mistral—the strong, dry, north wind—kicked up great clouds of dust. In the summer, the extreme heat was oppressive as most barracks were constructed out of sheet metal and tar. Conditions in the camp took their toll on the health of its residents. Young children were particularly affected. Skin diseases like impetigo were rampant, and the most common contagious diseases were tuberculosis and trachoma.⁹⁶

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Interview: CT quoted in Ibid., 118.

⁹⁴ Interview CT quoted in Ibid.

⁹⁵ Interview JR and JS quoted in Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 89.

In the early 1950s, government officials' biggest concern was managing sanitation and public health in the camp. Early correspondence about Camp Grand Arenas often focused on the problems of garbage, sewage, and disease. For example, in January 1956, the sewer system flooded which threatened camp residents as well as a nearby canal that brought potable water to Marseille:

“Water and sewage lies stagnant around the camp...it forms a nauseating swamp and these putrid odors are particularly dangerous due to their proximity to one branch of the canal. This canal, which brings potable water into Marseille, passes the sewage swamp at approximately 50 meters.”⁹⁷

Several months later, in July 1956, the director of the municipal bureau of hygiene attributed the deaths of two infants “to toxic contamination.”⁹⁸ The public health official also noted that other young children in the camp were “covered in open sores”⁹⁹ and in a memo “insisted that the municipality: 1) Remedy the situation of water canalization and 2) Impose a regular trash service.”¹⁰⁰ In short, the camp was overcrowded, lacked sufficient infrastructure, and could not sustain the large population.

Despite such warnings about camp conditions from both the departmental and municipal bureaus of hygiene, government officials did not make any significant improvements to the camp. One explanation stemmed from the multiple bureaucracies which disputed their jurisdiction over Grand Arenas. For example, the camp was initially managed with funds from the central Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism before the city of Marseille took over in the mid 1950s. By the late 1950s the local branch of the

⁹⁷ Letter from H. De Mouzon, head of Municipal Bureau of Hygiene to Departmental Engineer and Dr. Girbal, the municipal council member delegate of hygiene, January 12, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

⁹⁸ Departmental Director of Hygiene to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, July 28, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

MRU had reclaimed jurisdiction. It was often unclear to the Bureau of Hygiene as well as local and national authorities who was actually responsible for Camp Grand Arenas. For example, after multiple letters from the bureau of hygiene about unsanitary camp conditions, the departmental prefect asserted “that no part of the Camp Grand Arenas is under my jurisdiction.”¹⁰¹ The mayor’s office also denied any administrative responsibility “[we] have notified the director of sanitary services as to the situation concerning hygiene.”¹⁰² Moreover, as government officials were concerned with vast reconstruction and urbanism programs, “provisional” camps like Grand Arenas were not very high priorities.

FROM CITIZEN SQUATTERS TO ASOCIALS

Sanitary Services, part of the local branch of the Ministry of Reconstruction, did ultimately claim responsibility for the management of the Camp. However, in response to one letter from the Bureau of Hygiene about overflowing garbage, Sanitary Services defended its management practices arguing that: “the number of trashcans is sufficient for the population and we pass by three times a week to collect the garbage.”¹⁰³ Sanitary Services thus argued that “the number of trashcans in the camp corresponds to the needs of the population living there.”¹⁰⁴ The real problem, the director of Sanitary Services wrote, was that “damages are due to poor use... The principal origin of these issues is due to the negligence of a large number of camp users who dump their garbage around their

¹⁰¹ Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, August 6, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Letter from Head of the TAM and Cleaning Services, Jean Mondet to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, August 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

barracks.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, the sanitation problems in Grand Arenas were not due to poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and insufficient amenities, but were caused by the residents themselves.

As an official wrote: “There exists in Marseille, without doubt, an extremely colorful and cosmopolitan population, a minority of asocial nomads and vandals...”¹⁰⁶

According to this official, many of these asocials had been squatting in Marseille prior to moving to Camp Grand Arenas: “It is precisely these asocials who cause the most amount of worry.”¹⁰⁷

By the mid 1950s, as local and national officials continued to dispute jurisdiction over the camp, internal correspondence about sanitation problems in Grand Arenas shifted from the camp to the residents. In particular, the focus shifted to the behaviors of residents: “It is important to note that the behavior of many of the camp residents conforms to the habits imported from their countries of origin...”¹⁰⁸ In another memo, the office of the prefect writes: “The camp residents have many different nationalities with diverse behaviors and norms of the most humble of social levels and they don’t make use of the eight garbage dumpsters.”¹⁰⁹ Other letters from the mayor’s office and the local branch of the MRU, begin to describe camp problems in terms of the insalubrity and foreignness of the residents. Government officials rationalized their own difficulties

¹⁰⁵ Letter from R. Calloud, Departmental Satellite of Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, September 17, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

¹⁰⁶ Report to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône regarding the Marseille Squatter Problem, September 26, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from R. Calloud, Departmental Satellite of Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, September 17, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Engineer and Head of Departmental Services of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, November 21, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

in managing sanitation in the camp by invoking the “uncivilized” practices of camp residents.

By shifting responsibility for sanitation problems to the residents, officials also began to distinguish “normal” from “asocial” families. For state authorities, squatters had claimed the right to housing in both universal terms, and as French citizens, while “asocials” had not. Government officials wrote that asocial residents had “imported” their domestic practices from their “countries of origin.”

If authorities described asocial families as foreigners, then where did Grand Arenas residents purportedly come from? In memos, officials refer to the “asocials” as “North Africans” and “gypsies.” While most archival documents address where government officials *thought* camp residents came from, several demographic studies show where residents *actually* came from. More specifically, these studies detailed the nationality of camp residents: most were French. For example, a 1956 report by the urban planning department documented that out of 95 families studied, 85 families, or 89.35 percent had French nationality (according to the “head” of the family). Five families had Spanish nationality, or 5.3 percent; two families were Italian, or 2.2 percent. There was one English family, one Armenian family, and one Russian family.¹¹⁰ Although the study details the nationality of the camp residents, it does not document, where, from within the French empire, these French nationals came from. Each family is, however, listed by surname. Out of the 85 French families, 9 have “traditional-

¹¹⁰ Study of Grand Arenas by R. Auzelle, Head of Urban Planning, city of Marseille, May 24, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 254

sounding” surnames, including “Blaise,” while the rest have names which included “Montoya,” “Sanchez,” “Kheloufy,” and “Aziz.”¹¹¹

Although most residents of Grand Arenas had French nationality, officials thought most residents, particularly the “asocial” ones, were foreigners. What did the term “asocial” mean to French officials? Historically, the term has roots in nineteenth century discourses of national decline¹¹² and anxieties about the degenerative working classes.¹¹³ As the international eugenics movement emerged,¹¹⁴ “asocial” also reflected new “scientific” studies of racial hygiene.¹¹⁵ For late nineteenth and early twentieth century social reformers, asocial behavior was often linked to poor living conditions in slums in metropolitan French cities. Prior to 1945, the term “asocial” was part of a scientific imagination about racial inequality based in biological and genetic notions of

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² See: Ruth Harris, *Murders and Madness : Medicine, Law, and Society in the Fin De Siècle*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1989), Paul Frederick Lerner, *Hysterical Men : War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930*, Cornell Studies in the History of Psychiatry (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality : Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, 1st ed. (New York: H. Fertig, 1985), Robert A. Nye, *Crime, Madness, & Politics in Modern France : The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration : A European Disorder, C.1848-C.1918*, Ideas in Context (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹¹³ See: Andrew Robert Aisenberg, *Contagion : Disease, Government, and The "Social Question" In Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), Louis Chevalier, *Classes Laborieuses Et Classes Dangereuses À Paris Pendant La Première Moitié Du Xixe Siècle* (Paris.: Plon, 1958), Jacques Donzelot, "The Policing of Families," Pantheon Books, Rachel Ginnis Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris : Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992), Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford [Eng.]: Clarendon Press, 1971).

¹¹⁴ See: Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex : The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi Connection : Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), Richard Sonn, "Your Body Is Yours: Anarchism, Birth Control, and Eugenics in Interwar France," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 4 (2005).

¹¹⁵ See: Götz Aly, Peter Chroust, and Christian Pross, *Cleansing the Fatherland : Nazi Medicine and Racial Hygiene* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance : "Euthanasia" In Germany C. 1900-1945* (Cambridge [England] ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Detlev Peukert, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science," in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, ed. Caplan et al. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993).

inferiority. However after World War Two and the racist policies of the Third Reich, distinctions based on biological notions of racial inferiority were no longer viable. The term “asocial” became part of a new logic of development: asocials were not biologically inferior, but their “behaviors” were “unadapted.” As French officials initiated sweeping reforms to modernize and rationalize everyday life, asocials were not-yet-ready for modern living.

Why did officials also label asocials “foreigners?” At camp Grand Arenas, officials associated foreignness “with diverse behaviors and norms of the most humble of social levels.”¹¹⁶ In other words, camp residents were asocial foreigners because of their uncivilized domestic behaviors. Therefore, for asocials, camps like Grand Arenas would “offer, to this category of the un-adapted (*inadapté*), a last asylum were they could begin to be re-educated in order to guarantee a minimum of hygiene and order.”¹¹⁷ Asocials were foreigners because they were not-yet-ready to be French.

Although camp officials thought asocials were foreigners, most resident had French nationality because they were part of the greater empire. At this time, having French nationality was not the same as being a citizen. The Lamine Gueye law may have abolished “subject” status, but the colonized were still not full citizens. Most colonial subjects could thus claim nationality. They belonged to the French empire, but did not have the same political rights as citizens. In this sense, colonial nationals in the metropole had an ambivalent legal status as both belonging to France, but not French. In

¹¹⁶ Letter from Engineer and Head of Departmental Services of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, November 21, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223.

¹¹⁷ Report to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône regarding the Marseille Squatter Problem, September 26, 1951, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 120378

their descriptions of camp residents, officials' tendency to describe residents as foreigners underscores this ambiguity. In the overseas colonies, colonial subjects were not-yet-ready for full access to French citizenship. In the metropole, asocials (many of whom were colonial subjects), were not-yet-ready for full social rights like access to modern housing.

ONE SOLUTION TO THE SANITATION PROBLEM

By the mid 1950s, although the camp was still labeled “provisional” it began to house more permanent populations. While many squatting families cycled through Camp Grand Arenas in the early 1950s, by mid decade, many “asocial” families had formed a permanent population in the camp. For example, in 1961, 40,592 immigrants were registered in Grand Arenas.¹¹⁸ As one former resident remembered: “My parents had a bakery in Oran. Our family told us to come to France because there was work. We squatted for two years in Marseille before we landed in the camp Grand Arenas. I was young, but I understood then that the camp was supposed to be temporary and we wouldn't be staying there for long. Even so, we stayed there seven or eight years.”¹¹⁹

Disputes over which state bureaucracy was in charge of managing Camp Grand Arenas led to two consensuses: that camp problems were caused by foreigners (even though most residents were French) and that increased police surveillance was needed to improve sanitation in the camp: “We need a permanent police post at the Camp Grand

¹¹⁸ Temime, *Le Camp Du Grand Arénas, Marseille 1944-1966*, 103.

¹¹⁹ Interview: CT quoted in *Ibid.*, 86.

Arenas to enforce hygiene.”¹²⁰ By the mid 1950s, the local branch of the MRU, in concert with the city of Marseille, established “a permanent police presence to police the dense population at Arenas...and punish delinquents and those practices which are difficult for the inhabitants to abandon.”¹²¹

As overcrowding in the camp persisted, the increased policing of Grand Arenas did not improve conditions in the camp. In 1959, residents formed the *Amicale des Locataires de la Cite Nouvel Arenas* and petitioned local government for improvements to camp hygiene and infrastructure. In one letter to the mayor’s office, the president of the association wrote: the population is inundated by bad odors and rats that pollute the area and our homes...¹²² The association also appealed to a Marseille city council member, Jean Frassinnet, for help. After a visit to the camp, Frassinnet wrote the local and national offices of the MRU, the departmental prefect, and the mayor: “one could believe that this is a concentration camp...garbage was being scattered by the wind and dogs...I don’t know how it could be designed like this but I saw a tall sewage tank, very odorous, built exactly in front of a barrack, occupied by the family A!”¹²³ In addition to criticizing the insufficient number of trashcans and poor design of the sewage system, Frassinnet also described the lack of infrastructure including the “absence of roads...inexistent

¹²⁰ Letter from R. Calloud, Departmental Satellite of Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, September 17, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

¹²¹ Letter from Engineer and Head of Departmental Services of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, November 21, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223. See also: Letter from Jean Mondet, Engineer and head of the Cleaning Services to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, December 5, 1956, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223 and Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, January 5, 1957, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

¹²² President of the *Amicale des Locataires des Grand Arénas* to Jean Masse, deputy to the mayor of Marseille, October 26, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 254

¹²³ Letter from Jean Frassinnet, Deputy from the Bouches-du-Rhône at the National Assembly to the Minister of Reconstruction, the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, the Cleaning Services, September 15, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 254

lighting...no running water...and no medical services, neither infirmary or dispensary...There is not a tree, not a flower, not a playground.”¹²⁴

After a flurry of letters to local authorities, the Grand Arenas resident association decided to focus on one big problem: garbage. The president of the association wrote “the existing trash dumpsters are veritable foyers of infection.”¹²⁵ However, repeated appeals to local officials did not elicit much response. In a final letter to the mayor’s office, the association announced that they had found a solution to the garbage problem. The president wrote that they had decided to “destroy the existing trash dumpsters and instead put a trash can in front of every individual house.”¹²⁶ By the late 1950s, the residents of Camp Grand Arenas found a solution to the garbage problem. For them, camp problems were not solved by increased police surveillance, but by increasing the number of trash receptacles that serviced the population.

Overtime, local and national authorities did make improvements to the barrack-shanties. In the mid 1960s, authorities built more permanent housing out of pre-fabricated materials. By the 1970s, families were still living in Grand Arenas when the state began efforts to definitively close the camp.

While many squatting families sent to Grand Arenas eventually cycled out as new permanent housing was constructed, other families with an “asocial” status stayed on, often for many years, in the “provisional” camp. Initially, families in the camp were from a multiplicity of nations, including: Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. However, most families given an “asocial” status were: Roma and Sinti (classified as ‘Gypsies’ in

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ President of *Amicale des Locataires des Grand Arénas* to Jean Masse, deputy to Marseille mayor Gaston Defferre, October 26, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 254

¹²⁶ Ibid.

all government documents), and North-Africans (this term was applied to people from: Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Libya, even though many were not geographically from North Africa). Ironically, many “asocial” families in the camp actually had French nationality as they came from within the empire.

This close reading of government documents on Camp Grand Arenas demonstrates how early attempts at re-housing families resulted in a crude differentiation between “social” and “asocial” families. As authorities wrangled over who had responsibility for managing the camp, discussion shifted from focusing on the material conditions of the camp to the camp residents themselves. This led to a specific discourse where officials looked less at material conditions, and more at the moral and racial “conditions” of families. As government officials at the local level differentiated between “French” and “un-French” domestic practices in Grand Arenas, they demonstrate how perceptions of cultural and ethnic differences shaped developing ideas about social welfare. While all Grand Arenas residents had the right to shelter and sanitation, the explanation for poor conditions rested on the residents themselves, not the insufficient amenities. Thus Grand Arenas residents did not qualify for certain social rights because they had not—according to state officials—yet earned them.

CONCLUSION

In the immediate post-war period, France was attempted to rebuild the nation, but also to re-think what it meant to be French. Following the war, France also struggled with a post-war housing crisis and a burgeoning squatters’ movement claimed both the human and social right to housing. During this moment of possibility, squatters

participated in national debates about social welfare and the future of a comprehensive welfare state. In the first years of the movement, squatters recognized the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of homeless families in Marseille. However, as the movement clashed with local and national officials and struggled to gain legitimacy, squatters began to claim the right to housing on universal grounds. By claiming housing as a natural right, squatters downplayed the ethnic diversity of homeless families. Moreover, as the provisional government deliberated comprehensive social reform, squatters claimed housing as a social right and an integral part of any national welfare state.

While discussions of ethnic and cultural difference did not figure prominently in the squatters' agenda for the right to housing, perceptions of ethnic difference did figure into early state efforts at establishing housing programs. Between 1945 and 1954, municipal and state officials begin to implement the right to housing by providing provisional shelter for homeless families displaced by the war. A key outcome of this nascent re-housing system was a rough differentiation between squatters and asociales: Squatters continued to be regarded in official documents as citizens, while asociales were separated out based on assumptions about race, nationality, and domestic norms. As I will discuss in chapter three, this early distinction between normal and social families would develop, after 1954, into a comprehensive set of re-housing methods and policies that would shape public housing allocation in France in the late twentieth century.

CHAPTER III

Ordering the Disorderly Slum: 'Standardizing' Quality of Life in Marseille Shantytowns, 1953-1962

"The Peyssonnel slum is a veritable leper at the heart of the city... We must clean-up this pitiful Court of Miracles—the domicile of the tribes of Mohammed and Santiago."
-Marseille Magazine, 1954

During the post World War Two boom, France implemented a comprehensive urbanism program meant to modernize and rationalize the nation by putting the city, the home, and the citizen in order. This chapter examines post-war slum-clearance and re-housing practices in Marseille, France from 1954-1962. In particular, I discuss the role of local *techniciens* (technocratic experts like urban planners and public health officials) as mediators between everyday life and state redevelopment policies. Local *techniciens* were charged with classifying particular people and places with the goal of codifying a universal standard of human need. I will examine these larger themes through a close-reading of the slum, Peyssonnel, which was located in downtown Marseille. Peyssonnel residents were from disparate backgrounds: many were French—from the metropole or colonies—while others were immigrants from Spain and Italy. Local *techniciens* examined the living conditions of these families to determine whether they were “sociable” enough for re-housing. These experts employed rigorous techniques—like statistics and demography—to quantify quality of life. Through standardized methods

approved by the central government, local *techniciens* determined whether a family was asocial, and whether an asocial family could be re-socialized. However, they also negotiated with and assessed families with a diversity of domestic norms and practices. Although local *techniciens* cultivated a deep faith in the power of quantitative method to modernize French cities and families, their empirical work often contradicted their written conclusions. For example, while “North African” families consistently scored higher in demographic studies as the *most* adapted to French ways of life, local *techniciens* nonetheless described them in written reports as the *least* adapted and least able to transition from slum living to modern housing. In other words, local *techniciens*’ common sense assumptions about ethnic and social differences contradicted their own quantitative results.

While I make sense of what modernization meant at the local level, I also situate the efforts of local *techniciens* within the larger context of redevelopment and decolonization. From the 1950s through the early 1960s, France was not just attempting to modernize, but was also working out the immediate repercussions of decolonization. Modernization strategies were pursued both at home and in the colonies: urban planning in the colonies was thought to be one way of managing colonial peoples and places,¹ and “developing” Africa could be another way of holding on to empire.² During the Algerian

¹For scholarship on colonial urban planning: Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations : Algiers under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).; Paul Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).; Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).; Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State : Negritude & Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

² On modernization theory, development, and decolonization in Africa see: Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society : The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, African Studies Series (Cambridge, [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Frederick Cooper and Randall M. Packard, *International Development and the Social Sciences : Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), John Kent, *The Internationalization*

war for independence, the Constantine Plan was one key way France tried to keep Algeria French through implementing a vast program of public works.³ In the metropole, from 1958-1962, local modernization efforts became increasingly tied to Constantine Plan funds and institutions as the government implemented social welfare programs for Algerian families.⁴

I examine how this larger context of decolonization intersected in complicated ways with modernization methods at the local level. I trace the shift from questions of “asocial families” to a narrower focus on “Algerian families.” In the immediate postwar, the social question was understood in terms of “populations of the desperately poor”⁵ that included immigrants, French, and colonial subjects. With decolonization, and in particular, the escalation of the Algerian war of Independence, this social and racial hierarchy narrowed: asocial families were increasingly understood as Algerian. I examine the relationship between perceptions of racial difference and the shifting ways local *techniciens* understood the “social question.”

of Colonialism : Britain, France, and Black Africa, 1939-1956, Oxford Studies in African Affairs (Oxford New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1992).

³ On colonial Algeria and the War of Independence see: Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities : Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria*, Society and Culture in the Modern Middle East (London New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed by St. Martin's, 1995), *Algeria & France, 1800-2000 : Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, 1st ed., Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), Benjamin Stora, *Histoire De L'algerie Coloniale : 1830-1954*, Collection Repères ; 102 (Paris: Ed. La Découverte, 1991). James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War : Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005). Matthew James Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution : Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

⁴ On the Constantine Plan and Algerian decolonization: Amelia Lyons, "Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974," (University of California, Irvine, 2004), Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization : The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁵ Clifford D. Rosenberg, *Policing Paris : The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006). 2

SOLVING THE SOCIAL PROBLEM: TECHNOCRACY AND *TECHNICIENS*

After World War Two, debates about a new and better relationship between citizen and state focused on the need for a more centralized approach to the economy, social services, and infrastructure. State institutions would employ technological methods toward the management of social welfare. The technical expertise of urban planners was integrally linked to their belief that social organization promoted public good. For example, in 1950, the minister of Reconstruction and Urbanism, Claudius-Petit, established a tableau of universal development and construction norms including: the standardization of running water, indoor toilets, and room size in all new construction.⁶ In 1958, the ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism (MRU) adopted urbanist Robert Auzelle's "Tableau of Habitants' Needs"⁷ as the national domestic standard.⁸ These standardized norms were part of a larger urban plan that would provide technical solutions to social problems. Human need would be measured empirically, and these calculations would dictate the organization of space and amenities. The tabulation of domestic and urban space would re-order family life and overcome degenerative social problems like delinquency and promiscuity. The standardization of human norms understood as "universal" helped to address the "social question" through empirical methods.

⁶ Paul Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).4

⁷ *Tableau recapitulative des besoins des habitants du point de vue de l'amenagement des Agglomerations*

⁸ Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. 5, See also: Joshua Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers : Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

“The social question” has been described as a “catch-all phrase referring to an amalgam”⁹ of degenerative social problems like prostitution, mental illness, and alcoholism. Although state officials were concerned with such social problems after World War Two, the “social question” has historical roots in the nineteenth century, and “referred...to a new form of poverty linked to the advent of the industrial age.”¹⁰ During this period, the “new poor” were imagined as dangerous classes whose degenerative social scourges directly contributed to national decline.

In *The Policing of Families*, Jacques Donzelot describes “the social” as an emerging sector aimed at solving the problem of the social question.¹¹ He traces the genesis of the nineteenth century social sector “in which quite diverse problems and special cases can be grouped together, a sector comprising specific institutions and an entire body of qualified personnel.”¹² Central to Donzelot’s study are concepts of governmentality, or the way that organized practices create a certain type of citizen, how those practices are normalized, and how citizens govern themselves through normative behavior.¹³ The development of specific methods like demography and statistics were aimed to better classify and document populations toward the better management of citizens. In the nineteenth century, the social emerged as an object that could be worked upon—where particular categories, like the family—became important units of analysis integral to codifying and normalizing concepts of social welfare.

⁹ Janet R. Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France : The Musée Social & the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).17

¹⁰ Ibid.17-18

¹¹ For discussions of governmentality and the family see: Jacques Donzelot, "The Policing of Families," Pantheon Books.

¹² Ibid.IX

¹³ For Foucault’s discussion of governmentality: Michel Foucault et al., *The Foucault Effect : Studies in Governmentality : With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

Scholars have traced this history of the social question and the evolution of a “type of rationality” concerned with a “modern society that would ‘pass from the government of men to the administration of things.’”¹⁴ Others have examined continuity within technical bureaucracies from the Third Republic, to Vichy, to the post war period.¹⁵ Recent work has also explored the particularities of post 1945 technocratic institutions and actors, specifically debates about the “replacement of politicians by experts.”¹⁶

WHAT IS A LOCAL *TECHNICIEN*?

The idea that the social question existed as a problem that could be fixed took particular hold after World War Two. Technical expertise would play a central role in the construction of public good, and the technocrat emerged as a key actor in the organization and definition of social welfare. Scholars have defined a technocrat as “a type of actor who... can be appropriately called a technician of general ideas”¹⁷ and “any expert or high-level bureaucrat involved in state administration.”¹⁸ Other studies have introduced the French term *techniciens*,¹⁹ referring to a cadre of individuals from top schools like the *Ecole Polytechnique*, and elite institutions like the engineering corps,

¹⁴ Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. 1

¹⁵ See: Richard F. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France : Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge [Eng.] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).; Brian Newsome, "The Rise of the Grands Ensembles: Government, Business and Housing in Postwar France," *The Historian* 66, no. 4 (2004), W. Brian Newsome, *French Urban Planning, 1940-1968 : The Construction and Deconstruction of an Authoritarian System* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

¹⁶ Gabrielle Hecht, *The Radiance of France : Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II*, Inside Technology (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1998). 29

¹⁷ Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. 9

¹⁸ Hecht, *The Radiance of France : Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II*. 29. For other stidoes of the technocrat: Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France : Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century*, Richard F. Kuisel, *Ernest Mercier; French Technocrat* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1967).

¹⁹ See: Hecht, *The Radiance of France : Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II*.

Ponts et Chaussées. This work has been useful in considering the development of certain “practices of reason”²⁰ or faith in quantitative methods for the construction of public good. In this chapter, I introduce “local *techniciens*” as part of the technocratic project, but will distinguish local *techniciens* from technocrats.

Local *techniciens* were local actors who participated in these larger national debates about technology and politics, but were outside the elite corps of individuals forming the top ranks of state institutions. While local *techniciens* were not part of this cadre of high-functionaries, they similarly characterized their work in terms of the welfare of the nation; they maintained a firm faith in the efficiency of rational method in the management of everyday life. Local *techniciens* were in a unique position: they were government officials with the task of carrying out centralized policies, but they also interpreted national standards at the local level. While centralization is key to understanding the postwar approach to urban planning, *techniciens* nonetheless interpreted and re-worked these technocratic methods at the local level. Because local *techniciens* mediated between everyday life and the central state, they were confronted with the paradox of applying a universal standard of need to a diverse population. In particular, local *techniciens* were forced to consider difference in their documentation of “need” for working class and migrant families.

The “family” as a particular category and object of analysis has figured prominently in local *techniciens*’ studies of the social question.²¹ Local *techniciens*

²⁰ Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. 9

²¹ Studies of the developing welfare state have discussed the emerging model of the nuclear family: social insurance benefits became increasingly tied to a constricted familial model that excluded grandparents and other extended family members. For example, see: Ewald, François. *L'etat Providence*. Paris: B. Grasset, 1986. Donzelot, Jacques. "The Policing of Families." Pantheon Books. Dutton, Paul V.

decided whether to bulldoze a slum or tenement based on individual studies of families living there. I draw on recent work in gender²² and migration history to make sense of how local *techniciens* evaluated families. In particular, the family became a site of hygienic, moral, and cultural intervention.²³ Wives, mothers, and daughters were a key measure of a family's "level of adaptation" to French culture. Studies like Amelia Lyon's *Invisible Families* demonstrate how the family—and women's bodies—functioned as barometers for measuring "French-ness."

I argue that only through attention to local *techniciens*, can we make sense of how abstract concepts like "the nuclear family" and "universal human need" were confronted and changed through the particularities of diversity in everyday life. Only by interrogating how *techniciens* negotiated this complicated local environment can we make sense of how perceptions of difference—especially negotiations of race, culture, and class—changed national conceptions of social welfare. As Paul Rabinow argues, the orchestration of diversity is central to urban planning.²⁴ My analysis of Marseille

Origins of the French Welfare State : The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914-1947, New Studies in European History. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Pedersen, Susan. *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State : Britain and France, 1914-1945*.

Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Steinmetz, George. *Regulating the Social : The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History.

Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993. Surkis, Judith. *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006.

²² Gender historians have also examined what they call a male breadwinner familial model:

welfare benefits were based on the earnings of the male head of the family. See: Lewis, Jane. *Women in Britain since 1945 : Women, Family, Work and the State in the Post-War Years*, Making Contemporary Britain. Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: B. Blackwell, 1992. Pateman, Carole. "The Patriarchal Welfare State." In *Democracy and the Welfare State*, edited by Amy Gutman. Princeton: Princeton, 1988. For discussion of women's bodies as a key site for social intervention, See: Canning, Kathleen. *Languages of Labor and Gender : Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850-1914*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996. Fuchs, Rachel Ginnis. *Poor and Pregnant in Paris : Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992.

²³ See: Lewis, Gail. *'Race', Gender, Social Welfare : Encounters in a Postcolonial Society*. Cambridge, UK Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell, 2000. Lyons, Amerlia. "Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974." University of California, Irvine, 2004.

²⁴Rabinow, *French Modern : Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. 289

neighborhoods shows how local *techniciens* codified methods meant to universalize concepts of human need through the particularity of everyday life in slums and tenements. Their interactions with French and immigrant families are integral to understanding how social welfare practices developed as both universal and hierarchical. This attention to the work of local *techniciens* helps unpack how national concerns with “asocial families” shifted in the late 1950s to a more narrow focus on Algerian families.

LOCAL *TECHNICIENS* AND THE HOUSING CRISIS, 1953-1954

During the winter of 1953-1954, two homeless Parisians froze to death after being evicted from their homes, sparking outcry from housing activists. The most vocal of these critics, Catholic Priest Abbé Pierre, initiated a campaign against homelessness and galvanized mass public support. His campaign also fueled an outraged public already critical of the lack of proper housing: Although the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism was created in 1945 to address the housing crisis, the institution had largely failed to construct new housing. In 1953, many families still lived in dilapidated housing.

In 1953, the new head of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism, Pierre Courant announced a new and aggressive plan to confront the housing crisis. The Courant Plan was the first program that successively mass produced housing. Based in part on the financing system that his predecessor Claudius-Petit established, Courant initiated a housing construction program known as the “Million Project.” Relying heavily on pre-fabricated materials and a centralized contracting system, the “Million Project” was intended to construct entire apartment buildings for one million francs, allowing for the mass construction of housing around France. Between 1953 and 1962,

nearly 500,000 housing units were constructed.²⁵ The program permitted more families to ascend into the public housing, or *Habitation a Loyer Moderé* (HLM) system.

In the 1950s, a large number of families did move out of their war damaged and ancient buildings into standardized “modern” apartments. In order to make room for new housing, government authorities also needed to clear out old slums and tenements. Officials had to decide which of the families living in these dilapidated buildings qualified for housing in the new HLMs.

Local *techniciens* were in a key position to mediate between everyday life and government policy during the ongoing housing crisis. Experts from local urban planning and public health departments worked in specific neighborhoods and slum areas to assess the integrity of buildings and living conditions.²⁶ The decision to label a slum an *ilot insalubre*—or a cluster of blighted buildings officially marked for redevelopment—would begin the legal process through which a slum could be appropriated by the city, the residents evicted or re-housed, and the site redeveloped. Urban planning and public health councils would make recommendations to the city council about *ilots insalubres*, and the city council would review cases before passing them along to the prefect, and finally to the central government. The work of local *techniciens* was thus an important preliminary step in the larger project of construction and re-housing.

The process of examining slums and tenements also necessitated studying the families living in them. In addition to analyzing the structural integrity of a building,

²⁵ Lyons, "Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974." 151

²⁶ The urban planning and public health departments collaborated closely at the municipal and departmental level, each contributing empirical data on slums and residents. Members from the four departments also sat on two key councils: the council of public health and the council of urban planning. These councils were comprised of local architects, engineers, and medical doctors with particular expertise in issues of urban planning and public health.

local *techniciens* assessed the moral integrity of families to determine whether they were “ready” for new housing. This led to a stratified approach where some families qualified for “normal” housing, while others did not. In this chapter I focus on those “asocial” or “unadapted” families who did not qualify to live in normal housing. Many of them lived in tenements or slums (*bidonvilles*) around France, and most of them, like the residents of the Marseille slum, Peyssonnel, were a mix of migrant and French families.

PEYSSONNEL: THE COURT OF MIRACLES AT THE HEART OF MARSEILLE

The Peyssonnel slum was located in downtown Marseille, blocks from the city center and main boulevard *La Canebière*.²⁷ Because of Peyssonnel’s proximity to the docks and old port—a typical area of employment for working class residents—the slum grew over time as a convenient residential site for families and single-male laborers. The Peyssonnel population was a mix of recent migrants and long-term Marseille residents. Many were French—from the metropole or colonies—others were Europeans displaced during World War Two who never relocated.

While the public was concerned about the deplorable state of French housing, slums and tenements also generated anxiety about degenerative social problems. A series of articles in Marseille newspapers and regional magazines linked Abbé Pierre’s housing campaign to warnings about the dangers of slum-living. In 1954, two reporters for the leisure periodical, *Marseille Magazine*, published an exposé on the Peyssonnel slum. They alluded to Abbé Pierre’s campaign against homelessness, titling the article, “Abbé Pierre, do you know Peyssonnel, Court of Miracles of all the Derelicts of Marseille?”

²⁷ Although new arrivals to Marseille historically settled in the Panier neighborhood near the Old Port, families were forced to look elsewhere for cheap shelter after the neighborhood was dynamited during World War Two.

While the piece touched on the duty of the government to re-house displaced families, the article mostly pathologized the slum. In particular, the article described the foreignness of Peyssonnel residents, the disorder of the slum, and the danger such a mysterious, impenetrable area posed for Marseille residents:

“a court of miracles...[and] the domicile of the tribes of Mohammed and Santiago... Less than one kilometer from [downtown]...one of the most foreign neighborhoods in Marseille, so isolated that only a few Marseillais know about it... Peyssonnel is full of Negro huts, Arab hovels, and bohemian caravans...At night, the strum of guitars and husky voices of flamenco waft over the shanties, undercut by the insistent throbbing of north-African tam-tams...The languages most in use are, without doubt, Arabic and Spanish.”²⁸

The article underscored the foreign-ness of Peyssonnel by alluding to the population of north and sub-Saharan Africans and Roma, and especially, their “exotic” practices and norms. As a “court of miracles” the slum was like a casbah, but at the heart of the French metropole. The article also used photographs to document how many residents preserved their “foreign” lifestyles, not only because they did not speak French, but because they maintained “strange” dress and domestic practices.

²⁸ *Marseille Magazine* no. 28, 1954, p. 22, Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 25.

Figure III.1 “This old Bedouin Women...”²⁹



Included in the “Court of Miracles” article, figure III.1 depicts a robed woman with a covered head walking away from a shack. The woman holds an empty tub in one hand, and casts a shadow that leads the eye toward a small child seated in the dirt. The caption below the photo reads: “Although settled in Marseille for many years, this old Bedouin woman has changed nothing of her traditional costume, she doesn’t want to smile for the camera.” While the photo captures the woman in motion, walking away from a rude shack, the caption fixes her in time: she has lived in Marseille for many years, but because she lives in Peyssonnel, she has remained unchanged and unassimilated to French life. The evidence offered to undergird her lack of advancement is her “traditional costume” and her unwillingness to smile for the camera. The photo and

²⁹ *Marseille Magazine* no. 28, 1954, p. 22, Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 25.

caption reinforced the incredulity that such foreignness could thrive in Marseille for years unbeknownst to Marseille residents.

The article also pathologized Peyssonnel as disorderly and a “leper at the heart of the city.” Prior to venturing into the “most flea-ridden of flea-infested places in Marseille” the authors described the disinfecting and protecting measures necessary: “before entering the slum, our guide extracted a small box of powder from his pocket and conscientiously sprinkled this powder on his shoes, his socks, the bottom of his pants...He took of his hat and sprinkled it too...Then he handed us the box and said, ‘It works, D.D.T.’”³⁰ The authors described the need to guard against slum diseases by liberally sprinkling themselves with the toxic pesticide, D.D.T. The article characterized the slum in need of “clean-up” and as a leprous outcast that should be expelled. Its proximity to the city center was particularly dangerous because it was like a “cancer,” threatening to eat away the heart of the city.

The authors described the danger Peyssonnel posed to Marseille residents, in part because it was chaotic and disorderly:

³⁰ *Marseille Magazine* no. 28, 1954, p. 23, Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 25

Figure III.2 “Less than one kilometer from the *Canebière*”³¹



In figure III.2, laundry and rugs form a canopy over a narrow alley packed with men and women. Although partially obscured by hanging clothing and a throng of people, the buildings appear haphazardly constructed and seem to lean into the alley. A barefoot, shirtless child forms the centerpiece of the scene as a gaunt man in an oversized suit—but with coiffed hair—lurks to the side, gazing back toward the crowd. The caption below describes the scene as “A Gypsy alley...less than one kilometer from the Canebière.”³²

³¹ *Marseille Magazine* no. 28, 1954, p. 23, Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 25

³² The Canebière is the main road that runs through downtown Marseille.

By emphasizing the slum as chaotic, and dangerous, the authors made a case for bull-doing Peyssonnel. They cited the need for frequent police intervention, either to subdue rowdy residents, or to search for criminals hiding out in the labyrinth of shanties: “Peyssonnel is one of the most atrocious mysteries...Only honest men are in danger here. This underworld doesn’t only shelter witch doctors and she-sorcerers, but also criminals seeking asylum.”³³

THE WAR ON SLUMS: A PATHOLOGICAL PROBLEM AND A TECHNOCRATIC SOLUTION

While the *Marseille Magazine* article described Peyssonnel as disorderly and unknowable, local *techniciens* sought to render Peyssonnel knowable and orderly. For example, the head inspector of urbanism André Hardy described slums in pathological terms, but outlined a technocratic solution to the slum problem. In a series of memos to Marseille Municipal departments, Hardy underscored the biological dangers of slums: “Slums are always linked to material and physiological misery and lead directly to human degeneration...Because of the lack of attention to quality of life, hygiene and moral character, society as a whole fails.”³⁴ Hardy thus linked the material condition of slums to human physical and moral degeneration, and by extension, national decline. Like the authors of the Peyssonnel article, local *technicien* Hardy also discussed the problem of slums in terms of a diseased body: “What is the cure for this disease which afflicts our

³³ *Marseille Magazine* no. 28, 1954, p. 25, Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 25

³⁴ Report by André Hardy to Departmental Council of Hygiene, February 21, 1955. Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

cities? How do we rehabilitate the urban tissue?”³⁵ However, Hardy framed his solution to the slum problem in technocratic terms. For Hardy, these “wounds can be healed by: 1) statistical analysis; 2) the examination of these statistical results using demographic, material, and financial analysis; 3) developing construction programs.”³⁶ For Hardy, “these meticulous and detailed studies are necessary”³⁷ for the solution of these moral and national ills. Hardy thus argued that a meticulous quantitative approach using statistical analysis was the means to solve the problem of slum living, and by extension the housing crisis.

Officials at the central Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism similarly described the problem of slums in pathological terms and the solution in technocratic terms. For example, in a pamphlet, the “War on Slums” (*Lutte contre les Taudis*), the MRU linked the dangers of slum living to the degeneration of family life:

“Slums sterilize our city centers...and there is a direct correlation between mortality rates and the nature of habitat: dark and humid rooms, overpopulation, crumbling walls and insufficient sound and thermal isolation are detrimental to the physical and moral health of the occupants...The degradation of family life contributes equally to the augmentation of the number of alcoholics, insane, juvenile delinquents, prostitutes and asocials who are simultaneously the charges of, and of danger to, the collectivity.”³⁸

The MRU similarly compared the city to a body, invoking medical terminology that slums “sterilized”, or rendered impotent, the downtowns of cities, which should be the center of reproduction, progress, and profit. The MRU correlated mortality with habitat,

³⁵ André Hardy, *Rapport de l’Habitat Defectueux et la Politique du Logement*, 1951. Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

³⁶ André Hardy, *Rapport de l’Habitat Defectueux et la Politique du Logement*, 1951. Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

³⁷ André Hardy, *Rapport de l’Habitat Defectueux et la Politique du Logement*, 1951. Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

³⁸ Pamphlet from the *Ministère de la Reconstruction et du Logement*, “*La Lutte Contre le Taudis et la Rénovation de l’Habitat Défectueux*,” Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

arguing that the conditions in slums lead to the physical and moral deterioration of residents and the decomposition of domestic life. In particular, the MRU invoked the specter of associable behaviors like alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution. The MRU associated these moral diseases with the “floating populations” of asocials and working class poor and linked these “dangerous classes”³⁹ to the specter of national decline.

A photograph from the pamphlet, with the caption “alcoholism and juvenile delinquency” couples arguments about the dangers of slum-living with a provocative image.⁴⁰

³⁹ Louis Chevalier, *Classes Laborieuses Et Classes Dangereuses À Paris Pendant La Première Moitié Du Xixe Siècle* (Paris,: Plon, 1958).

⁴⁰ Pamphlet from the *Ministère de la Reconstruction et du Logement*, “*La Lutte Contre le Taudis et la Rénovation de l’Habitat Défectueux*,” Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

Figure III.3 “Alcoholism and Juvenile Delinquency”⁴¹



In figure III.3, a little boy with a dirty face stands defiantly—barefoot and barelegged. He clutches a large bottle in his hands. It seems to be a wine bottle, which undergirds the photo’s caption, that slum life promotes alcoholism. His shadow gestures backward to some shacks and debris in the background. The area around the boy is barren: there are neither trees nor shrubs. The photograph suggests a parallel between the boy’s sullen expression, and juvenile delinquency; between the bottle and alcoholism. The photograph foregrounds the assumption that slum-living necessarily leads to these kind of social ills, even though the boy could have simply picked up a bottle, and because he is standing in the sun, squints at the camera. The photo provides visual “evidence” that slum-living leads to social disease.

⁴¹ Pamphlet from the *Ministère de la Reconstruction et du Logement*, “*La Lutte Contre le Taudis et la Rénovation de l’Habitat Défectueux*,” Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

While the problem of slum-living was described using pathological rhetoric, the solution was a meticulous and quantitative assessment of slum-living. While this approach was influenced by assumptions about slum-living, it was also an attempt to gather hard statistical data about slums and the families living in them. The pamphlet described the necessity of “doctors, economists, administrators, journalists, lawyers, urbanists, and politicians, to study defective habitat from within their respective disciplines in order to cure our civilization of this scourge.”⁴² In other words, the MRU called on a cadre of specialists to evaluate slum-living in order to provide a palliative to the problem. The MRU detailed a method of assessment involving “systematic analysis of the territory in its entirety...these studies are not only of the buildings, but also the inhabitants, detailing: familial composition, financial means, occupation, house-keeping methods, etc.”⁴³ The analysis of slum-living pertained not only to the dilapidated state of the buildings, but to the residents themselves.

QUANTIFYING QUALITY OF LIFE IN PEYSSONNEL

While photos like the one depicting “alcoholism and juvenile delinquency” helped to conjure assumptions about the dangers of slum-living, the methods promoted by the MRU and practiced by local *techniciens* would quantify the dangers of slum-living. In particular, empirical analysis of living conditions would permit local *techniciens* to calculate a numerical value, and this number would correlate with a family’s quality of life.

⁴² Pamphlet from the *Ministère de la Reconstruction et du Logement*, “*La Lutte Contre le Taudis et la Rénovation de l’Habitat Défectueux*,” Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

⁴³ *Ibid.*

A letter from the MRU to the Bouches du Rhone local urban planning and housing office outlined the methods local *techniciens* would implement for evaluating buildings and the families living in them. Similar to the “War on Slums” pamphlet, in this letter, the MRU called for a “summary inventory of the specific local problems”⁴⁴ of tenements and slums. In particular, the MRU called for local *techniciens* to work with municipalities to conduct local studies. These studies would evaluate: “the composition of families, their means of existence and their sociability and the state of habitability of the buildings they occupy.”⁴⁵ A Declaration of Insalubrity would be based on the results of these studies and would be the first step in the legal process by which families were rehoused, the slum razed and the site redeveloped.

In the early 1950s, local *techniciens* began to study Peyssonnel as a potential site for new development. In 1951, the director of the Municipal Bureau of Hygiene visited the slum and described living conditions: “Most buildings are constructed from chance materials like plywood and sheet metal and these huts shelter seven or eight members of a family in a single, drafty room, with a low ceiling. The floor is typically bare earth, and the ventilation is constituted by the open door. There are often no beds, and even less often bedding; just mattresses thrown on the bare earth, and rags for blankets.”⁴⁶ The director also described the lack of running water and sewer system, as waste drained directly onto the narrow streets and collected in pools around the slum. He concluded by asserting that “these are veritable foyers of degeneration... There is absolutely no

⁴⁴ Memo from the *Ministère de la Reconstruction et de l’Urbanisme* to *Direction de l’Aménagement du Territoire Service des Affaires Foncières, de l’Habitat et du Logement*, February 10, 1952, Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 31

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Letter from *Médecin Directeur du Bureau Municipale d’Hygiène* to Doctor Girbal, *adjoint délégué a l’Hygiène*, Regarding the *Dénonciation de taudis Enclos Peyssonnel*, November 16, 1951, Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 25

possibility to ameliorate these slums in order to render them habitable. The only rational solution is to bull-doze all these completely insalubrious dwellings.”⁴⁷ In this description of Peyssonnel, the head of the Municipal Bureau of Hygiene asserted that lack of hygiene and overcrowding had contributed to the moral degeneration of the residents.

After this preliminary report, local *techniciens* from the urban planning department began a comprehensive quantitative assessment of Peyssonnel. While the report from the director of the Municipal Bureau of Hygiene assumed a link between the deplorable material conditions in the slum and the moral decay of the residents, local *techniciens* from the urban planning department sought to demonstrate this link empirically. They used a rubric determining “sociability and salubrity” to analyze the material conditions of the slum and studied individual households to assess the moral conditions of each family living there.

Most individual household studies were conducted by *techniciens* from the municipal urban planning department. These habitat studies, or *Les Enquetes sur l’Habitat*, were standardized and looked like figure III.4. Each form had set categories that *techniciens* assessed in the tabulation of salubrity and sociability.

⁴⁷ Letter from *Médecin Directeur du Bureau Municipale d’Hygiène* to Doctor Girbal, *adjoint délégué a l’Hygiène*, Regarding the *Dénonciation de taudis Enclos Peyssonnel*, November 16, 1951, Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 25

were the most detailed. For salubrity, the investigator examined the condition of the building. Because Peyssonnel was scheduled to be completely bull-dozed, the investigator did not assess the salubrity of this building. Normally, a salubrity score was determined by: air circulation, light, access to water and toilets, the sturdiness of the building, number of rooms, and proximity to neighboring houses, garbage, or sewage. The *higher* the score, the *more* insalubrious the building and the less likely to be renovated.

Under sociability, the investigator assessed and ranked the family. Scores based on sociability would help determine where or whether families would be re-housed. While the sub-categories under salubrity assessed the material conditions and quality of the building, the sub-categories under sociability assessed the domestic and moral conditions of the family. The sociability portion of the form was divided into four sub-categories: profession, housekeeping, furnishings, and manner of living. Except in the case of a single mother, the profession sub-category reflected the employment status of the male head of the family (*chef de famille*). A manager or skilled-worker would receive better scores, while an unskilled laborer was assigned a worse score. An unemployment status received the worst score.

Aside from profession, most of the criteria used to determine the sociability of a family assessed the role of the wife and mother. Under the second sub-category under sociability—housekeeping—the investigator penalized for bad odors, dirty dishes, unclean windowpanes, unswept floors, and cluttered tables. Under furnishings, the third sub-category, the investigator checked for the presence of a kitchen stove, dining table, beds and bedding, bathroom commodities, and even a parlor. The fourth sub-category,

“manner of living,” assessed the presence of a laundry line, cooking fuel, trash bins, and decorating style.

Lastly, the investigator documented the size and composition of the family: the ages of the father, mother, and children, the number and sexes of children, and the number of family members outside of the nuclear family (grandparents, aunts, etc) living in the house. The larger the family, the worse the score, and the “lower” the sociability. For example, a large family most likely suggested overcrowding, with too many people sharing one or two small rooms. A large family also meant that either the parents were irresponsibly having too many children, or several families were sharing one household. These multiple scenarios contributed to the existing consensus that overcrowding led to promiscuous and incestuous behavior among family members.

After tabulating and averaging all the points, the investigator assigned a sociability/salubrity score. This number corresponded to a label of: normal, average, or mediocre. The *more* points a household had, the *more* insalubrious or asocial the family. A score between 0 and 2 meant that the family was normal, and their house was salubrious. A score between 2 and 2.5 indicated that the family had average sociability, and the salubrity of their house could be ameliorated. If the family received above a 2.5, their sociability was mediocre, and their house insalubrious. Although the binary between sociability and salubrity was meant to distinguish the condition of the house from that of the family, in the final tabulation, the scores overwhelmingly reflected the moral and material condition of the family, rather than the material state of the house.

Thus, the salubrity—or condition—of the house was based on the manner in which a family lived in it.⁴⁹

In the study pictured in figure four, the C. family received a very poor score. Although the family was not penalized for bad odors, the floors, table, dishes, and windows were marked as dirty. There did not seem to be any proper bedroom, kitchen, or living room furniture. There was no laundry line for drying clothes, no cooking fuel, no trash receptacle, and no decorations.

This form was meant to standardize the method by which local *techniciens* assessed the salubrity of houses and the sociability of the families living in them. Each individual family living in Peyssonnel was examined. According to a 1955 demographic study by a municipal urban planner, Feracci,⁵⁰ 126 families, or 656 people lived in Peyssonnel.⁵¹ Of these 126 families, I located complete individual household studies like figure four for 45 families. Feracci meticulously ranked each category noting: the profession of the head of the household, housekeeping (dirty dishes, floors, windows, bad odors), furnishings (beds, stove, etc), manner of living (decorations, trash receptacles, etc).

Feracci also added a new category: nationality. For example, on the household study for the C. family, Feracci noted the family was “Spanish.” For each of these studies he not only recorded the nationality of the head of the household, including where and when the father was born, but the nationality of each member of the family: where

⁴⁹ For documentation on these quantitative methods of sociability/salubrity see: Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 25; 483 W 254; 468 W 179.

⁵⁰ Feracci conducted most of the individual household studies for most of the Marseille slums and tenements in the 1950s, including Peyssonnel. See for example: the 439 W series, Marseille Municipal Archives.

⁵¹ Peyssonnel Study of Sociability and Salubrity, by Ferracci, Technical Services Department, Urban Planning Division, November 2, 1955, Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 25

and when the mother was born, the children, grandparents, sisters, etc. Out of the 126 families, Feracci documented four main “nationalities:” French, Italian, Spanish, and North African. Out of the 45 complete studies, I counted nationality categories for: French, Spanish, British, and North African. Many with French nationality were colonial settlers, born abroad, but returning to France during decolonization. Many of their children were born in Marseille. Similarly, the parents of most Italian, and Spanish families were born abroad, but their children born in Marseille. Although Feracci designated North African as a specific category of nationality, this category actually represented a hodge podge of families from north Africa, the middle east, and some from sub-Saharan Africa. It is unclear how Feracci arrived at his documentation of nationality, whether he asked to see official identification papers, or simply asked the residents where they were born.

While officials at the MRU framed the problem of slums in terms of a “floating population” of dangerous classes, local *techniciens* like Feracci began to pay more attention to nationality. According to Feracci’s study of 45 households in Peyssonnel, three families were designated North African, 11 families were Spanish, 29 were French, and two were British.

Table III.1 Breakdown of Families Studied by “Nationality”

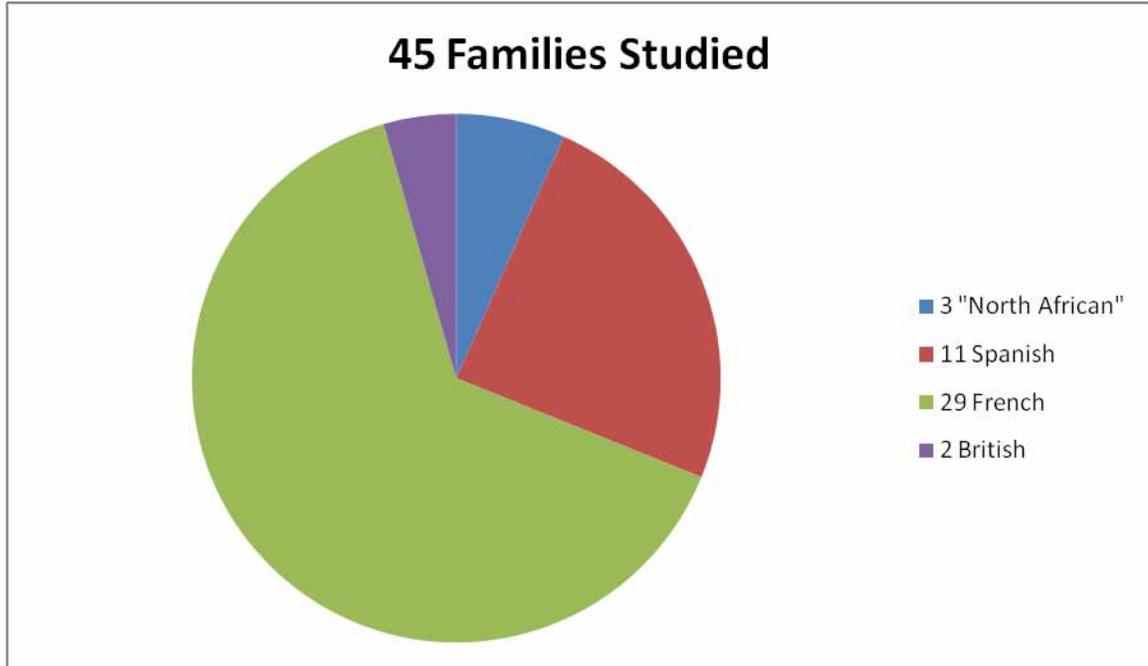


Table III.2 45 Household Studies: Peyssonnel, 1956

# of Families by “Nationality”	% of Families Salubrious	% employed	Average number of children per family
3 “North African”	67%	100%	4
11 Spanish	45%	91%	2.1
29 French	3.4%	79%	2.6
2 British	0%	100%	0

Source: Compiled from Individual Housing Studies, Peyssonnel, 1956. Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 25

Based on the individual household studies, two out of three, or 67% of the “North African” families were salubrious. Out of 11 Spanish families, five were salubrious, or 45%. Only one out of 29 French families received a salubrious score, or 3.4%. Neither

of the two British families were salubrious. While most of “heads” of the families were employed, the “North Africans”, Spanish, and British families had the highest levels of employment. On average, the “North African” families had more children than the other families.

Feracci’s household studies reveal two key contradictions: First, government documents and the press characterized Peyssonnel as a “court of miracles” inhabited by foreigners who were mostly Gypsies and North Africans. In contrast, Feracci’s empirical work showed that most residents were French. Second, state officials and the media tended to overwhelmingly describe “north Africans” as insalubrious and un-civilized. For example, head urbanist Hardy, and the director of the municipal bureau of health Mouzon, both described Peyssonnel houses as “veritable foyers of degeneration” and described the “large population of Arabs” living in the slum. In contrast, the quantitative work of local *techniciens* recorded “north African” families as the most sociable and the most salubrious.

The ways in which local *techniciens* imagined the slum contrasted their own empirical work. While “North Africans” were characterized as disruptive and asocial, the empirical work of local *techniciens* demonstrated that proportionately more North African families than French, Italian and Spanish families were deemed “sociable.” The same local *techniciens* who overwhelmingly described “North Africans” as insalubrious and un-civilized, also revealed, through their own quantitative methods, that these families were in fact “more sociable” than their French and Spanish neighbors in Peyssonnel.⁵²

⁵² This discrepancy between rhetorical description and empirical documentation is also reflected in how local *techniciens* imagined resident segregation in Peyssonnel: “This population is grouped together by

While the MRU characterized the war on slums in terms of nineteenth century discourses of the degenerate classes, local *techniciens* added the category “nationality” to their standardized method for assessing quality of life. By adding this category to their household study forms, local *techniciens* demonstrated how nationality was increasingly viewed as an important factor in distinguishing families. This finding supports recent studies describing a shift from concerns about “social class to nationality.”⁵³ For example, in *Policing Paris*, Clifford Rosenberg traces a shift from anxiety about the floating and dangerous classes—which he argues were imagined as both poor French and immigrant families—to concern about nationality and foreign families. My attention to local *techniciens* as intermediaries between everyday life and centralized policies shows how nationality was emerging as an important measure of difference.

The work of local *techniciens* also draws attention to the unique place of colonial subjects within this hierarchy. Although colonial subjects technically had French nationality, they were singled out as distinctly foreign. Local *techniciens* created the category “north African” to distinguish families from French colonies—like Algeria and Morocco—from French, Spanish, and Italian families. By categorizing “north Africans” as having a distinct nationality, local *techniciens* demonstrated the ambiguous ways in which perceptions of cultural and racial difference intersected with understandings of formal nationality. French colonial subjects actually had French nationality, but local *techniciens* nonetheless understood them as foreign nationals. Local *techniciens* singled out “north Africans” based on common sense assumptions of racial difference.

ethnicity, Spanish, Gypsies and some French on one side, Arabs on the other.”⁵² Reports written by local *techniciens* stated that Peyssonnel residents segregated themselves based on ethnicity. Empirical work contradicted this assumption. For example, maps noting where families lived in the slum demonstrated they lived in a jumble of nationalities. Map of Peyssonnel, Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 25

⁵³ Rosenberg, *Policing Paris : The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars*. 3

Not only were colonial subjects labeled “foreigners” despite having formal ties to the French nation, local *techniciens* singled out “North Africans” as the “least sociable” in written reports. In the early 1950s, local *techniciens* made sense of associability in terms of a racial and social hierarchy: in written reports, “North Africans” were characterized as most asocial, “Gypsies” were asocial, and French and Italians were least asocial.⁵⁴ In contrast, the quantitative work of local *techniciens* showed that “North African” families scored highest as the most adapted to French ways of life. While this tension between rhetorical assumptions and empirical work is not explicitly addressed in the archives, this discrepancy points to the ways that perceptions of cultural and racial difference influenced local *techniciens*. This incongruity points to the power of common sense ideologies of difference at work during this moment of modernization.

RE-HOUSING ASOCIAL FAMILIES: FROM PEYSSONNEL TO LA PATERNELLE

The “war on slums” and the system of classifying families and their houses was part of France’s re-housing and construction program. From 1953-1962, local *techniciens* assessed 25 slums and tenements around Marseille. They examined 2,285 housing units (apartments, shacks, tenements) and conducted individual household studies for 2,317 families.⁵⁵ Each of these families was given a sociability score and this rating would determine how a family would be re-housed. However, as local and national authorities continued to quantify family norms and practices, concerns arose

⁵⁴ My findings support recent studies that have contextualized perceptions of race and social class during this period in terms of a spectrum that included poor working French, Italian and Belgian migrants, and French colonial subjects: “An ambient antiblack anti-‘oriental’ racism pervaded the country, but every previous immigrant group, including peasants from the French countryside faced hostility with racial overtones as well.”Ibid.116

⁵⁵ For studies of Marseille slums and tenements in the 1950s and 1960s see: Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 254

over re-housing. Should families previously living in slums be allowed to move directly into new HLMs? Could families with low sociability scores manage living in modern apartments with modern families?

In a letter to the Minister of Reconstruction and Urbanism, Marseille mayor Gaston Defferre expressed concern about re-housing slum-dwelling families previously living in slums: “We have difficulties re-housing a category of the population, at once *inadapté*⁵⁶ and without sufficient resources, who live in *bidonvilles* or tenements.”⁵⁷ As the city enacted their slum-clearance program, they needed to relocate displaced families. If these families were not re-housed, they would simply squat elsewhere, or start a new slum in another location. Correspondence among local *techniciens* and the mayor’s office, as well as with the central government, discussed this problem of where to house un-adapted families: “it is neither possible nor desirable to re-house these occupants in normal housing right away.”⁵⁸ In other words, these families were deemed too asocial to live in normal housing. Debates about un-adapted families continued throughout the 1950s, and three cities, Marseille, Lille, and Lyon, took the initiative in addressing the problem of where to put asocial families. The solution was to construct “Reduced norm housing.”

“Reduced norm housing” would house families not sociable enough for normal housing in HLMs. Based on the reports of local *techniciens*, families rated “ameliorable” or able to be re-socialized would qualify for intermediary housing, otherwise they would

⁵⁶ I will utilize the French term, *inadapté*, which roughly translates to: not adapted, or not evolved to French ways of life.

⁵⁷ Letter from Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to the Ministry of Reconstruction, December 12, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 44

⁵⁸ Letter from Lacroix, *Directeur des Services Techniques de la Ville de Marseille* to the *Directeur Departemental du Ministere de la Construction*, no date ; Marseille Municipal Archives 455 W 44

be sent to holding camps.⁵⁹ This intermediary housing was “not quite” normal housing. These buildings would literally have reduced norms: They would not have the kind of amenities that the MRU had deemed universal to modern domestic life. Although the central state was attempting to standardize domestic norms and amenities, some residents did *not yet* qualify for modern housing.

At work behind “reduced norm housing” was a logic of gradualism. Certain families were not-yet-ready for modern housing: they would not know how to conduct themselves and would misuse modern amenities, by storing coal in the bathtub, for example. Therefore, these families had to be schooled in domestic norms. They had to be gradually exposed to what modern living meant. Buildings constructed with “reduced norms” would not have hot water or central heating. Rather than the “universal” norm of a toilet per household, reduced norm housing would have a toilet per floor. Asocial Families would gradually be re-socialized,⁶⁰ and overtime would qualify to move into normal housing.

In 1959, the city of Marseille began constructing the city’s first reduced-norm housing, an apartment block destined to re-house un-adapted families. The housing units were constructed out of simple, durable materials and lacked sophisticated modern amenities, like heating. The new residence was named *La Paternelle* (The Paternal). La Paternelle was intended as an intermediary step between slum and normal housing where un-adapted families could be trained in modern domestic norms and practices.

⁵⁹ For a close reading of Camp Grand Arenas see chapter two.

⁶⁰ Letter from Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to Monsieur Leroy, *Directeur General de l’Agence Technique Caisse des Depots and Consignations* Regarding La Paternelle, June 12, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives 455 W 45

The site chosen for La Paternelle was the fourteenth arrondissement of Marseille, in the neighborhood known as Saint Marthe.

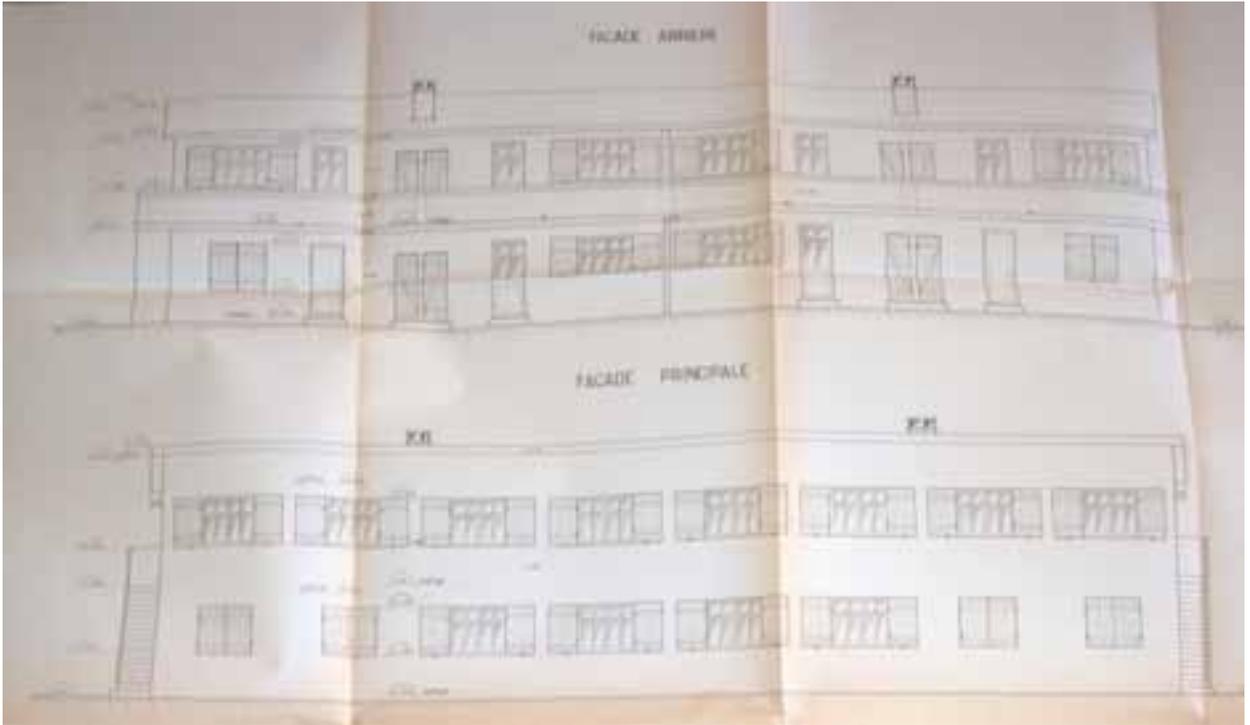
Figure III.5 Map of Marseille: From Peyssonnel to Paternelle



From this map of Marseille, note the distance from the fourteenth arrondissement (delineated by the star) to downtown (the number one near the old port), approximately five miles. Clearing Marseille's city center of slums and redeveloping downtown was a key goal for the municipal government. Officials had to decide on new locations for housing displaced residents and the barren and eclectically developed city outskirts became the most desirable choice.

Unlike later developments, La Paternelle was not a high rise building: it was designed with two floors, and would house approximately 200 families.

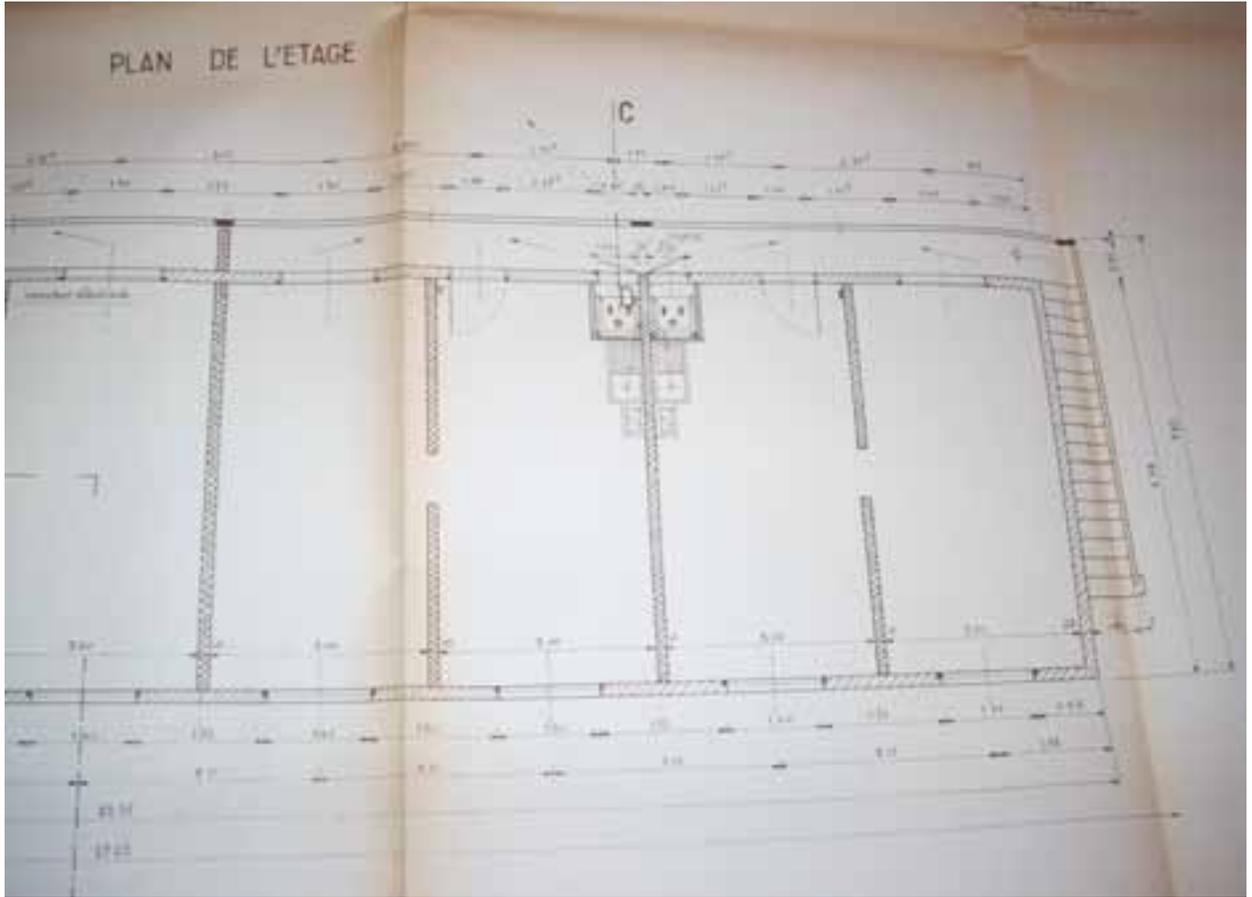
Figure III.6 Facade of La Paternelle⁶¹



The doors of each unit opened to the exterior, and the second story was ringed by a balcony that opened to two sets of stairs on each side of the building. Each housing unit had two rooms, one main room and one bedroom:

⁶¹ Plans for La Paternelle, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 45.

Figure III.7 La Paternelle Floorplans⁶²



While each housing unit had access to running water, there was no hot water and no heating source aside from the gas stove in the kitchenette.⁶³

According to the report describing the construction project: “This housing will be for residents as yet little adapted to modern construction and collective life. All materials must be robust, and all important drainage should be located on the exterior of the building for easy access for repairs. Combustible materials should be reduced to a minimum.”⁶⁴ In addition to the specification for using “robust” materials because of the level of “adaptation” of the residents, the plans for La Paternelle also designated the use

⁶² Plans for La Paternelle, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 45.

⁶³ *Projet de Construction de 240 Logements de Transition*, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 45

⁶⁴ *Projet de Construction de 240 Logements de Transition*, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 45

of inexpensive construction materials: “As the goal is to keep costs as reduced as possible, the contractors will use materials at hand in their warehouses.”⁶⁵

La Paternelle was a cheap and quick solution to the problem of where to house “asocial” families. However, as its provocative name suggests, La Paternelle was also supposed to re-socialize families to French ways of life. The municipal urban planners and architects designed Paternelle to re-order and discipline disorderly families through the standardization of living spaces.

As slums like Peyssonnel were bull-dozed, displaced residents from these blighted sites were often relocated to “reduced norm housing” like La Paternelle. Based on the final report of the 126 individual household studies of families living in Peyssonnel, local authorities selected only 36 families for relocation in “reduced norm housing.” The 90 remaining families were moved into provisional camps, like Grand Arenas.

Archival documents show detailed studies of the 36 families selected for re-housing in “reduced norm” housing. Out of a population of 656, only 148 Peyssonnel residents were re-housed. The rest were sent to temporary camps. Of the 36 families designated to be re-housed, 24 were French, 9 were “north African,” and 3 were Italian.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ *Projet de Construction de 240 Logements de Transition*, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 45

⁶⁶ Out of the French families, the average number of children was 2.37, the “north-African” families averaged 2.22 children, and the Italians 3 children. The “head” of French families earned between 3,000 and 7,500 francs per month and most additionally received family allocations (*allocation familial*) between 2,000 and 4,000 francs. “North African” and Italians earned between 3,000 and 4,000 francs per month, and also received some family allocations.

Table III.3 Re-housing Peyssonnel Families

# of Families by “Nationality”	Total # of People	% of total population	% of Total Families	% of Re-housed Families	Average number of children per family
9 “North African”	31	4.7%	7.1%	25%	2.1
24 French	103	15.7%	19%	66.6%	2.375
3 Italian	14	0.5%	2.3%	8.3	3
0 Spanish	0	0%	0%	0%	NA
0 British	0	0%	0%	0%	NA

Source: Individual Housing Studies, Marseille Municipal Archives 439 W 25

Reduced norm housing like La Paternelle was intended to re-educate and re-socialize families deemed too disorderly for “normal modern life.” Paradoxically, one key way families were to be re-socialized was not through exposure to new modern modes of living (central heating and indoor plumbing), but through exposure to “reduced norms” as a half-step toward modern life.

Despite efforts to impose domestic order through standardizing physical space, many city officials were concerned that the new residents of La Paternelle, instead of being re-socialized, would import old practices and domestic norms:

“we don’t want things to deteriorate in such a short time, to a new *bidonville*. It’s important to take draconian measures to police this group of residents. It is necessary, notably, to forbid occupants from constructing this-and-that outside their apartments (animal cages, various kinds of huts). Considering these conditions, a guardianship must be set up...and the guardian must be helped by frequents police rounds.”⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Letter from Pouchot of the *Société Marseillaise Mixte de Construction et d’Aménagements Communaux* to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, July 16, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 167

This city official asserted the importance of taking “draconian measures” to prevent Paternelle residents from turning their new housing into a new *bidonville*. In particular, this official was concerned with certain “tell-tale” slum-like practices, like setting up animal cages and sheds haphazardly around the new building. Thus, re-socializing Paternelle residents was also to be a combination of re-education and surveillance measures. Unlike provisional camps that were often patrolled by police, La Paternelle was to also have a guardian. This guardian would be appointed by the city and live in Paternelle with the other residents and “would be chosen with the purposes of assuring the best possible surveillance.”⁶⁸

Despite increased surveillance, municipal officials remained concerned with the specter of the re-bidonvillisation of La Paternelle. For example, in late 1959 and early 1960, in the months after the residents moved to the new “reduced norm housing,” reports began to circulate about the “abnormal” practices that residents had imported from their old ways of life.⁶⁹ A report from a local *technicien* in the urban planning department detailed the problems at Paternelle: “the electrical wiring appears to be malfunctioning, and the water and sewage lines are clogged or leaking...these problems are due to resident misuse including throwing large objects down drains and toilets.”⁷⁰ Other reports describe: “a group of gypsies living in La Paternelle [that] have begun a kind of nightly orchestra. They are exceptionally noisy and are menacing to their

⁶⁸ Letter from Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to Pouchot, Regional Director of the *Société Marseillaise Mixte de Construction et d’Aménagements Communaux*, July 20, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 167

⁶⁹ Memo from the *Société Central Pour l’Équipement de Territoire* to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, October 26, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 167 ; Memo from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli to Pouchot, March 18, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 167.

⁷⁰ Letter from Pouchot, November 4, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 167.

neighbors.”⁷¹ Despite the shoddy construction of Paternelle, municipal authorities tended to cite resident misuse and disruptive behavior as the main justification for the perception that Paternelle was “rapidly transforming into a new *bidonville*.”⁷² In short, the Paternelle experiment was not working as well as hoped. Despite attempts to order domestic norms through standardizing physical space, residents seemed to be falling back on their old ways, building chicken coops, and moving grandparents and other family members into a space designed to only house the nuclear family. Despite efforts at increased surveillance, residents were forming nightly musical ensembles and carrying on until early hours of the morning.

Municipal authorities began to consider new methods for re-socializing Paternelle residents. However, they were restricted by a shortage of money: the Marseille municipality had largely funded Paternelle from the city budget compiled largely by resident taxes. As Marseille continued to look for a solution to their problem of slums and asocial families, new state institutions created under the auspices of the Constantine Plan offered one possibility for more funding for re-education programs.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND RE-EDUCATION FOR ALGERIAN FAMILIES

Between 1953-1962, local efforts at slum-clearance and re-housing un-adapted families were occurring within the larger national and colonial context of the Algerian war for Independence. France was increasingly involved in military conflict in Algeria, but also confronted with the specter of domestic “terrorism” associated with the large

⁷¹ Memo from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli to the Commissaire de Police, September 5, 1964, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 167.

⁷² Letter from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, April 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 167.

population of Algerians living in France. Concerned with the threat of attacks by the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) in the metropole, the government began to consider new approaches to “winning the hearts and minds” of Algerians both in France and Algeria.

In 1958 the government of the Fourth Republic dissolved amidst the crisis of the Algerian war and terrorists threats in the metropole. Charles de Gaulle re-assumed the presidency but set a number of preconditions for his return, including the drafting of a new constitution that would bestow more power to the executive branch of government. Once the new constitution establishing the Fifth Republic was ratified, De Gaulle worked to strengthen French rule in Algeria and ensure that Algeria would remain part of France. The Constantine plan was implemented in 1959 and was intended to counter the influence of the FLN through social welfare and infrastructure programs for Algerian workers and families in France and Algeria.

Several institutions were mandated under the Constantine Plan to provide social welfare services and promote social education in French ways of life. In 1958, two institutions, the *Fonds D’Action Social* (FAS) and the *Société Nationale de Construction de logements pour les travailleurs algériens en Metropole* (SONACTORAL) received special funding to provide social services and benefits for Algerian single-male workers, but especially Algerian families.⁷³

⁷³ The Fonds D’Action Sociale (FAS) was initially created in 1947 under the name Fonds D’action Saniatire et Social. Its main purpose was to provide some financial assistance to workers and families in search of better housing, and to provide some services promoting hygiene. In 1956, the Ministry of Interior created a fund for the construction of housing for Algerian workers in the metropole, or SONACTORAL. This credit society was supposed to work with HLM offices to create dormitory-style housing for the single-male Algerian workers in the metropole. For more discussion see: Lyons, "Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974."

Under the Constantine Plan, the main objectives of the FAS and SONACOTRAL were: “to eliminate terrorism, to promote cultural and psychological social education for migrants and their families, to act to promote public opinion and separate agitators from the mass of migrants that can be welcomed comprehensively and fraternally.”⁷⁴ The FAS would operate in both Algeria and the metropole to promote “the amelioration of the living conditions of Algerians and facilitate the accession of families to modern habitat.”⁷⁵ In the metropole, the FAS would be particularly concerned with clearing slums with large populations of Algerians, and with social education services that would focus on women, including courses on housekeeping, hygiene, and French “ways of life.”⁷⁶

FAS would work in concert with SONACOTRAL to become the “instruments of the Constantine Plan” and the “organisms specializing in slum clearance” and suppressing terrorist activities through surveillance.⁷⁷ While the FAS was also funded to work in Algeria, SONACOTRAL was mandated to construct housing for Algerian workers and families in the metropole. Many SONACOTRAL employees were *techniciens* who had established careers as urban planners, security officers, or bureaucrats in Algeria prior to working at SONACOTRAL.⁷⁸ Moreover, the new head of SONACOTRAL was Eugene Claudius-Petit, the former minister of Reconstruction and Urbanism, who had built his career on promoting hygiene, clearing-slums, and standardizing domestic norms. Claudius-Petit’s faith in the social construction of modern

⁷⁴ Sophie Josset, *Le FAS : 1958-1998*. Internal Report commissioned by the Fonds d’Action Sociale, 1998. From the private library of the FASILD. P. 11

⁷⁵ Circular no. 65 from the ministry of interior, February 10, 1958. quoted in Josset. P. 13

⁷⁶ Josset, 14.

⁷⁷ Marc Bernadot, "Sonacotra: 1956-1992" (Sorbonne, 1997). 48

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 48

life, and the institution's roots in colonial management and administration contributed to SONACOTRAL's special mission to clear slums, re-house Algerian families and workers, and suppress the rebellious elements thought to be thriving in *bidonvilles* around France. Most importantly, SONACOTRAL would work to re-socialize Algerian families to embrace French ways of life through the control of domestic spaces and practices.⁷⁹

Thus, the FAS and SONACTORAL became integral institutions in the war against *Algerian* slums, and the fight for *Algerian* hearts and minds. These institutions also established local organizations to promote social welfare services. For example, the FAS funded the *Association des Travailleurs d'Outre Mer* or ATOM in Marseille, the Association for Housing and Social Promotion in Paris, and the *Foyer Notre Dames des Sans-Abris* in Lyon. SONACOTRAL funded the construction of *cités de transit*, dormitories for single-male workers, and reduced norm housing for families in Marseille and throughout France. From 1959 until the end of the Algerian War for Independence in 1962, these associations received ample financial support from the central government. As municipal authorities searched for additional means to continue slum-clearance programs, associations like FAS and SONACOTRAL became attractive sources of funding.

FROM ASOCIAL FAMILIES TO ALGERIAN FAMILIES

In particular, as municipalities tried to re-socialize families by re-housing them in facilities like La Paternelle, they needed more money to establish social-education programs. ATOM, and by extension, the FAS, could be helpful in alleviating some of the

⁷⁹ Ibid. 48

local work. While local municipal budgets were constricted, associations like the FAS had access to more resources, and were thus a key source of funding for municipal governments looking for a solution to their slum problems. In a memo to local housing authorities, including the urban planning department, Marseille mayor Gaston Defferre outlined the particular difficulties of funding “reduced norm housing,” and the potential role of the FAS/SONACOTRAL in ameliorating the problem: “In order to realize our goal of clearing slums and tenements, the municipality must be in a position to build and allocate housing...SONACOTRAL is specially charged with constructing housing for North Africans, and the organization benefits at once from funds from the HLMs and the special funding from the Fonds d’Action Social. As there could be anywhere from five to six hundred north-African families in our *bidonvilles* and tenements, there should be a way to reconcile these different desires among these organizations.”⁸⁰ In other words, although Marseille was concerned with the war against slums and the re-education of *asocial* families, the FAS, SONACOTRAL, and ATOM were preoccupied with the war against *Algerian* slums and the re-education of *Algerian* families. In the interest of Marseille’s redevelopment plans, the mayor suggests there must be a way to reconcile Marseille interests with the FAS/SONACOTRAL/ATOM mandate. The solution: an emphasis on North African or Algerian Families, and a de-emphasis on the other “asocial” families living in Marseille slums and tenements.

Beginning in 1959, municipal authorities and local *techniciens* in search of government funding began to employ a different kind of language. Rather than discussing the problem of *bidonvilles* and *ilots insalubres* in terms of *asocial* or un-

⁸⁰ Memo written by Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre on the *Financement du Programme des 2,000 logements*, no date, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 44

adapted families, they began to describe the problem exclusively in terms of “north African” or Algerian families.⁸¹ Several letters from Mayor Gaston Defferre to the MRU trace this shift: “[our] problems concern the demolishing of *ilots insalubres* and *bidonvilles* and the re-housing of the population including: north-Africans, gypsies and nomads in the *bidonvilles*, north Africans and black Africans in the *ilots insalubres*.”⁸² In this 1960 memo, Defferre described a somewhat diverse population of “north” and “black” Africans, gypsies, and nomads. In a 1961 memo, Defferre instead discussed the population exclusively in terms of “north Africans in *bidonvilles*.”⁸³ In another example, a letter to the prefect from the Mayor’s secretary general described: “the presence in a field of about 30 Muslim families...the problem in this *bidonville* is more than just a question of urbanism, it is a question of security.”⁸⁴ Municipal officials and local *techniciens* began to approach ATOM and FAS especially if they had a slum or tenement with a particularly high concentration of Algerians. After 1959, ATOM officials and local *techniciens* often worked in tandem to assess and classify Algerian families living in slums.

In the early 1950s, local *techniciens* tended to look at all the families living in slums, and rank their associability. However, by the late 1950s, Algerian families were singled out exclusively as slum-dwellers in need of re-socialization. For example, in

⁸¹ Letter from Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to Pierre Sudreau, head of the Ministry of Reconstruction, October 24, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245; see also Memo from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, January 9, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245 and Memo from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, December 21, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245.

⁸² Letter from Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to Pierre Sudreau, head of the Ministry of Reconstruction, October 24, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245.

⁸³ Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to SONACOTRAL, February 1, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archives, 455 W 44. b

⁸⁴ Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, December 21, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245.

Marseille's La Paternelle, ATOM set up a social center for Algerian women and girls with the goal of offering classes that would re-educate them, and help them to "evolve" and embrace modern French life. The idea was that targeting Algerian families, and Algerian wives and mothers in particular, was one way to transform Algerian families from within. However, Algerians made up only a fraction of families living in Peyssonnel and La Paternelle, thus many of the families that local *techniciens* had labeled "asocial" were not included in these social-education programs which instead targeted only Algerian or "north-African" families. For example, "gypsies," who were often noted as having Spanish nationality, consistently received insalubrious scores and were often sent directly to camps like Grand Arenas rather than reduced norm housing. Of those "gypsy" families that did qualify to live in facilities like La Paternelle, none of them were singled out for re-socialization, although government documents make frequent reference to their disruptive and destructive practices.

Although re-education was intended for "asocial families" with diverse backgrounds, including French, Spanish, Italian, and "North-African," it was overseen by an organization whose explicit mandate was to target Algerian families and to "resolve the problems...of an important population originating from Algeria in Marseille."⁸⁵ Therefore, the families that ended up being singled out for re-education were Algerian families. As local *techniciens* continued to assess slums and families, they began to focus less on asocial than Algerian or "north African" families. As funding for slum clearance was overseen by an organization concerned with Algerian families, local *techniciens* began to assess slums in terms of the "north African" families living there.

⁸⁵ From Jean Vaujour of FAS/SONACOTRAL to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, January 5, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archive, 455 W 44

CONCLUSION

Modernization and quantitative methods were viewed as a key way to solve social problems after World War Two. In the early 1950s, the social question was understood in terms of working class French families, immigrants, and colonial subjects living in slums around France. I introduced local *techniciens* as intermediaries between everyday life and central state policy and argued that these local officials are a key way to make sense of shifting notions of social and racial difference. Local *techniciens* assessed families from diverse backgrounds in the first step toward re-housing families and implementing a modernization project. Local *techniciens* attempted to calculate a universal standard of welfare as one way to eradicate the “social problem.” However, by attempting to solve the “social problem,” they produced and reinforced social and racial hierarchies.

In particular, local *techniciens* began to pay more attention to nationality as a marker of difference, and understood “north Africans” to be foreigners even though they had French nationality. By contrasting local *techniciens*’ empirical work with their rhetorical conclusions, I demonstrate the power of common sense perceptions of racial and social difference: although “north Africans” consistently scored highest as being the most “adapted” to French ways of life, local *techniciens* nonetheless described them as the least adapted and least civilized.

In the last section of the chapter, I situate the larger context of decolonization and the Algerian war for independence into modernization efforts at the local level. In the late 1950s—and during the escalation of the Algerian war for Independence—attention shifted from asocial families to Algerian families. Specifically, the problem of re-

socializing asocial families fell onto organizations mandated to address the problem of Algerian families. Those families that came to be defined as in need of “re-socialization” tended to be Algerian or “north African” families. While asocial families continued to live in slums and tenements in Marseille neighborhoods, Algerian families were singled out for special re-education and housing programs.

CHAPTER IV

Modernizing the Metropolis, 1953-1963

In 1953 interview, newly elected socialist mayor Gaston Defferre stated that the future of Marseille lay in its modernization: “The role of a mayor is to transform the city and adapt it to modern life... We must transform, modernize, and develop this city that we love, to ameliorate the standards of living of our residents.”¹ In his first years as Mayor, Defferre worked with the municipal council and the central government to balance the budget, improve roads and sewage infrastructure, and begin to develop downtown Marseille. These efforts were part of the larger national plan—the *Commissariat General au Plan*—engineered by Jean Monnet as a comprehensive strategy for modernizing and reconstructing France after World War Two. The Plan would operate in five year increments, and Marseille and other French cities drafted their own municipal five year plans as part of the national design.² While local and central state officials outlined a detailed vision of modernization, local residents also participated in debates about modernization by forming resident associations and petitioning city hall for improvements to their homes and neighborhoods.

¹ Gaston Defferre interview in *Enterprise*, Marseille Municipal Archives 100 II 416

² Report from Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to the Central State regarding the City of Marseille’s economic and social activities. March 23, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 118. See also: Emmanuel Todd, *The Making of Modern France : Ideology, Politics and Culture* (Oxford ; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991).

Recent work has questioned the assumption that modernization was a primarily top down affair. Scholarship in labor history has challenged the “view that the planning movement was predominately technocratic and uninterested in ideas of popular participation” by examining the role of factory workers and unions in state planning.³ Recent studies in urban history have argued that “modernization always took place within the context of local experience and collective consciousness.”⁴ Work in cultural geography has focused on the experience of urbanization and the changing physical landscape in the making and imagining of the neighborhood: “The growth and transformation of industry... reorganization of housing [and] social welfare...promoted vital shifts in the meaning and experience of community.”⁵

This chapter builds on recent scholarship by arguing that there was not a single, state defined, and imposed modernization plan for Marseille, but a multiplicity of visions. Municipal politicians shaped modernization plans by navigating between local and national politics: they utilized presidential cabinet positions acquired through elite national networks to promote local development. Residents linked the physical space of their changing neighborhoods to notions of quality of life and modern living: they formed associations to protest pollution caused by nearby factories and demanded that city hall improve their neighborhood infrastructures by building roadways and sewage systems. Residents also engaged in patronage politics by promising votes to local socialist and communist politicians in exchange for access to new, modern housing.

³ James Hinton, *Shop Floor Citizens : Engineering Democracy in 1940s Britain* (Aldershot, England ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: E. Elgar, 1994)., 9. See also: Herrick Chapman, *State Capitalism and Working-Class Radicalism in the French Aircraft Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), Herrick Chapman, "Review: Modernity and National Identity in Postwar France," *French Historical Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999).

⁴ Rosemary Wakeman, *Modernizing the Provincial City : Toulouse, 1945-1975* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997)., 102

⁵ David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003)., 238

While chapter three focuses on the modernization efforts of local *techniciens*, this chapter examines how Marseille residents imagined and debated the future of a modern Marseille. I argue that local politics is an important realm for examining how modernization was contested and shaped from below.

While scholarship on the experience of urbanization has focused on the formation of class solidarities, this chapter examines how residents also understood their neighborhoods in *ethnic* terms.⁶ Concepts of difference were integral to local understandings of social welfare. More specifically, notions of *rootedness* were a key way that residents from diverse ethnic backgrounds imagined who was “from” the neighborhood, and who deserved access to “modern” living.

LOCAL POLITICS AND THE *CUMUL DES MANDATS*

Marseille mayor Gaston Defferre is a key figure for making sense of how municipal politicians navigated between local and national politics. Defferre was first elected in 1953 and remained mayor for thirty-three years until his death in 1986. As mayor of one of France’s largest cities, Defferre was also an important figure in the socialist party. Defferre was part of the generation of French politicians who came of age politically in opposition to the Vichy regime and German occupation. As an active member of the resistance in southern France and north Africa, Defferre drew on his wartime service to gain legitimacy as a rising member of the socialist party after the war.

⁶ For discussion of intersections of categories of race and class: Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom : Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).; Laura Tabili, *We Ask for British Justice : Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain*, The Wilder House Series in Politics, History, and Culture (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

As French politics have tended to be dominated by a centralized government in Paris, one way that politicians cultivate influence is through holding several local and national positions at once—a practice called *les cumuls des mandats*—or the accumulation of government appointments. As both an elected Member of Parliament and mayor of Marseille, Defferre was eligible to be appointed to the presidential cabinet. He was first appointed to the presidents' cabinet as the minister of Merchant Marines from 1950-1952. In 1956, he was appointed the Minister of France *d'Outre-Mer* (Minister of Overseas France). Finally, in 1980, he served as the Minister of the Interior and Decentralization. By holding several elected positions at once, ministerial appointments and through elite connections, Defferre secured financial support from the central government to initiate modernization projects in Marseille.

Defferre's efforts to modernize Marseille were part of his campaign promises to make Marseille and the region into what he called "the California of Europe."⁷ As a key node between Europe and Africa, the port of Marseille and its large naval supply and oil refining industries would form the industrial backbone of the "second city of France."⁸ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Defferre's administration focused on a vast program of public works and housing construction: "Because of our rigorous and efficient fiscal program," Defferre wrote, "the city could initiate and expand large public works that have transformed the visage of our city."⁹ Between 1954 and 1960, the municipality bulldozed slums, rebuilt the downtown, and renovated the sewage and potable water networks. The city also improved roadways, constructing a tunnel under the port, and

⁷ For Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre's multiple references to Marseille as the "California of Europe" and "Second City of France" see: Marseille Municipal Archives: 483 W 118 ; 483 W 257 ; and 100 II 416.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mayor Gaston Defferre "The role of the Mayor," no date, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 257

building the *Corniche John F. Kennedy*, the highway which replaced the old road around the bay. Defferre initiated projects to construct new hospitals and elementary schools, as well as buttress the secondary and university school system in the region.¹⁰

By establishing Marseille's own five year plan, Defferre participated in the national project to modernize France. However his strategy for modernizing the city, and for maintaining his long tenure in office, also drew from practices particular to Marseille, namely the historical relationship between municipal politics and organized crime. Although Defferre is credited with streamlining the municipal bureaucracy and ushering the city into a "new age," he also collaborated with members of organized crime to execute his vision for a modern Marseille.¹¹ Defferre forged many of his underworld connections during his participation in the Resistance, including his long term friendship with Louis Rossi, a member of Corsican organized crime from the Panier neighborhood. Defferre often called on Rossi to help quell docker strikes and worker unrest and to provide protection during party meetings and electoral campaigns.¹² For example, in 1944, during the liberation of Marseille, Defferre forcefully took over the offices of the *Provençal* newspaper¹³ with the armed help of Louis Rossi and his entourage.¹⁴ As a

¹⁰ Colette Ysmal, *La Carrière Politique De Gaston Defferre* (Paris,: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1965).40-41 and Gaston Defferre interview from *Enterprise*, no date, Marseille Municipal Archives, 100 II 416.

¹¹ For references to Gaston Defferre and organized crime in Marseille: Jacqueline Cristofol and Alain Dugrand, *Batailles Pour Marseille* ([Paris]: Flammarion, 1997), Georges Marion, *Gaston Defferre* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989), Ysmal, *La Carrière Politique De Gaston Defferre*, Gilbert Rochu, "Marseille, Les Années Defferre," Editions A. Moreau.

¹² For example, during the Algerian war for independence, Defferre was a target for the OAS. Lacking confidence in the police, Defferre relied on Rossi and his men to provide protection. Marion, *Gaston Defferre*. 205

¹³ Gaston Defferre, *Le Provençal*, 23 August 1944.

¹⁴ After helping take over *Le Provençal*, Rossi drew a salary and was officially on the payroll of newspaper even though he was also illiterate. Marion, *Gaston Defferre*. 110.

Marseille resident remembered in an interview: “Everyone knew that Defferre had ties with the mafia, but we overlooked it because he did so much for our city.”¹⁵

Defferre also relied on the media to promote his modernizing vision. During his thirty-three years as mayor, Defferre created a press enterprise which included all of the regional newspapers except for the communist newspaper, *La Marseillaise*. *Le Provençal* was Defferre’s first media acquisition and would remain a key tool during elections and when necessary to address Marseille residents. Defferre often wrote editorials for the paper explaining, for example, the need for increasing municipal taxes to build public works or help fund new development downtown. As Marion argues, “*Le Provençal* was utilized as a political tool, often at the detriment to journalistic quality...It was in the newspaper where all was decided, organized, and executed.”¹⁶ Most of the newspaper offices and services were mobilized during municipal campaigns, including cars, staff and presses.¹⁷ Between 1944 and 1974, Defferre acquired other regional newspapers including *Le Soir* and *Var-Matin*. In the 1970s, Defferre’s agency also bought *Le Meridional*, Marseille’s conservative paper.¹⁸

As mayor of a port city—a key node between France and Africa—Defferre wanted to maintain economic ties with the colonies. Historically, the port had been central to Marseille’s economic activity through trade in the Mediterranean. However, the port took on special significance as France expanded its colonies in north and sub-Saharan Africa in the nineteenth century. Marseille became the gateway for cash-crops

¹⁵ Oral history with A.V., conducted by author, Marseille, December 12, 2007.

¹⁶ Marion, *Gaston Defferre*. 197

¹⁷ In its early years, the newspaper was often in debt and depended on cash flow from Defferre’s affluent first wife, Paly Defferre. Ibid. 197

¹⁸ For Defferre, the media had utility for furthering his political goals. So, for example, when offered to buy the northern paper *Nord-Matin*, Defferre declined as this regional paper would have little impact on southern politics. Ibid. 197

and other goods from the colonies into France. From 1956 to 1957, Defferre served as the Minister of France *d'Outre-Mer*. He drafted the legislation that would become the foundation for decolonization in sub-Saharan Africa.

Although in charge of decolonization, Defferre had consistently emphasized the centrality of the colonies to the modernization of France. While decolonization was intended to grant political autonomy to French West Africa, independence was also designed to strengthen the economic ties between France and its former colonies. In a speech to the forty-eighth congress of the socialist party, Defferre outlined his position on the gradual independence of the colonies: “It is time to act quickly and to practice a politics of evolution that is absolutely contrary to a politics of abandonment which would consist of ceding everything by trying to retain everything.”¹⁹ Defferre thus proposed a strategy of “evolution” over abandonment:

“African leaders... understand that the ascension to independence does not imply a magic solution to all problems, particularly to financial, economic, and social problems, not to mention the problems of personnel and technology. They understand the necessity for accepting a number of years of assistance from the metropole for assuring organization in their territories and rapid and harmonious economic and social development.”²⁰

Defferre argued that African leaders accepted a policy of gradual independence, which would necessitate prolonged dependence on France for economic, organizational, and technical guidance.

The Defferre Law was passed on June 23, 1956 “authorizing the government to implement reforms and take appropriate measures to assure the evolution of the territories

¹⁹ Defferre at the 48th Congress of the SFIO. June 28, 1956. Quoted in Marion, 66-67.

²⁰ Defferre interview in *Express*, March 22, 1957.

d'Outre Mer.²¹ The law may have articulated the eventual political independence of French colonies, but it reinforced the economic ties between colony and metropole. Marseille was to be an important conduit between former-colonies and metropole: "Marseille occupies an important geographic position in order to maintain and develop commercial, cultural, and human relations with Africa."²² As both Minister of *d'Outre Mer* and as mayor of Marseille, Defferre situated his city as a central mediating site between Europe and Africa: "The city of Marseille is situated at the crossroads of the great commercial currents that unite Europe and Africa, the Middle and Far East, and South America."²³

In addition to the centrality of the colonies, Defferre recognized that modernization was contingent on United States aid. In his support for the Marshall Plan, Defferre's position was in keeping with the socialist party. Indeed, the majority of Western European political parties and governments understood that post war recovery depended on American assistance.²⁴ For French socialists, as Adereth argues, recovery would depend on the "modernization of France...and the [e]xploitation...of the colonies. Both these aims required state intervention and outside aid."²⁵ In Marseille, American aid principally took the form of CIA covert operations on the docks and financial support

²¹ Texte of the '*loi-cadre Defferre, Loi No. 56-619*,' June 23, 1956.

²² State Report : The Social and Economic Action of Defferre and the City of Marseille, no date, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 118.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ M. Adereth, *The French Communist Party : A Critical History (1920-1984), from Comintern To "The Colours of France"* (Manchester [Greater Manchester] ; Dover, N.H., USA: Manchester University Press, 1984). 149. See also: Harvey G. Simmons, "French Socialists in Search of a Role, 1956-1967," Cornell University Press.

²⁵ Adereth, *The French Communist Party : A Critical History (1920-1984), from Comintern To "The Colours of France"*. 149-150

for Gaston Defferre as he revived Marseille's port economy.²⁶ In Marseille, as in Paris and Western Europe, American aid was also contingent on a politics of anti-communism.

As Cold War tensions escalated, American aid, and in the case of Marseille, CIA involvement was conditional to an anti-soviet and pro-capitalism agenda.²⁷ One way of marginalizing the communists—thus helping to ensure American aid—was by forming coalition governments. In 1947 the French socialist party formed a coalition with the center-right *Mouvement Républicain Populaire*, called the “Third Force.”²⁸ Also in 1947, the socialist Prime Minister, Paul Ramadier, expelled all Communists from his cabinet, as did most other European countries intent on securing United States aid.²⁹ In 1953, Defferre pursued a similar tactic during his first municipal election: in the first and second round of municipal elections, no single party, with the exception of the communists, had a clear majority.³⁰ Although the communists had actually won a majority of city council seats, Defferre out maneuvered the PCF by organizing a socialist-MRP coalition. For the thirty years of Defferre's tenure in office he would maintain a multi-partisan coalition that would largely overwhelmingly approve his projects for modernizing Marseille. During this period, the communists were reduced to a vocal

²⁶ Marion, *Gaston Defferre*.

²⁷ Moreover, the Communist party's anti-imperialist agenda often contradicted Defferre's efforts to secure ongoing economic ties with former colonies. The communist party, along with its trade union, the Confederation General du Travail (CGT), promoted work stoppage on the Marseille Docks in protest of sending arms or military equipment to Vietnam and Algeria. See: Adereth, *The French Communist Party : A Critical History (1920-1984), from Comintern To "The Colours of France"*.; UMR TELEMME (Research group : France), *Dockers De La Méditerranée À La Mer Du Nord : Des Quais Et Des Hommes Dans L'histoire : Colloque International, 11 Au 13 Mars 1999, Cité Du Livre, Aix-En-Provence, Musée D'histoire De Marseille* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1999).

²⁸ Adereth, *The French Communist Party : A Critical History (1920-1984), from Comintern To "The Colours of France"*.154-55

²⁹ Ibid.146

³⁰ The Marseille city council was comprised of 63 members. After the first round of elections in 1953, the socialist party (SFIO) only won 18% of the vote which amounted to 15 council members. The Communists, led by Francois Billoux, had 24 council members, while the center right, conservative parties, and independents (MPR and RPF) contributed a smattering of elected officials to make up the rest of the council. Ysmal, *La Carrière Politique De Gaston Defferre*. 39-42

minority with little voting power within the municipal council.³¹ As a mediator between local and national politics, Defferre forged a political agenda aimed at modernizing Marseille as well as maintaining his position in power.³²

“WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO COMFORT:” DEBATING THE MEANING OF MODERNIZATION

One reason why Defferre was able to maintain his position in office was because Marseille residents believed—for the most part—that modernization would improve their everyday lives. Moreover, in the fifteen years following World War Two, Marseille residents, and French citizens as a whole, began to benefit from state modernization efforts.³³ For example, after 1953, the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism began the mass construction of housing in earnest.³⁴ The new head of the MRU, Pierre Courant, initiated the Million Project, which would finance the construction of cheap, prefabricated apartment projects around France. While the MRU continued to construct the more expensive HLM during this period, Million housing enabled more families to

³¹ Marion, *Gaston Defferre*. 185. For a study of the PCF after 1958: David Scott Bell and Byron Criddle, *The French Communist Party in the Fifth Republic* (OxfordNew York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1994).

³² Because Defferre often held two important positions simultaneously, as a cabinet minister and mayor, he relied on a vast technocratic bureaucracy at city hall to implement his modernizing position. Although Defferre was the local face of modernization plans, municipal employees handled much of the day to day operations at city hall. For example, the city’s Secretary General, a position held for several decades by Jean Poggioli, acted as Defferre’s chief of staff, often deciding which local issues merited Defferre’s attention. Municipal employees thus fielded many of the questions and concerns that arose from residents concerned about development plans in their neighborhoods.

³³ For discussion of the thirty years of post war boom, particularly, the increase in living standards and expectations about quality of life: Jean Fourastié and Jacqueline Fourastié, *D'une France À Une Autre : Avant Et Après Les Trente Glorieuses* ([Paris]: Fayard, 1987), Jean Fourastié, *Les Trente Glorieuses : Ou, La Révolution Invisible De 1946 À 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).

³⁴ For an institutional history of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism: Brian Newsome, "The "Apartment Referendum" Of 1959: Toward Participatory Architectural and Urban Planning in Postwar France," *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (2005), W. Brian Newsome, *French Urban Planning, 1940-1968 : The Construction and Deconstruction of an Authoritarian System* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), Brian Newsome, "The Rise of the Grands Ensembles: Government, Business and Housing in Postwar France," *The Historian* 66, no. 4 (2004).

move into new housing more quickly. In the mid 1950s, families did begin to move into new apartments. Although many still lived in old tenements with no amenities, new housing was increasingly available. For example, between 1954 and 1960, the city of Marseille constructed 4,000 housing units. During this period, Marseille appeared to be “a city under construction.”³⁵

In addition to the transformation of the city, images of modern living were also ubiquitous in popular culture, including films and magazines.³⁶ For example, in the 1950s, the local lifestyle periodical, *Marseille Magazine* printed several features on the modern home. An article, “The Apartment of an Intelligent Couple,” detailed the young wife’s assertion that every modern apartment needed to have “a refrigerator and a washing machine.”³⁷ “Next,” the husband is quoted, “we will have a machine in the kitchen that will do everything, peel everything!”³⁸ The wife concluded by asserting, “We have the right to comfort!”³⁹ Articles like this one reveal the ways in which “the right to comfort” was being internalized as an important element of modern living. For this couple, the legitimacy of modernization came in the form of a more comfortable, easy lifestyle. Moreover, the right to comfort was expressed as a universal ideal. Where debates about social welfare in the immediate postwar period focused on the necessity for providing for the basic social welfare of French citizens, by the 1950s, the right to modern living—or comfort—was articulated as a basic right.

³⁵ Marion, *Gaston Defferre*. P. 202.

³⁶ For discussion of modernization and popular culture see: Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

³⁷ “Apartment of an Intelligent Couple,” magazine clipping with no reference to periodical or date, Marseille Municipal Archives, 439 W 69

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

In 1960, the city of Marseille and the regional branch of the *Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques* (INSEE) surveyed almost 400 residents living in both newly constructed public housing, and older houses around Marseille.⁴⁰ The purpose of the study was to ascertain how local residents felt about modernization and whether they felt they benefitted from state efforts to mass construct public housing. The survey asked residents: “Do you consider yourself poorly housed? Do you have a kitchen? Do you want a new house for your family?”⁴¹ According to the results of the study, 77% of the families surveyed desired new housing in a modern apartment.⁴²

In 1955, a similar survey had been conducted, and researchers compared this earlier data to the 1960 results. In both studies, residents were asked “How many rooms do have? How many rooms do you want?” In 1955, most families of four “wanted at least three rooms.”⁴³ However, according to the 1960 survey, “most people wanted between four and five rooms in their house.”⁴⁴ In other words, according to these two surveys, Marseille residents’ standards for modern living were increasing. In 1955, residents expressed that an apartment with three rooms would satisfy a family’s “comfort needs.” However, in 1960, an average family of four claimed that their idea of modern living necessitated having an apartment of between four and five rooms. Moreover, in

⁴⁰ Introduction, Study of Housing Needs, City of Marseille, Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, December 20, 1960, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1839

⁴¹ Introduction, Study of Housing Needs, City of Marseille, Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, December 20, 1960, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 12 O 1839

⁴² Study of Housing Needs, City of Marseille, Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, December 20, 1960, pg. 13, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1839

⁴³ Study of Housing Needs, City of Marseille, Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, December 20, 1960, pg. 11, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1839

⁴⁴ Ibid.

1960, those families who thought their existing “homes were an appropriate size and not too overcrowded, still wanted to move to a larger house.”⁴⁵

In another study, published in a special issue of the Marseille Chamber of Commerce periodical, Marseille residents living in newly constructed public housing were surveyed. The goal of this study was “to define the criticisms and aspirations of habitants of new housing.”⁴⁶ The survey featured responses from residents living in all types of new housing which included: prefabricated housing constructed under the Million Project, regular HLMs, and so-called “luxury” apartments including Le Corbusier’s *L’Unité d’Habitation* in the south of Marseille. In one set of questions, residents were asked if they were satisfied with the amount of hot water they received in their homes. The responses were divided by housing types: Only 31% of apartments constructed under the Million Project in Marseille had hot water. For residents living in this kind of public housing, 54% were very dissatisfied, 14% were somewhat dissatisfied, 25% were more or less satisfied, and only 7% of these residents were satisfied. In contrast to the lack of hot water in Million housing, most HLMs—about 82.4%—had hot water in Marseille in 1960. Of the residents living in HLMs, 54% were satisfied with their hot water, 18% were more or less satisfied, 19% somewhat dissatisfied, and only 9% very dissatisfied.⁴⁷

In another question, residents were asked if their new housing had enough room for a washing machine and refrigerator:

⁴⁵ Study of Housing Needs, City of Marseille, Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, December 20, 1960, pg. 13, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1839

⁴⁶ Introduction, Special issue of Marseille chamber of commerce periodical, no date, Bouches-du-Rhône ne Departmental Archives, BETA 1004.

⁴⁷ Paragraph from: Special issue of Marseille chamber of commerce periodical, no date, pg. 54, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, BETA 1004.

Table IV.1 “Refrigerators and Washing Machines”⁴⁸

	Logement “Million”	LOGECOS	HLM	Luxury
Has room for both a refrigerator and washing machine	30	65	60	73
Only has room for a washing machine	17	7	14	3
Only has room for a refrigerator	10	19	14	19
No room for either appliance	36	7	12	4
No response	7	2	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100

Most living in prefabricated Million project housing said they did not have room for either appliance, while 60% of those living in HLM did say they had enough room for both.

Although not all new housing included amenities like hot water, or space for appliances, residents expected modern apartment to include all these elements. In 1946, hardly any homes in France had running water or indoor toilets. By 1960, however, Marseille residents expressed extreme dissatisfaction if the running water in their new apartments did not come heated. Residents' imagination about what constituted modern living reflects how minimum expectations for “basic needs” changed dramatically in the fifteen years following World War Two. As Victoria de Grazia argues in *Irresistible Empire*: “To acknowledge that a ‘minimum existence’ was a right...marked a big step forward. If nothing else, it opened the way for a new consensus, namely that everybody could disagree about the specific sets of goods and services that added up to an adequate

⁴⁸ Special issue of Marseille chamber of commerce periodical, no date, pg. 61, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, BETA 1004

‘minimum.’”⁴⁹ In this moment, the issue was not *if* France should modernize, but *how* and *when*.

In debating the meaning of modernization, resident notions about “the right to comfort” were sometimes in tension with municipal efforts to promote the “public good.” Municipal authorities asserted that improving the public good was a central goal for city plans to modernize Marseille and create the “California of Europe.” However, a debate about industrial pollution in the Saint Louis neighborhood points to some key tensions at the heart of the debate about modernization, particularly how concepts like “public good” and “social welfare” were differently imagined and articulated. For example, in 1959, residents from the Saint Louis neighborhood in the north of Marseille complained during a city council meeting about the pollution from a nearby factory:

“The oil factory, Antonin Roux, expels dust and debris that the wind carries to our adjacent neighborhood. The roads are covered with this ash, as well as the plants in the garden; you can’t even tell the color of the flowers. In apartments, the floor and furniture are covered with a layer of powder; the drinking water is discolored; food is inevitably covered with a powder the color of chocolate...and respiration is obviously difficult.”⁵⁰

In response to this complaint, Mayor Gaston Defferre explained:

“We are a great industrial city, the second city of France. We are also the first oil refinery port of France, maybe even of Europe...I know that the residents of this neighborhood suffer on certain days when the wind is right...and we have taken measures to ameliorate these smells...Alas! If Marseille is going to remain an industrial city, the reality is that some of our residents will suffer inconveniences...if we close our factories, Marseille will become a city of tourism and she won’t know the activity that we have now!”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire : America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005). P. 342.

⁵⁰ *Séance Conseil Municipal*, October 12, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives 599 W 179

⁵¹ *Séance Conseil Municipal*, October 12, 1959, Marseille Municipal Archives 599 W 179

In other words, if Marseille was going to remain the second city of France, and a modern industrial powerhouse, residents would have to acquiesce to certain domestic inconveniences. City hall viewed industrial expansion as a key way to improve Marseille's overall prosperity. Defferre downplayed the pollution of the Saint Louis neighborhood in order to promote the necessity of attracting big business to Marseille. Resident conceptions about everyday social welfare—in this case the right to live without exposure to pollution—were at odds with a municipal vision of public good and prosperity.

FORMING RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Residents participated in modernization debates by forming formal and informal associations. Associations often developed out of diverse neighborhoods. For example, in Marseille's northern neighborhoods, many residents worked on the docks, or in factories, and many had come to Marseille during the wave of Italian immigration during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. During the interwar years, Spanish, Corsicans and Armenians also settled in these neighborhoods. As one resident recalled:

“Families were often very mixed, Italians, Armenians, of all origins. They lived in bidonvilles, in HLMs, at Capitaine Gèze, in Grand Arenas, a large number lived in the Panier, where sailors and dockers always lived, in Belle de Mai, and, in the northern neighborhoods like Sainte-Marthe.”⁵²

In the Saint Marthe neighborhood, located in the Fourteenth arrondissement in the northern outskirts of Marseille, residents registered with city hall to form an official association called a *comité d'intérêt de quartier* (or CIQ). They formed the CIQ to petition city hall to modernize their neighborhood. Many had moved to Saint Marthe

⁵² Alfred Pacini and Dominique Pons, *Docker À Marseille* (Paris: Payot/Rivages, 1996).12

because of the cheapness of land, and overtime, the village had grown into a sizable neighborhood. Between 1952 and 1962, this association repeatedly petitioned the city to install sewer lines, and to build roads, schools, and a post office.⁵³ These residents asserted that they paid city taxes, but did not benefit from them because of their isolation from downtown. They even petitioned to secede from the city of Marseille and form their own municipal government if the city did not act to construct basic infrastructure. Their petitions were often detailed: the association noted on maps and in photographs where they needed a post office, or where sewer lines should be installed. By the mid 1960s, the municipal administration began to work with Saint Marthe residents, installing roads, sewers, and building a post office. Over time, this neighborhood also became prime real estate for the construction of large public housing which necessitated further urban development in the area.

Neighborhood resident associations are one way to understand local conceptions of social welfare and collective good. Who they excluded also reveals local notions about who “belonged” to the neighborhood. For example, resident associations often mobilized against the problem of squatters in their neighborhoods, petitioning local officials to evict squatters from unoccupied buildings or abandoned fields: In 1956, a *comité d’interet du quartier* (CIQ) from the Calade-Bernabo neighborhood in the north of Marseille wrote the mayor to complain about “a clandestine village...occupied by numerous gypsies and north Africans” that had sprung up in an abandoned factory.⁵⁴ In 1962, residents from the third *arrondissement* wrote a series of letters to the mayor to

⁵³ See dossier: CIQ Sainte Marthe, in Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 10

⁵⁴ Memo from J. Couteaud, Engineer, and chief of the Marseille *ponts et chaussées* to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, July 4, 1956. Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 223

complain about “a parking lot permanently occupied by gypsies.”⁵⁵ In one letter, the president of the association stated, “We, the residents, conscious of our needs and rights, demand the eviction of the nomads and gypsies.”⁵⁶ In a petition signed by forty one residents of the *La Renaude* public housing complex, the president of the association included a letter complaining “about new habitants—dirty, flea-infested gypsies—who insult us” and were living in several unoccupied apartments.⁵⁷ In resident complaints about squatters, they often associated the illegal occupation of neighborhood buildings with “gypsies” and “north Africans.”

However, another neighborhood petition about squatters reveals that not all squatters were unwelcome. In 1963, the Belle-de-Mai CIQ wrote several letters to the mayor expressing concerns about squatting families illegally occupying an abandoned building in the neighborhood. The families had been living in an old industrial building that was marked for bull-dozing to make way for new public housing. Unexpectedly, the association did not organize to complain that the squatters’ were violating private property rights. Instead, the organization tried to find permanent housing for the squatters *in the same neighborhood*. The association petitioned the city to re-house the squatting families in public housing newly constructed in Belle-de-Mai.⁵⁸

While the Belle-de-Mai neighborhood association advocated for these squatting families, the organization distinguished between the twelve families they hoped could remain in the neighborhood, and the “problem of the four squatting gypsy families” who

⁵⁵ Memo from A. Rocchi, president of the *Association des Locataires du group HLM, Saint-Charles 3eme*, to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, February 7, 1962. Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 22.

⁵⁶ Memo from A. Rocchi, president of the *Association des Locataires du group HLM, Saint-Charles 3eme*, to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, February 7, 1962. Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 22.

⁵⁷ Petition to mayor Gaston Defferre from residents of the *La Renaude* housing complex, 1968, Marseille Municipal Archives 468 W 179

⁵⁸ Memo from President of the Belle de Mai CIQ, to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, November 21, 1963, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 10

were living in the same abandoned building.⁵⁹ The association did not appeal to city hall to re-house the squatting “gypsy families.” Instead, the association detailed that the “gypsies camped without right” in the outdoor courtyard of the building.⁶⁰ The Belle-de-Mai residents distinguished between the squatting families who *lived* in the abandoned building, and the “gypsies” who *camped* there. In a letter responding to these petitions, the mayor’s office stated that they would attempt to re-house the twelve families in the Belle-de-Mai neighborhood, but that the “gypsies” would be evacuated from the building. According to municipal reports, once the “gypsies” were evicted, they were not rehoused.⁶¹

Why did the Belle de Mai residents try to help some of the squatting families, but not the others? Although archival documents do not elaborate on the relationship between the families in the Belle-de-Mai neighborhood, we can assume from the associations’ advocating on their behalf, that these twelve squatting families were accepted into the social and cultural fabric of the neighborhood in ways that the squatting “gypsies” were not.

According to municipal studies, the twelve squatting families in Belle-de-Mai were Spanish and Italian.⁶² However, the Belle-de-Mai association did not describe these families in terms of their ethnicity as Italians and Spanish, but as neighbors. In contrast, the association does not describe the “gypsies” as neighbors, but in ethnic terms. These families—from southern Spain and northern Africa, and ethnically Roma—were

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Memo from President of the Belle de Mai CIQ, to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, November 21, 1963, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 10

⁶¹ Letter from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli to President of the Belle de Mai CIQ, January 13, 1946, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 10

⁶² Letter from *HLM de Marseille* to Prefecture regarding Belle de Mai, January 9, 1964, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 10

racialized as “gypsies:” although they lived in the neighborhood, they were not “from” the neighborhood. The Belle-de-Mai resident association contrasted the “rootedness” of the twelve squatting families with the “unrootedness” of the four nomadic gypsy families. Those squatting families that had put down “roots” were the families that the association understood to be “from the neighborhood.”

Many new arrivals to Marseille settled where they already had family or community ties. For example, as Italian migrants had been settling in Marseille since the late nineteenth century, more recent arrivals often joined families and friends in neighborhoods with a large Italian community, like Belle-de-Mai. Therefore, many new arrivals already had “roots” in communities like Belle-de-Mai. The Belle-de-Mai petition to house some families but expel others demonstrates that residents did not imagine social welfare in universal terms, but in local ones. For many Marseille residents, being “from” the neighborhood was a prerequisite to participating in local debates about modernization.

THE SAINT LAZARE DISASTER: THE MARSEILLE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE LOCAL POLITICS OF HOUSING

Perceptions of ethnic and cultural difference were some ways that Marseille residents decided who belonged to their neighborhoods and who deserved to be modern. In working class neighborhoods in the north of Marseille—often affiliated with the

communist party—residents argued they were excluded from municipal modernization plans because of class distinctions and party affiliation.⁶³

Geographically and in local imagination, Marseille is organized along a north-south divide. Neighborhoods north of the Vieux Port—including several near downtown—have historically been working class neighborhoods of recent migrants. In the 1950s and 1960s, these neighborhoods were closely associated with Italian, Spanish, and Corsican communities. Neighborhoods south of the Vieux Port have historically been more affluent and affiliated with the Socialist and center right parties. In the 1950s and 1960s, Defferre’s political stronghold was concentrated in the south of the Marseille, although some northern neighborhoods, like the Panier, did ally themselves with the socialists.

In 1960, the collapse of several apartment buildings in the Saint Lazare neighborhood just north of the Vieux Port was the catalyst for a vigorous local debate about the meaning of modernization for working class families. Neighborhood residents and victims of the collapse accused the municipal government of neglect, and of excluding them from municipal plans for modernization. The local communist party saw the Saint Lazare collapse as a key opportunity to galvanize their constituency by taking up the cause of the victims of the Saint Lazare disaster. Using their local newspaper, *La Marseillaise*, communists turned the disaster into a local *cause célèbre*, accusing the municipal government of excluding working class families from the benefits of modernization.

⁶³ For a demographic study of voting practices and party affiliation in the Bouches-Du-Rhone during the fourth republic: Antoine Olivesi and Marcel Roncayolo, *Géographie Électorale Des Bouches-Du-Rhône Sous La I^{ve} République* (Paris,: A. Colin, 1961).

On June 26, 1960 at 6:10 p.m. the local *commissaire de police* received an urgent phone call that buildings had collapsed in the Saint Lazare neighborhood on the rue du Caire.⁶⁴ Once on the scene, the *commissaire*, along with police officers and firefighters, pulled three victims from the rubble: an infant, 20 days old; a single mother Madame C.; and a mother of four children, Madame M. The infant and Madame C. were already dead, but Madame M. was rushed to the hospital in critical condition where she later died of her injuries.⁶⁵ The police and firefighters then rushed to evacuate all families from the surrounding buildings which were also in danger of collapse.⁶⁶ After these forty-four other families were evacuated, the city quickly bull-dozed these structurally unsound buildings in order to prevent squatters from taking up residence. Of the eighty-five total families evacuated, most were not given the chance to retrieve their belongings before being evacuated, and most lost their furniture and other domestic items which were bull-dozed along with the buildings.⁶⁷

The investigation into the disaster revealed that the source of the collapse had been a deteriorated supporting wall. In a report to the mayor's office, the head architect attempted to explain why his department had "left many buildings throughout the city in a state of abandon."⁶⁸ He explained that his department had been aware of the decayed state of the supporting wall in Saint Lazare, and had performed a number of repairs on

⁶⁴Memo from the Marseille *Commissariat de Police* to *Monsieur le Commissaire Divisionnaire* in the *Commissaire Central*, June 26, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149

⁶⁵ Memo from the Marseille *Commissariat de Police* to *Monsieur le Commissaire Divisionnaire* in the *Commissaire Central*, June 26, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149.

⁶⁶Of the eight families living in one of the collapsed buildings, four families were Italian, two were Spanish, and two were French. See: Studies of Saint Lazare families and victims of Collapse, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149

⁶⁷ Memo from *Assistance Publique à Marseille* to Gaston Defferre, Regarding: Furniture, Rue du Caire. January 6, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149 ; Memo from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, to Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre, July 2, 1960. Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149

⁶⁸Memo from Albert Villard, Head Architect, to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, July 1, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149

this wall as well as others within the neighborhood. In his report to the court investigating the disaster, the head of the urban planning department cited a lack of funding and personnel as the reason for this gross oversight. According to the director, employees were swamped by work due to insufficient staffing, and building repairs were difficult due to lack of funding.

While the Saint Lazare collapse took most city officials by surprise, the neighborhood was not, in fact, excluded from the municipality's plans. Most of the buildings in the neighborhood were owned by the city, and had been acquired through eminent domain. The creation of a highway network was a major part of Marseille's plan for modernization, and much of the Saint Lazare neighborhood was scheduled for bulldozing to make way for a new freeway, the *Autoroute Nord*. This freeway was to be an important addition to the transportation infrastructure which would increase the flow of goods in and out of Marseille, thus bolstering the local economy. However, the highway expansion was still in the planning stages, and in the meantime, many of the buildings owned by the city had fallen into disrepair.

Families displaced by the collapsed buildings argued that municipal neglect was the cause of the disaster and that they had been excluded from city efforts to modernize Marseille. Therefore, while city hall did have a modernization plan for Saint Lazare—to raze half of the neighborhood and build a freeway—residents argued that they did not have access to the benefits of modern living. In response, the mayor's office promised that all displaced families would be permanently re-housed in new public housing. As *Le*

Provençal reported: “Evacuated residents have received good shelter in hotels, with meals included... They will receive new housing within the week.”⁶⁹

After the disaster, the mayor’s office moved to ensure the permanent re-housing of families in newly constructed apartment blocks. In a report to Mayor Gaston Defferre, Secretary General Jean Poggioli stated: “fortunately for us, the accident occurred at the moment when the first apartments of our program to construction 4,000 housing units destined to reabsorb slums and tenements is nearly finished. In any other circumstance, we would have been completely incapable to assure any definitive shelter to evacuated families.”⁷⁰ Poggioli thus expressed some relief that new housing had just become available so that the city could re-house the evacuated families. Most of these families would be re-located to Saint Barthelemy, a newly constructed housing project in the northern outskirts of the city.

However, in a series of letters to the mayor, families evacuated from the buildings argued that the municipality was responsible for more than just new housing: the municipality was also responsible for helping them replace all material items they were forced to leave behind. A letter from a lawyer representing four families from the collapsed buildings charged that municipal efforts to help with the costs of replacing domestic items were insufficient.⁷¹ On behalf of the families, the lawyer argued that the quality of life of these families had been compromised to a higher degree than the city was willing to compensate. Although the municipality had scrambled to provide for the

⁶⁹ *Le Provençal*, June 28, 1960

⁷⁰ Memo from Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli to Mayor Gaston Defferre, July 2, 1960. Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149.

⁷¹ Letter from Paul Lombard, lawyer representing Saint Lazare residents, to Mayor Gaston Defferre, September 21, 1960. Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149

basic needs of displaced families, the city and families differed in their conceptions of “basic welfare.”

As the mayor’s office worked to re-house the Saint Lazare residents and address the concerns of the very vocal neighborhood association, city hall also recognized the importance of the political affiliation of most Saint Lazare residents. As Head Architect Albert Villard wrote to Secretary General Jean Poggioli: “You know that the mentality of many of the habitants of these neighborhoods are influenced by a certain propaganda, and I must indicate to you that the residents..are the first to proclaim that absolutely no work has been done in the area for years, despite our evidence to the contrary.”⁷² In other words, Villard argued that Saint Lazare residents, who claimed that the city had never performed any sufficient repairs in the neighborhood, were exaggerating the degree of municipal neglect because of their affiliation with the communist party.

Although marginalized within the municipal government, one key way that Marseille communists found ways to participate in local government and galvanize their constituency was through debates about housing. Working class neighborhoods like Saint Lazare, had historically been closely tied to the PCF. The local communist party saw the Saint Lazare collapse as a key opportunity to galvanize their constituency by taking up the cause of the victims of the Saint Lazare disaster. The Saint Lazare disaster became a rallying point for the Marseille communist party, and their critique that the Defferre administration neglected the social needs of working class Marseille families.

Next to Gaston Defferre’s newspaper, *Le Provençal*, the communist paper, *La Marseillaise*, was most widely circulated in Marseille, and was an important organ for

⁷² Memo from Albert Villard, Head Architect, to Marseille Secretary General Jean Poggioli, July 1, 1960, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 149

communist politicians in working class neighborhoods. Two days after the collapse, on June 28, 1960, the front page article of the *Marseillaise* reported on the disaster:

“After the tragic accident, 90 families lost everything, the others no longer have a roof over their heads...Most desperately seek shelter...The municipality has offered to re-house the homeless of Saint Lazare but we’ll see if they keep their promise.”⁷³

Over the next few days, Louis Gazagnaire, a communist city council member, and head of the Marseille branch of the communist party, penned a series of editorials criticizing the Defferre administration for excluding working class residents from the opportunity for modern living. For example, when Defferre was first elected mayor, he asserted in a speech that the “construction of housing is a duty in a civilized world.”⁷⁴ Citing the Saint Lazare disaster, Gazagnaire invoked Defferre’s speech by arguing that the mayor had forsaken his “social duty” to Marseille residents.⁷⁵ Gazagnaire accused Defferre of not delivering on his campaign promise of new housing and modern living for all Marseillais.

A central issue for the communist party was the problem of high rents in new public housing which working class families could not afford. Although public housing was supposed to be subsidized, local and national government partly financed housing construction by charging high rents. Gazagnaire described the local communists’ perception of the central problem for working class families: “the most distressing dilemma: To live in a slum and have almost enough to eat, or live in comfort and tighten the belt.”⁷⁶

⁷³ *La Marseillaise*, June 28, 1960

⁷⁴ Defferre quoted in *La Marseillaise*, July 12, 1960.

⁷⁵ Louis Gazaganiare, *La Marseillaise*, July 12, 1960.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Gazagnaire specifically commented on the state of the new-housing that the victims of the Saint Lazare collapse received: “They will be re-housed, but let’s see how... The official announcement that all victims will be re-housed unfortunately hides some cruel realities.”⁷⁷ In particular, Gazagnaire detailed high monthly rents, but also additional fees, including compulsory home insurance.⁷⁸ Moreover, Saint Lazare victims who moved into new housing had to pay to have the electricity and gas installed in their apartments. While most had relied on portable butane stoves in old tenements, in these new apartments, portable stoves violated building codes and were illegal.⁷⁹ Gazagnaire continued: “In addition, the residents were obliged to undertake and pay for more construction as many apartments lacked doors... lights were not installed or wired...”⁸⁰ According to Gazagnaire, not only did residents have to pay more to live in the new housing, but construction was not yet finished once they arrived, forcing them to finish installing basic amenities themselves.

After describing the conditions of the new housing in one article, in the next, Gazagnaire focused on those victims of the Saint Lazare disaster who could not afford the higher rents: “The municipality offers us new housing... but in apartments too expensive for us!”⁸¹ explained one displaced resident. Gazagnaire described that out of roughly 85 families evacuated from Saint Lazare, about 30 could not afford the higher rents, and remained in temporary housing in a local elementary school. For example, Monsieur Tiran an evacuee, was offered an apartment in Saint Barthelemy. Prior to moving to the new housing he was asked to pay a 31,400 franc deposit, and his rent would be 15,000

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Louis Gazagnaire, *La Marseillaise*, July 12, 1960

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Louis Gazagnaire, *La Marseillaise*, July 13, 1960

francs per month. Monsieur Tiran explained: “What would you do? With my salary? I am a pipe-fitter, I can’t afford these expenses. Why accept this apartment and not be able to pay the rents and the extra charges?”⁸² Gazagnaire concluded this article with the warning: “If you protest too much about high rents you can expect the response, ‘If it pleases you, there are the *cités d’urgence!*’”⁸³

In this series of op-eds on the plight of the Saint Lazare residents, Gazagnaire discussed the larger issue of housing for working class families. He criticized the municipality for excluding working class families from the benefits of modern life because of high rents and hidden costs. He ended by invoking the specter of the *cités d’urgence*, including reduced norm housing like *La Paternelle*, or provisional camps, like *Grand Arenas*. *Cités d’urgence* were intended as an intermediary step between slum living and normal housing and were often associated with “asocial” foreign families.

By arguing that working class families were excluded from modernization, Marseille communists reveal the ways in which they also “bought-in” to the postwar domestic paradigm linking modern living and social welfare. For Marseille communists, as well as local residents, the question was not whether, but *how* France should modernize, and *who* was eligible for modern living. By focusing on housing debates, Marseille communists also articulated a political agenda which focused on the home—not just the workplace—as an important site for class struggle.⁸⁴ Lastly, by discussing the quality and type of new housing available to working class families, communists

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ For discussion of the neighborhood as an important site for working class solidarity and the role of communists at the local level see: Tyler Edward Stovall, *The Rise of the Paris Red Belt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). Gruber Helmut, *Red Vienna : Experiment in Working-Class Culture, 1919-1934* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Temma Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period : Social Movements in Picasso’s Barcelona* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

reflect local common sense understandings about the social and ethnic hierarchies shaping the public housing system, particularly the stigma associated with living in a *cité d'urgence*.

CLIENTELISM

Although communists argued that Defferre's administration excluded working class families from access to new housing, communists did participate in the public housing allocation system in Marseille. By engaging in patronage politics, both socialists and communists could shape who gained access to modern living.

In addition to forming resident associations, clientelism—or patronage politics—was also an important way that residents negotiated modernization and social welfare with both the socialist and communist parties in Marseille. As Philippe Sanmarco argues, clientelism is a “personal and personalized allegiance...[and] a phenomenon established for the most part at the local level...The heart of clientelism is linked to the electoral campaign. In its most simple form it consists of a classic offer: ‘At the moment of the election, you (*tu*) vote for me...and I will hire you, or your son, or your daughter.’”⁸⁵ Patronage politics has been a notorious and historical practice in Marseille. This exchange of favor, characterized as a personal, verbal contract between individuals was often related to jobs and housing.⁸⁶

Housing allocation was an important part of patronage politics in Marseille and intersected with modernization discourses in compelling ways. Marseille residents often

⁸⁵ Philippe Sanmarco, "Le Clientélisme, Comment Ca Marche? Clientélisme Et Politique En Région Provence Alpes Côte D'azur," in *Démocratie et territoires* (Université d'Aix-Marseille: Centre d'Etudes en sciences sociales appliquées and Appuis, Recherche, Education pour la Négociation Locale sur les Environnements, 2003). 1-3

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 1-3

expressed their desire to live a “modern life” as justification for why they deserved new housing. However, housing applicants often turned to local leaders to insure that their housing applications were read by the “right people.” Both Gaston Defferre’s socialist coalition and the communist party used housing allocation to curry favor with constituents.

The office that allocated HLM apartments was often linked to Gaston Defferre’s socialist coalition. The *Office Publique des Habitations de Loyer Modéré* (OPHLM) was a private organization charged within assigning apartments within the public housing system. As the state began the mass construction of housing, the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism helped create these local housing allocation bureaucracies. These privately run agencies handled local applications for public housing. In Marseille, the OPHLM was often staffed by members of the socialist party who had political aspirations, and this housing office was a training ground for aspiring local politicians.⁸⁷

Communist city council members, in their ongoing campaign for working class housing, often used city council meetings as a forum to critique the clientelistic practices of the socialists and the OPHLM: “the housing attribution process remains a mystery,”⁸⁸ complained one communist council member in 1959. In another session, a communist council member asserted: “the observations of our group are that the administration of the OPHLM exclusively reflect the tendencies and wishes of the majority coalition of the municipal council.”⁸⁹ In other words, the OPHLM assigned housing based on the party

⁸⁷ For example, Guerini, who lost the mayoral election to incumbent Gaudin in the 2008 Marseille Municipal Elections, was the head of the OPHLM in the late 1960s.

⁸⁸ Transcript : City Council Meeting, January 20, 1959. Marseille Municipal Archives 599 W 179

⁸⁹ Communist council member: M. Molino, Transcript from City Council Meeting, May 25, 1959. Marseille Municipal Archives, 599 W 179

affiliation of housing applicants. In response to accusations of practicing clientelism, Mayor Gaston Defferre responded:

“I am very aware that I pass my time responding to those who demand housing and I indicate that I cannot intervene because of my elected position as Mayor of Marseille. They ask my friends, they solicit elected officials to intervene on their behalf. I tell them that I cannot do anything, that there are rules for which I cannot make exceptions.”⁹⁰

Defferre acknowledged that residents often solicited requests through powerful municipal officials, but denied that he intervened on their behalf. He invoked the integrity of his office as mayor as preventing him from engaging in such patronage. In this “wink and nod” system of politics, for Defferre to acknowledge clientelism happened would undermine the very mechanism of the practice.⁹¹

In 1953, a municipal commission charged with investigating the housing attribution process concluded that because of the “clandestinity through which the distribution of apartments happen... the majority of housing candidates doubt the methods employed for the housing allocations.”⁹² The commission recommended the creation of a special housing committee that would operate as an alternative housing office alongside the OPHLM. The committee was intended to counter the opacity of the OPHLM system by holding public meetings and allocating housing on a case-by-case basis.

The committee attempted to rationalize the housing application process by creating a point system and common language through which housing applicants could be evaluated. Families would be examined based on a pre-determined set of standards which

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ For evidence of clientelistic practices between the socialist party and Marseille residents, see dossier: *Comité d'entente des Locataires HLM de Montredon*, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 179

⁹² Report to Head of Housing Services from René Husson, August 3, 1953. Marseille Municipal Archives, 540 W 9

would create more transparency in the housing allocation process. In the attribution of points, the housing application was judged based on the family situation and the condition of existing housing. According to this system, for example, the family would receive points based on the number of children and length of marriage:

Table IV.2 Point System for Housing Allocation⁹³

“Head of the Family”	Number of Children	Total points
Married less than 2 years	0	10
Married less than 4 years	1	10
Married less than 6 years	2	10
Married less than 8 years	4	20

**if married less than eight years with 3 children, but can provide a certificate confirming pregnant wife, can qualify for the final category*

**if children are of opposite sexes will receive an additional 5 points*

The second portion of the point system was based on the condition of the existing housing that families lived in. For example, a candidate evacuated from a condemned building received 35 points, while a candidate living in an overcrowded apartment (often young families living with their parents) received 15 points.⁹⁴ Thus the point allocation for housing condition was supposed to correspond to the most immediate material needs of a family. A family living in a condemned building was supposed to receive first priority and more points.

⁹³ See Marseille Municipal Archives 540W 9

⁹⁴ Report to Head of Housing Services from René Husson, August 3, 1953. Marseille Municipal Archives, 540 W 9

In addition to being ranked according to a point system, housing applicants would describe why they needed new housing. They often made their case in terms of vocabularies of “modern living.” For example, in a housing application a resident described himself as “married and a father of one child.” He emphasized his job as “a municipal employee in construction,” thus underscoring that he was a good breadwinner. After making the case for being the head of a “good family,” the resident described his existing poor housing conditions: “we live in a small apartment with no amenities, and our child of six and a half years is obliged to sleep in our bedroom because we don’t have enough space.”⁹⁵ In other words, as a “good family” the housing applicant made the case for needing “good housing.” He also specified the apartment size, location, and amenities that he would like to have. Housing applicants often underscored overcrowding, lack of running water or indoor plumbing, humidity, and lack of sunlight as the most common justifications for new housing.

While the new housing commission was intended to create more transparency in the housing allocation process, clientelism continued to be an important element in housing attribution. While housing allocation under the OPHLM bureaucracy was often linked to socialist influence, the housing allocation commission was one way that communists practiced clientelism. Although local communists were marginalized within Defferre’s coalition government, housing allocation was one of a few areas that communists could wield influence through patronage politics.

The ways in which communists introduced family case files suggests that the housing applications were evaluated less according to objective standards of fairness, than according to political interest. For example, in four 1953 commission meetings, the

⁹⁵ Letter from F.A. to Gaston Defferre, February 4, 1974, Marseille Municipal Archives, 540 W 9.

families that communist members “recommended for housing”⁹⁶ whose files represented “interesting cases that merited attention,”⁹⁷ were all families from working class and traditionally communist neighborhoods.

Local politicians also recognized that ethnic groups—particularly the Italian community—were important constituents and often appealed to them in cultural and ethnic terms. In the case of the housing commission, 70% of the families allocated housing were Italian, 17% were French, and 13% were Spanish.⁹⁸

As Mary Lewis argues, recent migrants were often integral to patronage politics because they were an exceptionally vulnerable and therefore manipulable potential constituency: “[T]he city’s system of patronage...promised protection to vulnerable migrants in exchange for their loyalty.”⁹⁹ In the 1930s, for example, clientelism often took more coercive forms. Getting or keeping a job often depended on membership in a political party. For dockers and laborers, employment was often contingent on membership in the socialist or communist Party. As one communist union leader explained: “we started going through all the electoral lists in the region with a red pen, and it became impossible to find work unless one became a permanent member of the PCF.”¹⁰⁰

After World War Two, communities like the Italians had been settled in Marseille for several generations. In addition to the large wave of Italian migration to France at the end of the twentieth century, after World War Two, France also entered into bilateral

⁹⁶ Housing Commission Meetings: August 3, 1953; October 2, 1953; September 25, 1953 in Marseille Municipal Archives 540 W 9

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Mary Dewhurst Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic : Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007).85

¹⁰⁰ Marion, *Gaston Defferre*.166

agreements with Italy in 1946 and 1951 to encourage labor migration. By 1959, Italians formed the largest immigrant population in France. By the 1950s, residents from Italian communities in Marseille were beginning to ascend the local political rungs in both the socialist and communist parties. In the case of the housing commission, it was run by city council member Alfred Pacini, a second generation Italian from the one of Marseille northern neighborhoods historically affiliated with the communist party.

Despite efforts to “standardize” the housing allocation process according to objective measures of need, clientelism remained a key way that new families could receive new “modern” housing. Patronage politics, therefore, was a key way that Marseille residents participated in local modernization efforts and helped frame how “modern life” was understood and achieved locally. Lastly, patronage politics often reflect party affiliation and ethnic association.

CONCLUSION

In the fifteen years after World War Two, many believed that modernization was the key to reestablishing France’s status as an economic powerhouse as well as the way to improve basic standards of living for French citizens. While there was relative consensus on the importance of modernization, *how* modernization should proceed, and *who* deserved modern living remained key tensions at the heart of postwar debates about social welfare and public good. This chapter argues that local politics is an important realm for examining how modernization was contested and shaped from below. Local politicians learned to navigate between national and local government, and formed elite patronage networks within national parties. For example, long time Marseille mayor,

Gaston Defferre, accumulated a number of ministerial positions within the executive cabinet. From these appointments, Defferre could promote Marseille's interests by helping frame the national debate about modernization. As Minister of *d'Outre Mer* from 1956 to 1957, Defferre drafted the legislation that would form the foundation of decolonization: France would grant political autonomy to former colonies, but work to secure ongoing economic ties. According to the Defferre law of 1956, Marseille would remain a key conduit for the ongoing exchange of labor and goods between France and Africa.

Marseille residents also participated in modernization debates by engaging in patronage politics with local politicians and forming resident associations to petition local government for neighborhood development. While local politicians learned how to engage elite clientelistic networks at the national level, Marseille residents learned how to work the local system. In housing applications, residents used a common vocabulary of modern living to make the case for why they deserved new apartments. Residents also engaged in clientelistic practices, promising votes to local city council members in exchange for access to the public housing system. The intersection of modernization and clientelism reveals the ways in which the right to modern living was interpreted less as a universal social need, but in particularistic terms. In Marseille, during *les trente glorieuses*, access to modern living depended less on insuring all citizens had access to a certain quality of life, than on residents' relationships with networks of local power.

Residents also formed neighborhood associations to petition municipal authorities for local development. While city government often articulated its modernization plans in terms of the public good, residents claimed the right to modern living in terms of their

perceptions of their individual welfare. Residents did not interpret modernization in universal terms, but in local ones. The neighborhood was the realm in which Marseille residents made sense of larger themes including the “right to comfort.” The neighborhood was also the realm where Marseille residents articulated who they thought deserved to be modern. While scholarship on the experience of urbanization has focused on the formation of class solidarities, this chapter examined how residents also understood their neighborhoods in ethnic terms. Concepts of difference were integral to local understandings of social welfare.

PART TWO. The “Immigrant Question” and the “Crisis” of the Welfare State

CHAPTER V

**From Colonial Subjects to Immigrant Workers:
Continuity and Change in Social Welfare Institutions from 1962-1979**

Figure V.1 “Merci Bien”¹



In the above political cartoon, published in *Le Monde* in 1984, a dark skinned man with a threadbare, patched suit walks away from the reader, carrying a suitcase. A large boot print on his backside reads “Thanks a lot,” suggesting that he is a migrant worker who is—or should be—leaving France now that his labor is no longer needed. The cartoon reflected a political climate that developed during the economic downturn of the

¹ *Le Monde*, special issue, October 1984.

1970s amidst growing public anxieties about immigration. As the French economy plunged into recession and unemployment rose, discussion of the downturn began to link immigration with national decline. In the 1970s, the “immigrant problem” crystallized as a key national debate, and an emerging consensus was that the “problem” could be solved if immigrant workers returned to their “countries of origin.”

While the notion that migrants were a temporary presence in France took on new meaning during the 1970s recession, this assumption developed earlier, during the post war boom years, or *les trente glorieuses*. During the economic boom, migration to France was largely unregulated as government officials and French companies relied on foreign labor to help rebuild and modernize France. As France worked out the repercussions of decolonization, government officials and corporations also encouraged temporary labor migration from former French colonies. Although the assumption—held by government officials, French corporations, and many migrant workers—was that these former colonial subjects and workers from southern Europe would eventually go home, most did not. During the 1960s, migrant workers increasingly sent for their families to join them in France.

Recent scholarship examining this “myth of return” has discussed how French officials imagined migration to be a recent and exclusively economic phenomenon, often ignoring the political and social dimensions of postwar migration.² For example, as

² For discussion of migration and the “myth of return” see: Belkacem Hifi, *L'immigration Algérienne En France : Origines Et Perspectives De Non-Retour* (Paris: Harmattan : C.I.E.M., 1985). Albert Memmi and Robert Bononno, *Decolonization and the Decolonized* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). For studies on the post war colonial and labor migration see: Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995), Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation : Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France*, Critical Studies in Racism and Migration (London ; New York: Routledge, 1992).

colonies gained independence, waves of migrants seeking political refuge fled to the French metropole.

In the 1980s, a growing body of literature on the history of immigration in France attempted to counter the assumption that migration was a recent phenomenon. This work, particularly Gerard Noiriel's *Le Creuset Français* (or The French Melting Pot), situated contemporary concerns about immigration within the longer history of migration and xenophobia.³ These studies also highlighted the diversity of France's ethnic origins, and celebrated this legacy as an important part of the making of modern France.⁴

While scholars in the field of immigration studies illuminated French "amnesia" about the history of migration to France, scholarship in the developing field of colonial studies examined the particularities of French amnesia about its imperial past.⁵ Studies like Benjamin Stora's *La gangrene et l'oubli* discussed how—in coming to terms with the loss of empire—France engaged in a collective act of forgetting. Others have sought to counter arguments that the French empire was an aberration—a blip on the national

³ For recent studies on the history of immigration in France: Jean-Jacques Jordi and Emile Témime, *Marseille Et Le Choc Des Décolonisations : Les Rapatriements, 1954-1964* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1996), Gérard Noiriel, *Le Creuset Français : Histoire De L'immigration Xixe-Xxe Siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 1988), Clifford D. Rosenberg, *Policing Paris : The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006), Benjamin Stora and Emile Témime, *Immigrations : L'immigration En France Au Xxe Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 2007), Emile Témime, *Histoire Des Migrations À Marseille* ([France]: Editions Jeanne Laffitte, 2007), Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, *Les Immigrés Et La Politique : Cent Cinquante Ans D'évolution* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques avec le concours du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1988), Laurent Gervereau et al., *Toute La France : Histoire De L'immigration En France Au Xxe Siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine Somogy, 1998).

⁴ For scholarship on the history of diversity in France see: Yves Lequin, *Histoire Des Étrangers Et De L'immigration En France*, Références Larousse. Histoire (Paris: Larousse, 1992), Yves Lequin, *La Mosaïque, France : Histoire Des Étrangers Et De L'immigration* ([Paris]: Larousse, 1988).

⁵ For discussion of memory and empire see: Claude Liauzu, *Violence Et Colonisation : Pour En Finir Avec Les Guerres De Mémoires* (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2003). Hédi Saïdi, *Mémoire De L'immigration Et Histoire Coloniale* (Paris: Harmattan, 2007). Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène Et L'oubli : La Mémoire De La Guerre D'algerie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991), Benjamin Stora and Mohammed Harbi, *La Guerre D'algerie : 1954-2004, La Fin De L'amnésie* (Paris: R. Laffont, 2004), Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère, *La Guerre Des Mémoires : La France Face À Son Passé Colonial* (La Tour d'Aigues: Aube, 2007).

radar—by examining the integral ways in which empire shaped the nation.⁶ Lastly, scholarship has connected the legacy of colonialism with anxieties about immigration.⁷ In particular, recent work has discussed the processes by which the French government reclassified colonial subjects as foreigners, and how families from former colonies became increasingly invisible within state social welfare programs.⁸

For example, Todd Sheppard has argued that the end of the Algerian war of independence marked a turning point for legal definitions of Frenchness.⁹ Prior to 1962, Algerian-Muslims had legal status as French nationals. However, with the end of the war, Algerian-Muslims were stripped of these (limited) political rights. As Shepard argues, this legal distinction excised Algerians from the new definition of Frenchness, where the “French government made common-sense understandings of racial or ethnic difference the basis of laws that denied most people from Algeria the right to remain French.”¹⁰

While recent scholarship has discussed changes in the political definition of Frenchness after decolonization, this chapter examines key continuities in social welfare regimes for former colonial subjects. While colonial subjects were stripped of their legal

⁶ Studies of the integral relationship between metropole and colony build on: Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire : Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). For recent scholarship on the ways in which empire shaped France see: Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens : Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 2004), Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State : Negritude & Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁷ Claude Liauzu, *Colonisations, Migrations, Racismes : Histoires D'un Passeur De Civilisations* (Paris: Syllepse, 2009).

⁸ Amelia Lyons, "Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974," (University of California, Irvine, 2004).

⁹ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization : The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 12

political standing, they were nonetheless still granted limited welfare allowances. Moreover, the same institutions that administered social welfare programs for colonial subjects during empire continued to do so for “immigrants” after. By showing continuities in social welfare programs, this chapter traces the crystallization of a social welfare hierarchy from the end of empire through the economic downturn of the 1970s. During this period, French metropolitan institutions developed in increasingly racialized terms as “immigrants” were allocated some social rights—like the right to housing—but were denied political rights on the basis of their “foreignness.”

The summer of 1962, and the mass “exodus” of migrants from Algeria to France at the end of the War of Independence is an important moment for making sense of how migrants from former French colonies were denied political *rights* because of their new “immigrant” status, but were granted limited welfare benefits in terms of their basic social *needs*. Many families displaced during decolonization landed in *cités de transit*, or temporary housing camps. Although families began to settle permanently, these transit camps highlight recent migrants’ ambiguous status by reinforcing families’ supposed impermanent presence in France.

By showing continuities in social welfare programs, this chapter also discusses the ambiguous status of families and workers from former colonies in France after decolonization and through the economic downturn in the 1970s. In the 1960s, migrant families and workers from former colonies began to permanently settle in increasing numbers at a moment when their presence in France was imagined to be temporary. While French officials had encouraged family migration prior to the end of empire, after decolonization state officials implemented programs which encouraged temporary labor

migration for single male workers. This emphasis on labor migration was part of French officials' larger vision for maintaining ties with former colonies. While these new states had political autonomy—and former colonial subjects had been reclassified as foreign immigrants—French officials nonetheless worked to maintain strong economic ties. Encouraging temporary labor migration for single male workers was an integral part of this newly imagined economic relationship between metropole and former colonies. Although the state implemented new programs to encourage single male labor migration, in the 1960s, families from former colonies continued to settle in France. Despite diverting most funds to construct single male migrant dormitories, the state also continued funding social welfare and housing programs for a familial population.

Although the state privileged single male labor migration in the 1960s, during the 1970s and the economic downturn, public anxieties increasingly focused on the specter of the male migrant worker as a national threat. “The immigrant problem” also gained national visibility as migrant workers began to advocate for better living conditions in SONACOTRA managed dormitories. From 1970-1979 migrant workers initiated a series of nationally organized rent strikes to protest discriminatory treatment, high rents, and poor living conditions. The SONACOTRA rent strikes demonstrate how recent migrants participated in French political and social institutions, helping to change national attitudes about the “myth of return.”

THE EXODUS OF 1962

During the summer of 1962, nearly a million people left Algeria in what the press called “the great exodus.” After almost a decade of war, Algeria gained independence in 1962 and most of the European settlers—as well as many colonial subjects who had

fought with French forces—fled to the metropole. The exodus placed considerable strain on the city of Marseille, the primary port between Algeria and France. Each week, the city received tens of thousands of people. The new arrivals camped on the docks, in public spaces, and in rapidly growing shantytowns. The arrival of almost one million people in just three months severely strained city resources. Marseille had just begun the mass construction of public housing and city residents were beginning to move in larger numbers into new apartments. However, after the summer of 1962, the population grew by 500,000 people which re-exacerbated the housing crisis.

In 1962, as boatfuls of *pieds noir* and *harkis* arrived from Algeria, “Marseille was submerged by a wave of refugees.”¹¹ In the early months of the year, about 42,000 arrived each month. These numbers spiked dramatically in May 1962 when over 100,000 arrived, and peaked in June when more than 350,000 landed in Marseille.

As Algeria was one of the last colonies to gain independence, this was not the first time that French settlers and former colonial subjects had left newly independent states for mainland France. In 1946, French protectorates Syria and Lebanon gained independence, and in 1954, France withdrew from Indochina. Morocco and Tunisia became independent states in 1956, followed by all of French West Africa by 1960. During this wave, over fifteen years, the total number of settlers or French colonial subjects arriving in France was approximately 500,000 people.¹² However, between the months of May and July 1962, more than 600,000 people fled Algeria for France.

¹¹ Jordi and Témime, *Marseille Et Le Choc Des Décolonisations : Les Rapatriements, 1954-1964*. 67

¹² *Ibid.* 151

Table V.1 People arriving in France from Algeria in 1962¹³

	Number of people arriving in France from Algeria in 1962
January	45,626
February	38,610
March	43,550
April	46,060
May	101,250
June	354,914
July	121,020
August	95,578
September	71,020
October	54,162
November	35,540
December	56,717

Previous waves of newly arrived colonial settlers and subjects could access Marseille’s Bureau of Social Aid or private charities for immediate assistance. These institutions handed out blankets and food to new arrivals and helped them find temporary shelter. However, the exodus from Algeria “overwhelmed all public and private welcoming and social Services.”¹⁴ Most recent arrivals struggled to accommodate their basic needs, like find housing and food for their families. Families found shelter where they could, squatting in abandoned buildings or building makeshift shelters in bidonvilles in the city. Marseille residents began to lodge complaints about squatters in their neighborhoods. As one resident wrote to the prefect: “there is a very old wooden barracks behind my house, lacking running water and toilets, which the city should have destroyed long ago...Living in this barracks...are between 60 and 70 families.”¹⁵ As the

¹³ Ibid.67

¹⁴ Jordi and Témime, *Marseille Et Le Choc Des Décolonisations : Les Rapatriements, 1954-1964*. 71

¹⁵ Memo regarding complaint of Monsieur P. to the prefect. October 8, 1962. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 12 O 1793

departmental director of public health wrote in a memo to the prefect, “the massive arrival of rapatriés has re-aggravated the housing crisis.”¹⁶

Marseille residents also complained about the dramatic increase in theft, banditism, and especially the increase in prices. As one resident described: “If there was a hold-up, it was a rapatrié, if there was a traffic jam, it was because of a rapatrié.”¹⁷ As a former rapatrié remembered: “None of us had a job or an apartment to sell. It’s more that the Marseillais profited from us.”¹⁸ According to police reports, crime did increase during the summer of 1962, as organized gangs took advantage of the chaos, staging a series of armed bank robberies. As one prefectural report stated: “between June 27th and the last week of July, there were nineteen armed robberies perpetrated in Marseille, seventeen concerned recent repatriates from Algeria.”¹⁹

As public anxieties about the dramatic surge in population increased, Mayor Gaston Defferre attempted to quell disquiet by outlining municipal and state efforts to address what he called “the Rapatrié problem” in a series of editorials in the *Provençal* newspaper. In one article he wrote, “it will require extraordinary measures to confront this exceptional situation that we find ourselves in.”²⁰ During the acute period of the summer months, references to the “rapatrié problem” seemed to refer to the entire mass of new arrivals, which included: French settlers, and Algerian-Muslims who had served in the army or in the colonial administrations. However, as local and national officials

¹⁶ Memo from director of public health to the prefect. October 8, 1962. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 12 O 1793

¹⁷ Jordi and Témime, *Marseille Et Le Choc Des Décolonisations : Les Rapatriements, 1954-1964*. 71

¹⁸ Ibid. 71

¹⁹ Ibid. 72

²⁰ Gaston Defferre article, *Le Provençal*, circa 1962, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 12 O 1792.

began to discuss lasting solutions to the problem, a clear distinction emerged regarding who were actually going to be repatriated.

The rapatriés who would become Marseillais were increasingly described as French-white settlers. For example, in a series of editorials in *Le Provençal*, Defferre explained joint municipal and state efforts to accommodate the new arrivals through the construction of housing and employment incentives: “We are working with the central state,” Defferre wrote, “to secure the land and means necessary to build housing” and to “welcome the...rapatriés who will become Marseillais.”²¹

Welcoming or integrating the European rapatriés into the metropole was not just a goal for the Marseille municipality, but “a problem of national scope and character.”²² In particular, government officials were concerned about the arrival in the metropole of a large population of former settlers who had vehemently opposed Algerian independence. The *Organisation de l’Armée Secrète*, or O.A.S., was a group of pieds noirs and soldiers who had committed terrorist acts in both Algeria and metropolitan France to protest what they saw as the betrayal of the French government to defend their interests in the colony. After the Evian Accords and the end of the war, French officials attempted to negotiate an agreement which would permit pieds noirs to remain in Algeria. However, as violence against French settlers escalated, many pieds noirs were forced to flee Algeria. Therefore, the “installation of the rapatriés”²³ was more than just the immediate effort to house new arrivals, it was the necessity of integrating them as French citizens. Or as

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Gaston Defferre article, *Le Provençal*, circa 1962, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1792.

Defferre explained in a *Provençal* article, “it’s our duty” to welcome the rapatriés just as it is “their duty to become Marseillais.”²⁴

In order to begin integrating the rapatriés into the metropole, the government created a special Ministry of Rapatriés to oversee the new programs at both local and national levels.²⁵ These programs were designed to offer short term relief, as well as offer longer term social welfare benefits. In addition to securing employment, the Ministry also worked with local housing offices to find permanent housing for the rapatriés. A 1962 memo from the Minister of Rapatriés to all departmental prefects outlined the “special housing program destined for the rapatriés including the construction of 35,000 public housing units (*habitations à loyer modéré* or HLM) by the end of May, 1963.”²⁶ In addition to constructing new housing, the Ministry encouraged existing public housing societies to allocate ten to thirty percent of housing openings to rapatriés. HLM societies “who acted especially in this effort for national solidarity”²⁷ would be awarded special financial incentives. Despite these directives to construct almost 40,000 new housing units in less than one year, the ministry cautioned local governments against using cheap, prefabricated materials “despite the efficacy and rapidity of these measures.”²⁸ Even in the use of buildings materials, the Ministry of Rapatriés emphasized permanence: integrating the European rapatriés into the national fabric was to ensure their long-term status as French citizens.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Directive From Minister of Rapatriés, no date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1791

²⁶ Memo from Ministry of Rapatriés to all French departmental Prefects, September 1, 1962, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1791

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

While the state created this new organization to oversee the integration of European rapatriés from Algeria, historically, the state had provided social aid to settlers and colonial subjects coming to France during previous waves of decolonization. For example, in 1954 the *Interministerielle pour les rapatriés d'Indochine* as well as the *Service Social des Affaires d'Outre Mer* helped those fleeing Indochina and “distributed warm clothing, pocket money, helped single women, widows, and the sick.”²⁹ After 1955, the *Interministerielle pour les rapatriés d'Indochine* became the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* and worked with municipal social services to help new arrivals from Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt.³⁰ While the state had historically provided some social aid to repatriates, all new arrivals—which included white French and colonial subjects—had qualified for some social aid. Moreover, many of the families that arrived during previous waves—particularly those from Vietnam—were of mixed heritage. For example, of the 2,600 Vietnamese families that landed in Marseille, 65% had one French and one Vietnamese parent.³¹ Therefore, the major shift during the exodus of 1962 was that the state distinguished white repatriates from colonial subjects. After 1962, only white French settlers qualified for programs overseen by the Ministry of Rapatriés.

While the Ministry of Rapatriés oversaw the assimilation of “European repatriates,” a branch of the Ministry of Interior—the Office of Muslim Affairs—was charged with all issues having to do with “Muslim refugees.” In particular, the office was concerned with the new legal designation of Algerians. In a classified memo to all departmental prefects, the Office of Muslim Affairs defined the new status of “Algerians

²⁹ Jordi and Témime, *Marseille Et Le Choc Des Décolonisations : Les Rapatriements, 1954-1964*. 31

³⁰ *Ibid.* 33

³¹ *Ibid.* 30-1

as foreigners.”³² Since 1947, all Algerians—both French-European and Muslim—had had French citizenship. With Algerian independence, all “European rapatriés” from Algeria retained their French citizenship, while those labeled “Muslim refugees” were reclassified as foreigners. In addition to underscoring the new legal status of Algerians as foreigners, the memo also outlined the “new directive concerning aid to Algerian migrants.”³³ In particular, the memo described: “The accession of Algeria to independence, having fundamentally modified the juridical statue of Algerians in France, conducts us naturally to rethink the problem of aid to these migrants and to precisely lay out the new orientation of the action of public powers in this domain.”³⁴ In other words, because Algerians were no longer legally French, they were no longer eligible for social aid. The Office of Muslim Affairs was referring, primarily, to the social welfare programs initiated during the Algerian War for Independence. Under the auspices of the Constantine Plan from 1958-1962, the French government established a substantial social welfare program aimed at “winning the hearts and minds” of Algerian families through improving living standards. Institutions like the Fonds D’Action Social were funded to implement programs in both France and Algeria.

In a 1963 memo, the Ministry of Interior specified that the new “policy [for Algerians] translates to the reduction if not the suppression of all aid.”³⁵ The central government and Office of Muslim Affairs directed all social welfare programs for Algerians to end. The new policy outlined in the memo was, in fact, consistent with the governments’ new definition of Algerians as foreigners. If Algerians had been stripped

³² Memo from the Ministry of Interior, *Service des Affaires Musulmans* to all French departmental Prefects. September 17, 1963 Underscore in the original, Marseille Municipal Archives 468 W 150

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

of any legal claim to French nationality, it followed that they should also be denied social benefits.

These new legal distinctions between “European *rapatriés*” (white French settlers known as *pieds noirs*) and “Muslim refugees” (or *Harkis* and French-Muslims) complicated municipal efforts to accommodate the new population as the central government restricted who qualified for social assistance. Despite the seemingly precise legal excision of Algerians from French citizenship, local authorities struggled to accommodate the large population of arrivals from Algeria who were both European and Algerian. A series of letters from the Marseille Bureau of Social Services and mayor Gaston Defferre³⁶ to the prefect and central government protested the cut of government aid to Algerians: “If the accession of Algeria to independence has permitted a different conception of the aid afforded to Algerians, the human problem nonetheless seems to remain the same and cannot be objectively ignored.”³⁷ In this letter from the Marseille Bureau of Social Services, the director distinguished the new legal status of Algerians as ineligible for aid, from the human problem of a large population of recent arrivals with no means. The director continued by asserting that: “The intervention of the Bureau of Social Aid in favor of North Africans remains very important and will not diminish anytime soon...The funds have in fact increased: in 1962, 249,797 francs. In 1963, 320,586 francs.”³⁸ While the central government had cut off funding for social welfare for Algerians, the municipal government was digging deeper into city coffers. In

³⁶ See letters in Marseille municipal Archives 468 W 150: Particularly, Letter from Jean Calvelli, Director of the Cabinet, Marseille Mayor’s office to Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Prefect, January 16, 1964; Letter from Marseille Mayor Gaston Defferre to Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Prefect regarding continued aid for Algerians, April 22, 1964

³⁷ Letter to Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Prefect regarding aid to North Africans, March 24, 1964, Marseille Municipal Archives 468 W 150

³⁸ Ibid.

particular, the Municipal Bureau of Social Aid, funded mostly by taxes collected from city residents, was spending more than ever to accommodate the immediate needs of new arrivals, which included both “European rapatriés” and “Muslim refugees.” After explaining that the budget of the Bureau of Social Aid had increased, not decreased, with the end of the Algerian War, the director asserted that:

“The work of the bureau is not limited to aid to persons of French nationality... The population originating from Algeria, implanted in Marseille, also needs my services, notably the unemployed, the sick, the elderly, and women with children... Considering that the migration of numerous destitute Algerians ‘in transit’ in our city is enough that they regularly receive aid for goods, meals, and shelter, the Bureau of social aid, in such a situation, must respond to considerations at once social and humane....”³⁹

In other words, the director of the Bureau of Social Aid argued that there was no real distinction between destitute French and destitute Algerians when it came to social needs. All new arrivals from Algeria who came with nothing were a concern to city authorities, especially as squatting in unhygienic and overcrowded buildings increased. Lastly, the director questioned the central government’s position that the Muslim refugees were a temporary population “in transit” by underscoring that no matter their official status, they still required “goods, meals, and shelter.”

The director further criticized the new status of Algerians as foreigners, by asserting that if Algerians were indeed refugees in France, then the “Algerian consulate [should] take the necessary measures to assure the means of subsistence and shelter to the Algerians recently arrived in France... Except it also seems improbable that the Algerian Consulate can assure financial support to its nationals—in general, foreign consulates do

³⁹ Letter to Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Prefect regarding aid to North Africans, March 24, 1964, Marseille Municipal Archives 468 W 150

not maintain social services.”⁴⁰ The director pointed to the ambiguities of trying to impose a refugee status—i.e. the legal framework of international asylum—on a population from a former colony. If Algerians used to be French, and were arriving in France in large numbers because of this colonial relationship, then it was difficult to classify them as asylum seekers. The director concluded his memo by asserting that “the action of the bureau of social aid cannot be reduced or supplemented unless the Algerian consulate can” provide such services.⁴¹

In response to local authorities’ complaints about the end of government aid to Algerians, the Office of Muslim Affairs wrote: “Even though the status of Algerians in France is less than completely defined, it is at least established that the migrant is a foreigner, and we must conduct legally in this matter.”⁴² According to this official, even though the legal definition of Algerians was clear, their actual status in France was not: “The problem of reordering the auxiliary Muslim refugees in France, continues to come into conflict” with their social needs especially “concerning the problem of housing.”⁴³ The central government began to acknowledge that simply excising Algerians from the political definition of Frenchness did not solve the social problem of a large population of newly arrived “Muslim refugees” in need of assistance.

While the central government had already detailed special social programs for European rapatriés, in 1963, the state outlined a separate social assistance program specifically for Muslim-Refugees: “In this regard, we preview a certain number of

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Memo from *Ministère des Rapatriés : Service d’Accueil et de Reclassement des Français d’Indochine et des Français Musulmans*, To all French departmental prefects, May 28, 1963, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1791

⁴³ Ibid.

measures... destined to promote a vast program of construction in favor of these people.”⁴⁴ The state conceded to construct some housing for Algerian families.

The institutions charged with constructing this new housing were the same organizations that oversaw the social welfare programs of the Constantine Plan: SONACOTRAL and the FAS. As I argued in chapter three, during the Algerian war of independence, SONACOTRAL and the FAS were funded through the Constantine plan to implement social welfare programs for Algerian families in France. While the end of the Algerian war for independence was marked by important continuities in social welfare programs for Algerians, this moment also reflected an important shift in the mandates of these institutions. After Algerian independence, the Constantine Plan was terminated, and the directors of these institutions looked for new ways to legitimate their organizations and justify their continuation.

While these organizations had managed social programs for Algerian colonial subjects during the war, after decolonization, these institutions petitioned the central state to oversee social assistance programs for all recent migrants—from Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Europe—as well as Algerian-refugees. Therefore, many of the same institutions that had managed social welfare and integration programs for Algerians during the war, continued to do so for all migrants after 1962. In 1963, SONACOTRAL also changed its name from the National Housing Construction Society for Algerian Workers to the National Housing Construction Society for Workers, or SONACOTRA. Another important shift in policy was that the FAS and SONACOTRA were directed to allocate more funds for migrant workers than for families. For example, in 1964, the Fonds

⁴⁴ Ibid.

d'Action Social cut funding for family housing from 8.5 to 1.5 million francs per year.⁴⁵ Although severely constrained by budget limitations, SONACOTRA would, however, continue to construct housing for immigrant families, including Algerians or “Muslim-Refugees.”

TEMPORARY HOMES FOR TEMPORARY FAMILIES: LES CITES DE TRANSIT

Despite these budget cuts, after 1963, a local branch of SONACOTRA, called the Housing and Management Agency for the Mediterranean Region (*Logement et Gestion Immobilière pour la Région Méditerranéenne*), or LOGIREM, was directed to oversee housing for all immigrant families, which included “Muslim-Refugees” from Algeria and migrants from other former colonies. LOGIREM was one of five special affiliates of SONACOTRA that were charged with the construction of immigrant family housing. Each affiliate covered a particular region in France, with branches in Paris (LOGIREP), Metz (LOGI-EST), Lyon (LOGIREL), and Anger (LOGI-OUEST).⁴⁶

While LOGIREM was technically part of the large HLM public housing bureaucracy, this organization did not construct normal housing, but Reduced Norm Housing.⁴⁷ LOGIREM developed out of the slum clearance efforts of city governments in the 1950s. For example, in the late 1950s, municipal governments, including Marseille, had initiated housing experiments—including *La Paternelle*—to house families designated “not-yet-ready” for modern living. As one municipal report detailed: “Since 1959, nearly five hundred families that occupied eight different bidonvilles have

⁴⁵ Lyons, "Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974." 346

⁴⁶ Mireille Ginesy-Galano, *Les Immigrés Hors La Cité : Le Système D'encadrement Dans Les Foyers (1973-1982)*, Recherches Universitaires Et Migrations (Paris: Harmattan : C.I.E.M., 1984). 33

⁴⁷ See chapter three.

been re-housed thanks to the action of the City of Marseille.”⁴⁸ After 1960, LOGIREM took up the local reins by expanding these pilot programs: “This municipal effort, undertaken to loosen the paralysis of urbanism operations, has been followed by a more ample action by the SONACOTRAL and LOGIREM, benefitting from the financial aid of the Fonds d’Action Social.”⁴⁹

As part of the Constantine Plan, LOGIREM was also mandated by SONACOTRAL in 1960 “to work with the municipality to re-house the bidonville population.”⁵⁰ LOGIREM would “try and resolve the housing problem posed by the presence in Marseille of a sizeable populating originating from Algeria.”⁵¹ In providing Reduced Norm Housing for Algerian families, LOGIREM attempted to resocialize residents to French ways of life. Therefore, during the Constantine Plan, re-housing was often accompanied by special social education programs targeting Algerian wives and mothers.

After the Constantine Plan was terminated, and as LOGIREM began to administer to all migrant families, resocialization was no longer a key goal for the institution. Extreme budget cuts made extra social programming unfeasible. While housing like “La Paternelle” had been intended as an in-between step for families deemed not-yet-ready for modern housing, after 1962 reduced-norm-housing focused more on meeting the immediate needs of migrant families, of providing them a temporary roof overhead.

⁴⁸ *Extrait des Registres des Deliberations*, regarding the *résorption des Bidonvilles and construction des cités de transit*, City Council Meeting, June 27, 1966. Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Letter from SONACOTRAL to Mayor Gaston Defferre, January 5, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archives 455 W 44

⁵¹ Letter from Jean Faujour of SONACOTRAL to Mayor Gaston Defferre, January 5, 1961, Marseille Municipal Archives 455 W 44

Therefore, LOGIREM was “not required to construct using durable materials.”⁵² Instead, the housing agency was “to construct using prefabricated materials corresponding to minimum norms.”⁵³

If the basic assumption for social assistance under the Constantine Plan was that gradual socialization led to an embrace of French ways of life, the basic assumption for social aid after decolonization was that migrants were in France temporarily. They might need some social aid—like shelter—while in France, but they would eventually return to what officials called “their countries of origin.” Moreover, as funding for family housing was dramatically cutback after 1964, local branches of SONACOTRA, including Marseille’s LOGIREM constructed mostly *cités de transit*.

During the 1960s, *cités de transit*—or transit camps—became the central government’s way of dealing with migrant families in France “temporarily,” as well as local governments’ answer to slum clearance and redevelopment. Similarly to earlier camps like Grand Arenas, *cités de transit* were meant as temporary holding centers for families. Although many families ended up staying in camps like Grand Arenas for many years, the intention during the immediate post war period, was that these camps were an in-between step between slum-dwelling and permanent housing. In contrast, in the 1960s, *cités de transit* had a much more ambiguous status. They were also temporary housing, usually barracks constructed out of pre-fabricated material or corrugated metal, but these *cités* were temporary because the families living there were thought to be an

⁵² Memo from *Ministère des Rapatriés : Service d’Accueil et de Reclassement des Français d’Indochine et des Français Musulmans*, To all French departmental prefects, May 28, 1963, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 12 O 1791

⁵³ *Ibid.*

impermanent presence in France. These families were not in-between slum and permanent housing, but in-between France and their “countries of origin.”

For example, in 1966, the city council approved the construction of a *cit  de transit*, *La Bricade*, in the north of Marseille. According to the mayor, *La Bricade* had two purposes, to clear slums and bidonvilles,⁵⁴ and to “rehouse particularly un-adapted families.”⁵⁵ The city, in participation with LOGIREM, chose the La Bricade site “based on the fact that this property is situated at the far limit of all inhabited areas.”⁵⁶ As Mayor Gaston Defferre wrote in a memo, “this land is very isolated, moreover, it is un-utilizable for normal construction because a section of it is situated in a heavy industrial zone, the other section is located on a rocky embankment improper for construction.”⁵⁷ As Jean-Paul Tricart argues, “this system presents, in the eyes of its creators, the triple advantage of assuring the maximum utilization at reduced cost...and the guarantee to local collectivities of a stay the most short as possible.”⁵⁸

TRANSIENT WORKERS?

While decolonization was meant to grant former French colonies political autonomy, an important goal was to maintain economic ties with new independent African states. After the “end of empire,” France continued to cultivate a “special

⁵⁴ Letter from Mayor Gaston Defferre to Claude Pellat, President of the *Comit  Interprofessionnel du Logement des Bouches-du-Rhone*, May 5, 1966, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245

⁵⁵ Letter from Claude Pellat, President of the *Comit  Interprofessionnel du Logement des Bouches-du-Rhone* to Mayor Gaston Defferre, April 22, 1966, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 245

⁵⁶ Letter from Mayor Gaston Defferre to Claude Pellat, President of the *Comit  Interprofessionnel du Logement des Bouches-du-Rhone*, May 5, 1966, Marseille Municipal Archives, 483 W 245

⁵⁷ Letter from Mayor Gaston Defferre to Claude Pellat, President of the *Comit  Interprofessionnel du Logement des Bouches-du-Rhone*, May 5, 1966, Marseille Municipal Archives 483 W 245

⁵⁸ Jean-Paul Tricart, "Gen se D'un Dispositif D'assistance: Les "Cit s De Transit"," *Revue Francaise de Sociologie* 18, no. 4 (1977). 610

relationship” with nations in West and North Africa.⁵⁹ While France placed considerable controls on colonial migration, for example, by putting stringent restrictions on the number of Harkis that could seek asylum in France as refugees, the state encouraged relatively free labor migration. As one official at the Ministry of Interior stated, “There is much reciprocity in these economic links.”⁶⁰ In 1962, France signed labor agreements with Algeria, Mali, Morocco and Tunisia, and with Senegal in 1964.⁶¹ As another official from the Ministry of Interior wrote, “migrants come to our country to earn a living and make up an important element of our national economy.”⁶² In other words, cheap, temporary labor from former colonies would help meet the demands of the market.

As France continued to implement a vast modernization program, including massive housing construction projects, laborers from colonies played a significant role in most sectors of the labor market. Migrant labor contributed broadly to French industry during this period, including automobile manufacturing, and chemical factories.⁶³ As

⁵⁹ James D. Le Sueur, *The Decolonization Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

⁶⁰ Memo from the Ministry of Interior, *Service des Affaires Musulmans*, to all French departmental prefects, September 17, 1963, Marseille Municipal Archives 468 W 150

⁶¹ Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation : Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France*. 43

⁶² From: Ministry of Interior; Service des Affaires Musulmans; To: Prefects, September 17, 1963, Marseille Municipal Archives 468 W 150

⁶³ For a discussion of the experience of migrant and guest workers: John Berger, *A Seventh Man : A Book of Images and Words About the Experience of Migrant Workers in Europe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), John Berger, *A Seventh Man : Migrant Workers in Europe* (New York: Viking Press, 1975). Ousmane Sembène, *Le Docker Noir* (Paris,: Présence africaine, 1973). For a study on the economic role of migrant workers in France: Georges Mauco, *Les Étrangers En France, Leur Rôle Dans L'activité Économique. Avec 100 Cartes Ou Graphiques Dans Le Texte Et 16 Planches De Photographies Hors Texte* (Paris,: A. Colin, 1932), Michèle Tribalat, *Cent Ans D'immigration, Étrangers D'hier, Français D'aujourd'hui : Apport Démographique, Dynamique Familiale Et Économique De L'immigration Étrangère* ([Paris]: Presses universitaires de France : Institut national d'études démographiques, 1991), Michèle Tribalat, *Faire France : Une Grande Enquête Sur Les Immigrés Et Leurs Enfants*, Cahiers Libres. Essais (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1995). For studies of migrant and guest workers in Germany: Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1990 : Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers*, Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers : Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich* (Cambridge, Eng. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Dirk Hoerder and Jörg

part of the national plan to modernize France, laborers from former colonies were also recruited to construct housing and public works.

Table V.2 Migrant Workers in French Industries⁶⁴

Industry	% Labor from Migrant Workers
Mining	18.5
Production of Metals	22.7
Metal Workers	17.7
Mechanical Workers	14.2
Machine Workers	15.1
Glass, Construction Materials	17.7
Chemicals	11.3
Rubber and Asbestos	17.1
Textiles	13.2
Clothing and Fabrics	5.5
Leather and Skins	7.7
Agriculture	10.0
Forestry	13.1
Construction and Public Works	32.2
Transport (except SNCF and RATP)	8.3
Sanitation	27.4

Source: CNPF, Notes et Argument (December 1973)

The period from the end of World War Two through 1968 has been called the “laissez faire” period of migration policy.⁶⁵ Despite the emphasis on labor migration, there was no comprehensive immigration policy during this period. Although France did create labor agreements with both European countries and former colonies, after these

Nagler, *People in Transit : German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820-1930*, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Washington, D.C. Cambridge ; New York: German Historical Institute ; Cambridge University Press, 1995), Rita C. K. Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁶⁴ Quoted in Gary P. Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies : The French and British Experience, 1945-1975* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979). 29

⁶⁵ Gary P. Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies : The French and British Experience, 1945-1975* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), Bernard Granotier, *Les Travailleurs Immigrés En France*, 3e éd. ed., Textes À L'appui. Série Sociologie (Paris: F. Maspero, 1976).

initial contracts, labor migration was mostly unregulated by the state. The government left employers to manage the “cheap, unqualified foreign labor force.”⁶⁶ In theory, migrant laborers needed a work permit to enter France, and most entered on some kind of visa usually provided by employers. However, after these permits expired, migrant workers typically stayed, often encouraged to do so, by employers who wanted to avoid the hassle of training new workers. This approach led to a large increase in the numbers of clandestine or undocumented workers who were technically in France illegally.

As it was difficult for the state to keep clear count of the actual size of the migrant worker population, it was similarly difficult for the state to keep accurate count of the number of families entering France during this period. Although the Ministry of Labor kept only an approximate count of how many migrant workers were in France, these numbers were far more accurate than estimates of the number of families in France during this period. For example, in 1963, an article in the *Cahier Nord-African* journal concluded that there were 250,000 Algerian workers in France, and 250,000 Algerian women and children. According to the Fonds d’Action Social, in 1964 there were 560,000 Algerians living in France, and only 140,000 of them were women and children.⁶⁷

It was difficult to keep track of familial migration for several reasons: First, the National Institute of Statistical and Economical Study (INSEE) who compiled the French census relied on data from local reporting. As Amelia Lyons argues, many “local reports on the foreign population reflected inaccurate knowledge about the current state

⁶⁶ Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation : Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France*. 44-5

⁶⁷ Lyons, "Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974." 296

of the French empire.”⁶⁸ Some regional officials did not count Algerians as foreigners, others lumped Algerians and West Africans together, others simply counted the head of the household, but not the family so that a family of four would be counted as one Algerian male worker.⁶⁹ Second, as the government tried to discourage family regroupment, families found ways of circumnavigating the system, entering France on temporary tourist visas and simply staying on.

Despite the difficulty of counting families from former French colonies, most sources report that familial migration actually increased during the 1960s. Therefore, although the government encouraged single male labor migration, families continued to migrate to and settle in France during the 1960s. This familial population continued to grow unchecked, and often uncounted, as government officials imagined migration in terms of single male migrant workers.

Migrant families thus occupied an ambiguous status in France during this period. Despite government efforts to divert most funding to promote single male labor migration, the state still allocated some social welfare funding for migrant families from former colonies. While many families settled in bidonvilles around France, some were moved to temporary camps, or *cités de transit*. These camps were supposed to provide temporary shelter for families who were in transit, or in-between their “countries of origin” and France. For many former colonial subjects, including the harkis who were forced to flee Algeria after the war, they were not actually “in-between” France and their home countries. Therefore, the assumption that migrant families were a temporary presence in France was in tension with the reality that they had no other place to go.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 301-304

⁶⁹ Ibid. 301-304

Although the period from 1945-1973 is known as the *trente glorieuses*, or the thirty years of post war boom, by the late 1960s, and even as early as 1962 in Marseille, some industries were beginning to struggle. Although Marseille continued to rely on port activity as a main source of revenue, after decolonization, exports to and from former colonies waned. As mayor Gaston Defferre wrote: “In reality, our city is far from being prosperous. If we do not succeed in attracting new industries to our region, our situation risks becoming dramatic.”⁷⁰

In 1968, government officials began to consider restricting migration as one way to protect French jobs and the economy. For example, the Franco-Algerian agreement of December 27, 1968 limited Algerian migration to France to 35,000 a year.⁷¹ French officials also tried to place more restrictions on migrant work and residence permits. For example, migrant workers needed to show proof of employment before they could be issued a residence permit.⁷² However, many migrants had already been in France for many years, had long overstayed their visas, but continued to be employed by French companies.

While these early attempts at restricting migration were not very successful, they do, however, point to a changing national mood. By the early 1970s, the decades of post war economic boom appeared to be drawing to a close. With the 1973 OPEC oil crisis, France plunged into recession and unemployment levels began to rise. While government officials had discouraged familial migration, but welcomed temporary male

⁷⁰ Newspaper clipping, Gaston Defferre, *Le Provençal*, no date. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 12 O 1792

⁷¹ Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation : Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France*. 49

⁷² *Ibid.* 49

migration during the boom years of the 1960s, as the labor market shrunk in the 1970s, national attention began to increasingly focus on single male migrant workers.

In the second half of this chapter, I examine how the “immigrant question” emerged as a key debate in the public sphere. I begin with a close reading of a violent crime committed by a male migrant worker from Algeria on a Marseille bus and how this isolated incident led to widespread debate about the social problem of immigration. In particular, as migrants were supposed to be a temporary population, many argued that the immigrant problem could be resolved if migrants returned to their “countries of origin.”

THE “IMMIGRANT PROBLEM:” MASSACRE ON BUS 72

On a “hot, oppressive” Saturday afternoon on August 25, 1973, a man described later as “a North African type” and an “Algerian,” boarded crowded bus 72, the line that travelled from downtown Marseille, to the nearby beach.⁷³ It was nearly 2:30 pm and “as several passengers dozed due to the heat, others tried to open a bus window for the hint of a breath of fresh air.”⁷⁴ During the summer months, this line was especially popular with school children and residents seeking to escape the heat of the city and for “all Marseillais, the number 72 [was] the bus to the beach.”⁷⁵ On this afternoon “it was a day like any other.”⁷⁶ After the “North African” boarded the bus, he and the driver quibbled over the fare. After this brief exchange, the man later identified as Salah Bougrine, a migrant worker from Algeria, sat quietly for a few seconds as the bus began to rumble away from the stop. Suddenly, he sprang from his seat, pulled out a knife from the folds of his clothes, and began stabbing the bus driver and passengers. The bus driver was

⁷³ *Le Provençal*, August 26, 1973

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

stabbed “several dozen times,” and seven passengers were injured: “It was a veritable massacre. Blood on the windows, blood on the seats, blood everywhere.”⁷⁷ The bus plowed out of control through traffic, hitting cars and zigzagging across the street before crashing to a halt. Bougrine continued to brandish his knife at the passengers before he was overpowered by Gracieux Lamperti, described in the Marseille papers as “a former boxing champion, and now a hero.”⁷⁸ As the bloody passengers began to pour out of the bus, Lamperti and a few others wrestled with Bougrine. They finally wrenched him from the bus and into the gathering crowd. In the chaos someone called out to lynch the North African and as the crowd prepared to string him up, the police finally arrived. Before they intervened, the bus driver died from loss of blood, and Bougrine was beaten into a coma.

The following day, every regional newspaper—*Le Provençal*, owned by socialist mayor Gaston Defferre, *La Marseillaise*, affiliated with the communist party, and the conservative *Le Meridional*—devoted the front page and several additional pages of articles to what they called the “Massacre on Bus 72.”

⁷⁷ *Le Provençal*, August 26, 1973

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Figure V.2 Massacre on Bus 72⁷⁹



Figure V.2 above, is from the *Provençal* paper.⁸⁰ Almost the entire front page is taken up by a photo of the inside of the bus where the crime took place. The photographer, who had to ascend into the bus in order to take the picture, displays the scene as if we, the readers, were also standing there, as witnesses to the carnage. Debris is strewn about the

⁷⁹ *Le Provençal*, August 26, 1973

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

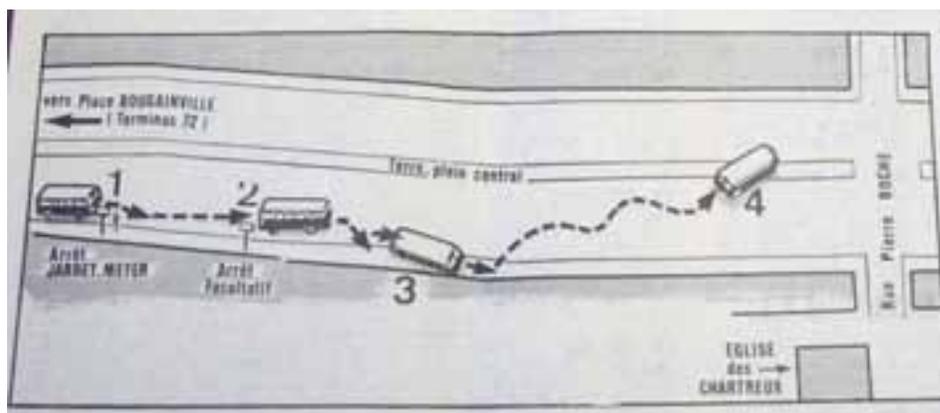
cabin, and as the eye is drawn toward the front of the bus, there is a lumpy, sodden mass lying next to the driver's seat. Although no caption specifies whether this is actually the body of the bus driver, we are intended to assume so.

Under this photograph of the bus are two snapshots: on the left, the slain bus driver, and on the right, Salah Bougrine, the alleged murderer. In the photograph, the bus driver's hair is combed neatly back, he is clean shaven, and his collar is casually unbuttoned. The caption under the photo of the dead bus driver reads: "The Victim: Monsieur Emile Guerlach, 49 year old, father of four children, employed at R.A.T.V.M. (the public transportation authority) since 1947." In the other photo, Salah Bougrine gazes out from under thick, dark eyebrows. His hair clouds about his head, and a black mustache snakes across his upper lip. His thin neck rises up from a tightly buttoned collar. The caption under Salah Bougrine reads: "The Murderer: Salah Bougrine, 35 years old. Born in Algeria but currently residing in Nice."⁸¹ Under the grim photo of the inside of bus 72, readers are confronted with two contrasting photographs: the victim, a working class bus driver, a union man, with four children, born in Marseille. The other photo: the murderer. A foreigner. An Algerian.

On the second page of this paper, a diagram shows the path of the bus as it careened out-of-control:

⁸¹ *Le Provençal*, August 26, 1973

Figure V.3 *Le Provençal*: Bus 72⁸²



The caption reads:

“Our illustrator has retraced on the above map the phases of the massacre of bus 72. 1) Salah Bougrine boards at the Jarret-Meyer bus stop. 2) After a brief discussion concerning the price of the ticket, he slits the throat and stabs the bus driver, Monsieur Emile Guerlach, multiple times. 3) Suddenly without a driver, the bus lurches crazily into a wall. 4) The bus zigzags along the street until a passenger succeeds in bringing it to a stop.”⁸³

Like the front page photo of the inside of the bus, this diagram is meant to draw the reader into the tragedy. Under this diagram, an article features the eyewitness accounts of the bus passengers and other victims. One “17 year old young girl covered in dried blood” was interviewed several hours after the crime: “Visibly traumatized, she spoke mechanically,” describing what she had experienced: “I was sitting with my father behind the bus driver,” she recounted:

“a North African got on the bus at the station without getting his ticket punched and as he walked past, the bus driver asked him to come back to punch his ticket. The bus started moving. Several seconds later, the man sprang up and pulled a knife out of his pocket and started stabbing the bus driver. Everyone tried to get out of the bus, but the man barred the path to the door and stabbed anyone near him. I saw people try to escape out the windows, others tried to take refuge in the back of the bus. I tried to escape by the door when I was stabbed in the back and my father was stabbed in the chest.”⁸⁴

⁸² *Le Provençal*, August 26, 1973

⁸³ *Le Provençal*, August 27, 1973

⁸⁴ *Le Provençal*, August 26, 1973

Detailed accounts from other injured passengers echoed this young girl's harrowing description.

On the third page of the paper, a caption reads: "Outpouring of grief from Marseille bus drivers. All transportation stopped yesterday. General strike today."⁸⁵ In addition to the work stoppages in solidarity with Guerlach's family, on the day of the funeral, three days after the crime, thousands of Marseillais poured into the streets to accompany the procession. The front page headline from the *Provençal* read: "Homage from the Marseillais."⁸⁶ Under this caption, there is a photograph of the funeral procession, showing the hearse, and a large crowd following behind:

Figure V.4 *Le Provençal*: Funeral Procession⁸⁷



⁸⁵ *Le Provençal*, August 27, 1973

⁸⁶ *Le Provençal*, August 29, 1973

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Inside the paper, several pages document the funeral procession in pictures:

Figure V.5 *Le Provençal*: Outpouring of Grief⁸⁸



In the above photo, Marseille residents line the streets to watch the convoy. Three older women form the centerpiece of the above left photo. One woman cradles her head in one hand. Another wipes her eyes with a handkerchief. The third woman clasps her hands in anguish, as she gazes out at the scene before her. On the far right, a woman clutches her face with both hands, bent over, wearing all black. She is the widow Guerlach, this photograph taken as she walks alongside the hearse of her dead husband. Madame Guerlach is flanked by her eldest son on one side, and a male relative on the other, supporting her as they walk.

Lastly, a wide shot of the processional shows a crowd of men and women, many in suits and ties, and wearing sashes in solidarity with the victim's family:

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Figure V.6 “Adieu from an entire City”



The caption under the photo reads: “Adieu from an entire city. Side by side with 2,000 transportation workers, the elected officials of Marseille, and thousands of people share the pain of a deeply suffering family.”⁸⁹

This large procession, attended by thousands of Marseille residents, marked the culmination of several days of protests and work stoppages in solidarity with the family of the deceased bus driver. This collective outpouring of grief also reflected a sense of collective shock. This traumatic incident had disrupted everyday life as residents asked how an act as mundane as riding the bus to the beach, could become so fraught with violence: “after the tragedy...the public [is] beginning to feel a diffuse and widespread fear. What used to be a common place thing—riding on the bus—[now] provokes everyday anxiety and heated emotions in all milieu of Marseillais.”⁹⁰ The media also capitalized on the story. For almost a week following the crime, every regional newspaper devoted the front page and several articles to reporting on the “massacre on bus 72.”

⁸⁹ *Le Provençal*, August 26, 1973

⁹⁰ *Le Provençal*, August 27, 1973

As the investigation began, police and the media waited for Salah Bougrine to come out of a coma. He was beaten so severely by the crowd, that he remained unconscious for several days following the crime. In the days that followed, police learned that Bougrine had suffered a severe head injury in 1969 while working in a factory in Nice and had never received proper treatment. Once Bougrine emerged from a coma and the police were able to interview him, they also determined that he was mentally ill.

While the “massacre on bus 72” was committed by a solitary individual with a history of mental illness, as a local paper reported: “Salah Bougrine is north African, and the generalization is quickly made.”⁹¹ In other words, the press, Marseille residents, and local officials began to discuss the massacre on bus 72, not as an isolated and violent crime, but in terms of the “immigrant problem.” In the following weeks, the local press described the tragedy on the bus in terms of the threat single male migrant workers posed to residents in their everyday lives, and the danger migrants posed to the nation in general. For example, in the *Provençal*, coverage of the incident routinely jumped from reports on the individual story of Salah Bougrine, to statements about the number of “Foreign workers in France: 3,700,000.”⁹²

The conservative Marseille newspaper, *Le Meridional*, was particularly volatile in its reporting on the “Massacre on Bus 72.” The day after the attack, the owner of the paper, Gabriel Domenech published an editorial “Enough! Enough! Enough!” condemning the crime as an attack on the nation as a whole:

“We have had enough!

⁹¹ *Le Provençal*, August 30, 1973

⁹² *Le Provençal*, August 28, 1973

Enough of these stealing Algerians, enough of these thieving Algerians, enough of these swaggering Algerians, enough of these troublemaking Algerians, enough of these syphilitic Algerians, enough of these raping Algerians, enough of these pimping Algerians, enough of these insane Algerians, enough of these murdering Algerians.

We have had enough of this rampant immigration that brings to our country all of the scum of the Mediterranean and mix with the honest and brave Frenchmen who work to earn a living for themselves and their families.

Yesterday, it was a poor bus driver who was the victim of the beastly, wicked deed.

Next a worker is attacked, after, taxi drivers, or small shop owners, or the defenseless elderly, or young girls, or women.

Until when? What are we waiting for before we act?"⁹³

Domenech's editorial invoked the image of a lurking, hyper-masculine, syphilitic "Algerian" who murdered bus drivers, victimized "the defenseless elderly," and violated young virginal French girls. Although migrants came from both Europe and former colonies in Africa, this article conflated Algerians with all immigrants. Moreover, although Algeria had technically been part of France ten years prior, Domenech described Algerians as "foreigners." Lastly, by characterizing Algerians as single, oversexed, males, the article reproduced the assumption that migration was comprised by a temporary single male workforce.

The articles that followed in the *Meridional* reinforced the idea that France was under attack, and needed to be protected from the hoards of foreign males. In particular, in the two weeks following the bus tragedy, the *Meridional* featured front page articles on all suspected rapes of French women by "Algerians" in Marseille and around France. On August 28, 1973 a front page headline read: "Two Algerians rape a young girl in front of

⁹³ *Le Meridional*, August 26, 1973

two of her friends who were held hostage at gunpoint.”⁹⁴ On August 30, 1973, another front page headline read: “Enough! Seven Algerians rape a young girl in Manosque (Alpes de Haute-Provence).”⁹⁵

The *Meridional* also began to publish editorials from nascent extreme right organizations who called for action against the immigrant threat. For example, on August 27, 1973, a group called the French Committee for a Pan European Union published an article calling on the government to “cease activities committee by the north African underworld in France.”⁹⁶ In another editorial, the Committee for the Defense of the Republic demanded the death penalty for Salah Bougrine. Lastly, a group calling itself the National Front demanded the “legitimate defense” of France and “invite[d] all French” to join them.⁹⁷

Domenech’s editorial, as well as articles from extreme right groups were also a call to action: “What are we waiting for before we act?” As the *Meridional* continued to report on rapes allegedly committed by Algerians, violent crimes against migrants escalated. Four days after the bus tragedy, *La Marseillaise* reported on “worrisome attacks against immigrants”⁹⁸ of mostly male Algerian workers in Marseille and surrounding towns including: Perreux, Puyricard, and Aix en Provence: “Another Algerian, Albedel Hemaman, 21 years old...was discovered inanimate on the night of August 25 near the docks...He had sustained blows to the head. The investigation so far has not found any suspects in these murders.”⁹⁹ Two days later, “Monsieur Said Ghillas,

⁹⁴ *Le Meridional*, August 28, 1973

⁹⁵ *Le Meridional*, August 30, 1973

⁹⁶ *Le Meridional*, August 27, 1973

⁹⁷ *Le Meridional*, August 27, 1973

⁹⁸ *La Marseillaise*, August 29, 1973

⁹⁹ “Two Algerians Succumb to their wounds,” *La Marseillaise*, August 31, 1972.

42 years old, was discovered Wednesday at 5 a.m. severely injured near la Joliette.”¹⁰⁰ Although the press described him as a single male migrant worker, he lived with his wife and seven children in a nearby bidonville. According to the newspaper article, he was last seen “when he left his home at 4 a.m. to go to work”¹⁰¹ at a nearby factory. As the *Marseillaise* reported, “it was during this normal trajectory of leaving home for work that he was attacked.”¹⁰² Ghillas was taken to the hospital where “he died Wednesday night.”¹⁰³ In most instances, solitary Algerians were attacked and severely beaten—including a sixteen year old boy—and almost all of them were beaten to death, or died later from severe injuries.¹⁰⁴ In the two weeks following the bus tragedy, the press reported on the deaths of seven migrant men.

Domenech’s editorial, articles from extremist organizations, and the escalation of violent attacks against “immigrants” point to the crystallization of several groups and themes that were part of the emerging radical right. Many who espoused extremist views, including Gabriel Domenech,¹⁰⁵ had also vehemently opposed Algerian independence. Some were also pieds noirs, who had formed part of the exodus of the summer of 1962, and had been members of the Organisation de l’Armée Secrete (O.A.S.). Others were from an earlier generation of conservatives, including supporters of the Vichy regime.¹⁰⁶ In 1972, members of several radical rights groups, formed a new

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *La Marseillaise*, August 31, 1972.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ See crime reports in *Le Provençal*: August 31-September 2 1973.

¹⁰⁵ By 1985, Domenech was a leader in the National Front, and ran a successful campaign for regional councilor, and later vice-president of the Provence-Alpes-Cote-d’Azur region on the National Front ticket.

¹⁰⁶ For example, some members of the new right had participated in the short lived Poujadiste movement of the mid-1950s, and were proponents of greater fiscal conservatism.

organization called the National Front, led by Jean Marie Le Pen.¹⁰⁷ For the emerging radical right, the “Massacre on Bus 72” was important justification that France was under attack by uncontrolled immigration.

Calling the wave of violence, a “pogrom” against immigrants, the *Marseillaise* as well as other newspapers printed statements of solidarity from trade unions, the communist party, the archbishop of Marseille, and rights associations: “In their total majority, regardless of political difference, numerous political parties, syndicates and associations have unanimously condemned the campaign of hate and provocation by racists.”¹⁰⁸ Local and national newspapers began to condemn the *Meridional* as a mouthpiece for the extreme right: “the wave of xenophobia that has been unleashed in Marseille following this tragedy, has been orchestrated and exploited.”¹⁰⁹

THE “IMMIGRANT QUESTION” AND THE THRESHOLD OF TOLERANCE

Despite the public outcry condemning the racist attacks, arguments about the necessity for national defense against immigration were not only espoused by the extreme right in France, but were also manifest in mainstream discourse about the immigrant problem. In a special editorial calling for the end of violence against migrants, Mayor Gaston Defferre described “the immigrant problem” in terms of “the high accumulation of foreigners” in France.¹¹⁰ Immigration was described as a social problem that threatened national decline.

¹⁰⁷ Edward G. DeClair, *Politics on the Fringe : The People, Policies, and Organization of the French National Front* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), Jonathan Marcus, *The National Front and French Politics : The Resistible Rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen* (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁸ *La Marseillaise*, August 28, 1973

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Le Provençal*, August 31, 1973

In the early 1970s, arguments about France's "threshold of tolerance" gained currency and informed local and national debates about the immigrant question. As Freeman argues, "the idea that culturally and racially diverse groups could not exist peacefully side by side was one of the intellectual underpinnings" of an emerging immigration policy.¹¹¹ One of the key supporters of this idea of the threshold of tolerance, was government official and specialist on immigration policies, Michel Massenet. Massenet believed "that the threshold of tolerance was not just some sociological theory or hypothesis, but was a law of social interaction." As Massenet wrote: "it is not a theory born in a research laboratory, it is an empirical fact, which leads us to observe, first in a very irregular manner, then in a more regular fashion, that certain phenomena unfold almost automatically, no matter which Frenchmen compose the host population, no matter which foreigners make up the newcomers."¹¹² In other words, the threshold of tolerance was not a theory, but an empirical fact: No group—i.e. no nation—could tolerate a foreign population that was more than 30% of the total population: "In general the threshold of tolerance was considered to be between 10 and 30 percent—if the proportion of foreigners reached or surpassed that level, trouble was inevitable."¹¹³ As Freeman argues, the threshold of tolerance "grew out of the theories of social scientists but became one of the working assumptions of French policy makers and a large sector of the general public."¹¹⁴ The rise of the radical right, could be explained, in part, by this logic: these new and troubling extremists were propelled compulsorily to violence, because the immigrant population had surpassed the threshold of tolerance. In

¹¹¹ Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies : The French and British Experience, 1945-1975*. 159

¹¹² Massenet quoted from *Pour une politique de l'immigration* quoted in, *Ibid.* 157

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 157-8

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 157

particular, a threshold argument justified the need for greater control of immigration: “immigrants” needed protection from right wing extremism and one way to protect them was to restrict the number of migrants entering France.

In the 1970s, the immigrant question emerged in national debates as a problem of number—there were too many foreigners in France—and a problem of integration—foreigners threatened to undermine French ways-of-life. President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing’s 1974 decision to ban future immigration reflected these national concerns.¹¹⁵ The logic behind the ban was that France needed to cease future immigration in order to integrate the existing population. From 1974, immigration policy developed along three paths: preventing future immigration, encouraging migrants to return home, and introducing measures to better assimilate the existing population. For example, in 1977, the state introduced the *aide à retour* program which offered financial incentives to families if they returned to their country of origin.¹¹⁶

These initiatives to impose stricter immigration policies largely failed. For example, few Algerians, for whom the *aide à retour* program was intended, took up the offer. Instead, a few Portuguese and Spanish families profited from the program, especially as the end of the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal and the death of Franco in Spain made returning home easier. The immigration ban also failed to stop migration due to a loophole which allowed for family regroupment. After the 1974 ban, the population of recent migrants actually sharply increased as single migrants, who had previously sent remittances home, now sent for their families to join them in France.

¹¹⁵ According to official figures, the foreign population in France was 7%, and 2.5% of that population were from former French colonies. Ibid. 160.

¹¹⁶ Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*. 19

While some new immigration policies focused on “assimilating” immigrants, other policies encouraged migrants to go home, reinforcing the idea that migrants were a temporary presence in France. This tension between integration and banning future immigration underscores the ambiguous status of migrants in France during this period: migrants were supposed to be a temporary presence in France and they were also supposed to integrate.

A key assumption driving ideas about integration was that assimilation was difficult for immigrants, particularly those from Africa. In the early 1970s, the state commissioned several local organizations to examine this perceived problem of integration. In Marseille, the FAS funded CLARB or the *Comité de Liaison pour L'aide et la Resorption des Bidonvilles* (The Liaison Committee for Aid and the Absorption of Bidonvilles) that specialized in slum clearance, to focus on the particular issue of immigrants in bidonvilles. In a 1976 report, Sylvie Jarry, head sociologist for CLARB, put the recent wave of migration to Marseille into historical context, asserting that “the Marseillaise region has traditionally been a destination for diverse migratory waves for nearly a century.”¹¹⁷ She drew parallels between the experience of earlier and recent migrants to Marseille: “Each of these waves has confronted the problem of adaption and acculturation to French society.”¹¹⁸ However, Jarry distinguished “Latin” immigrants from Southern Europe who “have not had as much social, cultural, economic, and political difficulty” from “today’s immigrants from *Afrique Noire* and north Africa.”¹¹⁹ Jarry explained that the problems with Latin immigrants “have been relatively minimal...because these populations have a certain number of common traits with the

¹¹⁷ Sylvie Jarry, CLARB report, May 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 748 W 7

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

French.”¹²⁰ Jarry explained that while “the majority of Latin immigrants, after a generation or so, have integrated into the French population without too many difficulties, today a large number of immigrant families—originating from north Africa and also gypsy families, find it difficult to integrate into French society and are joining the group of families known as ‘high risk’ or ‘socially handicapped.’”¹²¹

Jarry discussed what was particular about this latest wave of migration. She noted the “psycho-sociological consequences of uprooted immigrant populations” such that “most of the magrebins and Africans are from the rural world. They remained closely attached to the traditional values of their ethnicity: paternal authority, limited social freedom for women, communal life, and subsistence economies.”¹²² According to Jarry, once they were transplanted in France, “they brutally pass from the rural world to the urban world, from a Muslim civilization to a Judeo-Christian civilization, from an economy of subsistence, to an economy of consumerism, from rural employment to industrial employment.”¹²³ This brutal shift from the rural to the urban world “provokes a series of radical changes of habits, in their behavior, in their manner of thinking, in their manner of being... The immigrant is like a sailor lost in an unknown sea, with map or compass. This inability to express himself renders him as vulnerable as a child.”¹²⁴

By discussing the supposed difficulty of African migrants to assimilate to French ways of life, Jarry described the immigrant problem in terms of the particular pathologies of migrant communities. In her explanation of why migrants from Africa had difficulty assimilating, Jarry underscored how migrants were caught between two worlds: they

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

were in-between France and their countries of origin. She contrasted the backwardness of migrants' rural villages with the progressiveness of modern life in France. For Jarry, migrants' status in France was ambiguous because they did not know how to integrate into modern French institutions. Jarry also placed the onus for integrating on migrants themselves.

“WE WON’T BE DUPED!” THE SONACOTRA RENT STRIKES

While government reports described recent migrants in terms of their inability to assimilate into the French system, a series of rent strikes by migrants living in dormitories contradicted this assumption. Beginning in 1970, migrant workers began to organize to protest poor living conditions and systemic discrimination in male dormitories run by SONACOTRA.¹²⁵ After 1962, as FAS and SONACOTRA re-adjusted to accommodate all immigrants, the central government decreased funding to familial social welfare programs, and directed the FAS and SONACOTRA to focus on building dormitories for single male migrant workers. As the state encouraged a temporary migrant labor workforce, these SONACOTRA managed dormitories would provide single male workers a temporary home while they were in France.

While some dormitories were constructed on the outskirts of French cities, others were established in old, dilapidated buildings in industrial areas. Residents were mostly migrants from Portugal, Algeria, Senegal, and Mali, as well as other former colonies in

¹²⁵ For studies of migrant worker mobilization and protests regarding wages, housing, and residency permits see: A. Cordeiro and Raphaël-Emmanuel Verhaeren, *Les Travailleurs Immigrés Et La Sécurité Sociale* (Grenoble Paris: Presses universitaires de Grenoble ; distributeur, Éditions Ophrys, 1977), Michel Fiévet, *Le Livre Blanc Des Travailleurs Immigrés Des Foyers : Du Non-Droit Au Droit*, Migrations Et Changements (Paris: Ciemi, 1999), Granotier, *Les Travailleurs Immigrés En France*, Sally N'Dongo, *Coopération Et Néo-Colonialisme* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1976), Sally N'Dongo, *La "Coopération" Franco-Africaine* (Paris.: F. Maspero, 1972), Sally N'Dongo, *Voyage Forcé : Itinéraire D'un Militant* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1975).

north-Africa. Each dormitory was run by a SONACOTRA appointed director who was often a former colonial administrator or had served in colonial wars of independence.

As the government began to restrict labor migration, occupancy rates began to decline. Moreover, as families continued to settle in France, housing programs that prioritized a single male worker migration model became increasingly ineffective to accommodate new arrivals. It is estimated that SONACOTRA housed only 15% of the migrant population in male dormitories. However, many of the residents who did live in the dormitories worked in areas with very limited access to alternative housing. For these residents, the SONACOTRA managed dormitories were the only available housing.¹²⁶ As occupancy rates declined, SONACOTRA dramatically raised rents for those residents who remained in the dormitories.

In 1970, residents of a dormitory managed by SONACOTRA began to complain about poor living conditions. This dormitory, located in the town of Pierfitte, housed “267 African workers in fifteen rooms...a space of 30 centimeters separate[d] each group of four beds...the bedroom walls [were] moldy and damp...cockroaches and insects [had] invaded the ceilings, walls, mattresses and bedding.”¹²⁷ As one resident complained, “most of the mattresses haven’t been changed in four years.”¹²⁸ According to the Bureau of Social Aid, between 1969 and 1970, 76 Pierfitte residents were hospitalized for lung infections and “38 lived in this dormitory.” As another resident complained, “Where have all the funds from the Fonds D’Action Social gone?”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Ginesy-Galano, *Les Immigrés Hors La Cité : Le Système D’encadrement Dans Les Foyers (1973-1982)*. 176

¹²⁷ *Textes et Document*, “Les Travailleurs Immigres en France” no 153, 1975. Marseille Municipal Archives, 899 W 1

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Textes et Document*, “Les Travailleurs Immigres en France” no 153, 1975. Marseille Municipal Archives, 899 W 1

In January 1970, residents of the dormitory began meeting to collectively address their complaints about living conditions. They also sent a letter to the director of the local branch of the SONACOTRA, a “former colonial functionary” asking for a meeting to address their concerns.¹³⁰ In a reply sent to the residents five months later, the director refused to meet with them. In response, the residents’ committee attended a city council meeting to voice their concerns to the mayor in May 1970.

In July 1970, the committee sent another letter to the director stating that none of the residents would pay rent until the building was sufficiently renovated to improve living conditions. These residents initiated the first rent strike of migrant workers living in SONACOTRA dormitories. In October, the director finally agreed to a meeting and they discussed plans for some renovations. Between October 1970 and July 1971, a few of the tenants were re-housed as SONACOTRA and local officials prepared to begin some repairs. However, on July 20, 1971 at 6:30am, “several dozen police, armed with semi-automatic guns, raided the dormitory, rousing the remaining 260 residents, and assembled them in the courtyard.”¹³¹ A few of these residents were rehoused, but many were evicted.

As one resident was later quoted:

“Since Wednesday evening, we are 44 evicted workers, in the street. Homeless. We have been in this residence since 1966... The police, the mayor, the prefect, have known about the bad conditions here for a long time and they promised to re-house us. We won’t be duped! They want to evict us now all of a sudden because the building is suddenly dangerous. It’s a pretext! This eviction is a pretext, a way to disperse us and reclaim the house. We will resist this eviction,

¹³⁰ N’Dongo, *Coopération Et Néo-Colonialisme*. 119

¹³¹ *Textes et Document*, “Les Travailleurs Immigres en France” no 153, 1975. Marseille Municipal Archives, 899 W 1

and we will organize. We know that our struggle isn't isolated. A lot of immigrants struggle like us against poor living conditions."¹³²

The protests at Pierfitte, were some of the earliest SONACOTRA rent strikes. By 1975, 46 dormitories in France were on strike, and by 1976, 63 dormitories.¹³³ During this period between eighty and ninety-seven percent of residents participated in the strike.¹³⁴ Resident represented 24 nationalities, and “despite difficulties communicating with each other and between dorms because of language barriers,” residents began to implement a “system of democratic representation.”¹³⁵ During a moment when national discourse tended to conflate Algerians with all immigrants, the SONACOTRA rent strikes helped to illuminate the diverse backgrounds of recent migrants, many from north and west Africa.

In addition to protesting poor living conditions, residents also mobilized against what they called the discriminatory and humiliating practices of dorm management. As Ginsey-Gallano described in her 1984 study, “everyday life in the foyers is a barrage of humiliations and vexations....unannounced visits from the director—day or night—reprimands, *tutoiement* (using the familiar “tu” or “you” form in a condescending manner), are the everyday lot of these workers. All private life is forbidden.”¹³⁶ Each SONACOTRA dormitory was managed by a director, and in 1972, 95 percent of resident directors had worked in the colonial administration, or participated in military actions in Indochina and Africa.¹³⁷ As Lyons argues, “the pattern of employing veterans of the

¹³² *Textes et Document*, “Les Travailleurs Immigrés en France” no 153, 1975. Marseille Municipal Archives, 899 W 1

¹³³ Ginsey-Galano, *Les Immigrés Hors La Cité : Le Système D'encadrement Dans Les Foyers (1973-1982)*. 187

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 187

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 195

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 180

¹³⁷ Lyons, “Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State, 1947-1974.” 336

colonial administration in the immigrant welfare system underway during the Algerian War for Independence continued at an accelerated pace after independence.”¹³⁸ As colonial administrators and military officials returned home after their service, seeking employment, French metropolitan officials viewed migrant housing as a key sector in need of employees with training and experience working with colonial populations.¹³⁹

According to dormitory residents, directors gave European migrants privileged treatment over migrants from former colonies. Although there were strict rules about visiting hours, directors were more lenient with European residents. Moreover, directors could enter the room of any resident with the master key and did so at all hours. Lastly, while visiting rules were already strict, as rent strikes began in the early 1970s, SONACOTRA attempted to thwart further mobilization by restricting visiting privileges even more: residents were not permitted to congregate, have meetings, or have women visit the premises.

In 1975, residents formed a more centralized *Comité de Coordination* that included representatives from all dormitories participating in the rent strikes. They also adopted a common platform which included: a rent reduction; the right to receive visitors 24 hours a day, female or male; the right to meet and to free expression; the right to watch and comment freely on films and to organize other cultural activities. In addition to petitioning to change house rules, the common platform also called for all directors to be replaced by concierges and for management to be forbidden from entering a room without the presence or permission of the resident. Lastly, the *comité de coordination* asserted that no resident could be evicted without the agreement of the dormitory’s

¹³⁸ Ibid. 336

¹³⁹ Ibid. 336

committee of residents.¹⁴⁰ As representatives of dormitories in Bezons, Colombes, Nanterre, Artenteuil, Sannois and Francoville wrote, “Our goal with this campaign is to be treated like humans.”¹⁴¹

Initially, SONACOTRA refused to meet with the *comité de coordination*. However, between December 1975 and March 1976, representatives from SONACOTRA did meet with the group. One reason that SONACOTRA finally agreed to a dialogue is that representatives from the Communist Party (PCF) and *Confederation General de Travail* (CGT) offered to act as intermediaries. The PCF and CGT, in concert with SONACOTRA, began drafting an agreement that would address some of the concerns of the residents.¹⁴² On December 1, 1975, the CGT and PCF along with SONACOTRA signed an accord that would: “limit rent increases to ten *centimes* a day.”¹⁴³ While this agreement did attempt to limit the steep augmentation of rents, it did nothing to address the problem of living conditions in the dormitories which included residents’ grave concerns about racism on the part of the directors. The *comité de coordination* refused to sign this accord, and in March 1976, SONACOTRA declined to further address the claims of the *comité*, asserting that this group did not really represent the interests of all residents.

Although the *comité de coordination* drafted a common platform of resident concerns, SONACOTRA denied the legitimacy of the group to represent dormitory

¹⁴⁰ Ginesy-Galano, *Les Immigrés Hors La Cité : Le Système D'encadrement Dans Les Foyers (1973-1982)*. 189

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Ibid. 191

¹⁴² For studies on relationships between PCF, syndicates, and migrant workers: Dominique Labbé and Centre de recherche sur le politique l'administration et le territoire (Grenoble France), *La Syndicalisation En France Depuis 1945*, 6 vols. (Saint-Martin-d'Hères, France: Centre de recherche sur le politique, l'administration et le territoire, Institut d'études politiques de Grenoble, 1995), André Vieuguet, "Français Et Immigrés : Le Combat Du Parti Communiste Français," Editions sociales.

¹⁴³ Ginesy-Galano, *Les Immigrés Hors La Cité : Le Système D'encadrement Dans Les Foyers (1973-1982)*. 189

residents. SONACOTRA did, however, work with the Ministry of Interior to help facilitate the deportation of 16 members of the *comité de coordination*. On April 7, 1976, just weeks after negotiations fell apart, two delegates from the Champigny foyer were deported. On April 16, 1976, at 6am, “7 dorms were raided, and 16 delegates deported. Overall: 9 Algerians, 3 Portuguese, 2 Malians, 2 Morrocans and 2 Tunisians, all deported, by order of the Ministry of Interior for ‘trouble to the public order.’”¹⁴⁴ As the director general of SONACOTRA stated during a meeting on Thursday, April 22, 1976:

“the 16 residents researched by the police were deported for causing trouble to public order. By that, we don’t mean their participation in the dorm campaigns with the goal to ameliorate the housing conditions of immigrant workers, but the pressure of all kinds exerted on residents to impose the wishes of some, to collect funds, and to oppose by force the payment of rents.”¹⁴⁵

The director general of SONACOTRA asserted that migrant workers were deported for disrupting public order. In contrast, those that participated in the SONACOTRA rent strikes insisted they mobilized to improve public order and conditions in their dorms.

The rent strikes, which spanned from 1970 to 1979, were important for several reasons: as migrants from Portugal, Senegal, Mali and north African countries mobilized, the strikers called into question the assumption that migration was uniquely an Algerian phenomena. As migrants formed resident committees and attempted to work with SONACOTRA officials as well as the Communist Party and trade unions, these efforts contradicted the notion that migrants—particularly from African countries—were “too backwards” to participate in French social and political institutions. While a dominant consensus was that migrants were responsible for assimilating into French

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 201

¹⁴⁵ *Procès-Verbal* of the twelfth meeting of the *Comité d’Enterprise*, Thursday, April 22, 1976, p. 3 quoted in Ibid. 204

institutions, the strikers mobilized against what they saw as the problem of systemic racism within French housing and welfare institutions. Lastly, the strikes highlight migrants' efforts to make a better home for themselves in a moment when the dominant consensus was that migration to France should be temporary. As strikers questioned French social welfare institutions, they demonstrated that the "immigrant problem" could not be solved simply by the "assimilation" of the existing population of migrants, or banning future migrants from coming to France.

As rent strikes continued through 1979, SONACOTRA did compromise in some areas, namely the right to have visitors. However, many of the restrictive policies remained in place. However, as it is estimated that SONACOTRA dormitories only housed a fraction of the migrant population, in the late 1970s, national attention began to turn to those who did not live in single-male-migrant dormitories—families.

CONCLUSION

In the 1960s, migrant families and workers from former colonies began to settle and make homes in increasing numbers at a moment when their presence in France was imagined to be temporary. While French officials had encouraged family migration prior to the end of empire, after decolonization, state officials implemented programs which encouraged temporary labor migration for single male workers. The summer of 1962, and the mass "exodus" of migrants from Algeria to France at the end of the War of Independence is an important moment for making sense of how former colonial subjects were reclassified as "immigrants" and how the state implement programs to house immigrant families. Migrants from former French colonies were denied political *rights*

because of their new “immigrant” status, but were granted limited welfare benefits in terms of their basic social *needs*. Many families displaced during decolonization landed in *cités de transit*, or temporary housing camps. These camps reinforced families’ supposed impermanent status, although many families were settling permanently in France.

During the 1970s and the economic downturn, public anxieties increasingly focused on the specter of the male migrant worker as a national threat. The “immigrant problem” developed as a key national debate, and an emerging consensus was that the “problem” could be solved if immigrant workers returned to their “countries of origin.” “The immigrant problem” also gained national visibility as migrant workers began to mobilize to advocate for better living conditions in SONACOTRA managed dormitories. Moreover, as I will discuss in the next chapter, a generation of children who were born in France to families from former colonies, or had come to France as young children, were coming of age and beginning to agitate for social and political inclusion in new ways. The rent strikes are important precursor to the campaign for political and social inclusion, and cultural recognition, that the second generation would initiate in the early 1980s.

CHAPTER VI

Neighborhoods in Crisis: The *Beur* Generation and the New Dangerous Classes

A June 1973 *Le Nouvel Observateur* article, “The Banlieues of Fear,” described the peripheries of French cities as grim, barren, and dangerous territories: “Iron bars on the windows, frightened passers-by, deserted streets; it’s the hell of the banlieues. 30,000 muggings a year—not counting car theft, burglaries, hold-ups, rapes—committed more and more often by adolescents.”¹ As the 1970s recession deepened, public concern focused on the outskirts of French cities, associated with large concrete public housing apartments and chronic unemployment. The French press also began to report an alarming spike in youth criminality in the banlieue: “in the last six years, juvenile delinquency has increased in France by 147%.”² By the mid 1970s, many of the public housing projects—hastily constructed during the 1950s and 1960s—were falling into gross disrepair, and the population living in these *cités* was increasingly depicted as dangerous, young, and foreign.

¹“Les Banlieues de la Peur,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 18, 1973.

² *Ibid.*

This chapter examines how state officials, researchers, and the media constructed certain urban areas as “neighborhoods in crisis” and how problems like unemployment and crime were associated in changing ways with the specter of the “immigrant.” In particular, I discuss the shift in public concern from the “immigrant male worker”³ to “immigrant youth.” Unlike the “immigrant male worker” of the 1960s, “immigrant youth” were not going to return to their countries of origin—most in fact were born in France. By the late 1970s, media and local and national officials associated these “new dangerous classes” with the banlieue and what was called a new juvenile delinquency.

Beginning in the early 1980s, these “immigrant youth” from around France began to mobilize, arguing that their neighborhoods were indeed in crisis. For these activists, a key solution to social problems was to embrace multiculturalism. They argued for a break with the outdated model of French Republicanism that only recognized citizens as abstract individuals. For these young activists, the way to fulfill the French republican promise of equality was to embrace the reality that France was multi-cultural: they advocated for political and cultural recognition within the French nation. This youth movement paralleled the election of President Francois Mitterrand and the socialist government in 1981. Many within the youth movement interpreted the election as a moment of possibility as the socialists began to fund several nascent “immigrant youth” organizations, notably SOS Racisme. In addition to a growing national debate about the possibility of a multicultural France, the socialist government initiated a series of urban reforms to rehabilitate “neighborhoods in crisis.”

1983 marked a turning point in national politics as the anti-immigrant, far right National Front party dominated several municipal elections, notably in Dreux and

³ See chapter five.

Marseille. The rise of the radical right shut down national debates about the possibility for a multicultural France. As the socialists scrambled to maintain power, they retreated from discussions about cultural diversity. However, while the national debate refocused on the classic model of the abstract citizen, at the local level, urban rehabilitation projects targeted “neighborhoods in crisis” in terms of the concentration of “immigrants” living there. In other words, national discourse reaffirmed French tenets of the undifferentiated citizen, but local urban renewal projects targeted neighborhoods in terms of the differentiated ethnic groups living there. These reforms, called the “social development of neighborhoods” (*Developpement Social des Quartiers*) racialized urban territories by mapping social problems, associated with certain “ethnic” populations, onto specific neighborhoods.

FROM THE SOCIAL QUESTION TO THE RACIAL QUESTION?⁴

By examining the urban renewal programs of the mid-1980s, I demonstrate how perceptions of racial and ethnic differences are integral to how the state constructed “citizens” and “immigrants” despite the taboo of recognizing such difference. What was called the *social* development of neighborhoods were really funding programs for areas with a high concentration of “immigrants.” Although national discourses stigmatized the recognition of difference in the public sphere, local policies acknowledged difference in public space as one way to designate neighborhoods ‘in need of rehabilitation.’

French literature on the urban renewal of the banlieue has also recognized this contradiction between national republican discourse and local urban policies. Scholars

⁴ Didier Fassin and Eric Fassin, *De La Question Sociale À La Question Raciale? : Représenter La Société Française* (Paris: Découverte, 2006).

argue that the problem with urban rehabilitation in France is that the state “ethnicized” what were actually social problems.⁵ In other words, studies have similarly noted that urban policies targeted neighborhoods based on perceived ethnic and racial composition. Scholars have argued that this “ethnicization” of urban space is a deviation from the tenets of Republicanism. Such scholarship gives a “wrong path” argument: the reason for ongoing urban unrest in France is that the government has implicitly racialized the “social question.”

In *De la Question Sociale à la Question Raciale ?* (From the Social Question to the Racial Question?) Fassin et al. argue: “[Republicanism] only wants to see the distinction between French and foreigners, while the [Marxist heritage] privileges class distinctions—without paying enough attention to the fact that, on the one hand for reasons that are called discreetly called “origins,” certain French are treated like foreigners, and that, on the other hand, racial discrimination is redoubled as inequalities of class.”⁶ For Fassin, arguments about class inequality will not sufficiently address the problem of racial discrimination.

In this sense, Fassin argues against the tendency for French scholars “to substitute one category for another”⁷ or to discuss what are actually questions of race exclusively in terms of the social question.⁸ Fassin thus contradicts French scholars of the banlieue who

⁵ For arguments critical of what they call the ethnicization of social problems : Sylvie Tissot, *L'état Et Les Quartiers : Genèse D'une Catégorie De L'action Publique* (Paris: Seuil, 2007), Milena Doytcheva, *Une Discrimination Positive À La Française : Ethnicité Et Territoire Dans Les Politiques De La Ville, Alternatives Sociales* (Paris: Découverte, 2007).

⁶ Fassin and Fassin, *De La Question Sociale À La Question Raciale? : Représenter La Société Française*.256.

⁷ Ibid.254.

⁸ For discussions of the intersections of categories of race and class see: Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom : Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), Robert Miles, *Racism after 'Race Relations'* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1993), Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown, *Racism*, 2nd ed.,

argue that the problem with urban renewal is that the state “racialized” what are actually social problems. For Fassin, “the social question is also a racial question...It is clear that the social question and the racial question are intimately mixed.”⁹

This chapter demonstrates the ways in which the social question and the racial question are intimately mixed. I argue that the problem is not that “race” has obscured the “social question,” but that “race” is not explicitly recognized *as part of* the social question. Like Fassin, I argue that categories of race and class are contingent, historical, and integrally inform each other. For example, I demonstrate how rehabilitation “racialized” urban spaces: local and national authorities named social problems, like unemployment, in terms of the racialized populations living in neighborhoods. I also argue that “the social development of neighborhoods” focused less on renovating buildings, than on rehabilitating the residents themselves.

CONSTRUCTING NEIGHBORHOODS IN CRISIS

“Detectives in Marseille arrested a gang of youth who had committed over a dozen muggings and several rapes. The head of the gang, Mohamed Khouani was 18 years old and he had five accomplices including three minors, aged between 14 and 17 years old. They circulated in stolen vehicles, slashing the tires of isolated cars. If the owner returned, they stole his wallet, when it was a woman, they raped her.”¹⁰

If the “immigrant question” was characterized by single male migrant workers in the late 1960s and early 1970s, by the mid to late 1970s, the immigrant question was associated with a young “foreign” population, many of whom were characterized in

Key Ideas (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003). John Rex, *Race and Ethnicity*, Concepts in the Social Sciences. ([Philadelphia]: Open University Press, 1986), John Rex, *Race, Colonialism and the City* (London ; Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

⁹ Fassin and Fassin, *De La Question Sociale À La Question Raciale? : Représenter La Société Française*.5.

¹⁰ “Les Banlieues de la Peur,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 18, 1973.

public discourse as “juvenile delinquents.”¹¹ Debates about juvenile delinquency and anxiety about public safety also increasingly associated youth crime with particular urban spaces—the banlieues—or the outskirts of French cities. Beginning in the 1950s, the mass construction of public housing, or *grands ensembles*, occurred mostly in the banlieues and in the 1960s, began to increasingly house first and second generation immigrant families from Portugal, Spain, as well as former French colonies. These *grands ensembles* were often hastily constructed out of prefabricated concrete, with little attention to amenities, and no real proximity to schools, stores, transportation, or green spaces. The 1970s recession led to high levels of chronic unemployment in the *grands ensembles*, which were increasingly falling into disrepair. By the mid 1970s, the media began to describe the sharp increase in juvenile crime in terms of the “crisis” of the banlieues.

In addition to media attention regarding juvenile delinquents, government authorities also associated delinquency with what they called “immigrant” populations: A series of reports by the city of Marseille described the increase of foreign juvenile delinquency: “Juvenile delinquency among foreigners is markedly higher than French nationals and has increased much more sharply in the last few years.”¹² One report attempted to distinguish differences between French and immigrant delinquents: “Who are these young foreign juvenile delinquents? How is the nature of their delinquency

¹¹ For discussion of ‘immigrant youth,’ juvenile delinquency and the banlieue see: Joëlle Bordet, *Les Jeunes De La Cité*, 1re éd. ed., Le Sociologue (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998), Jean-Claude Boyer, *Les Banlieues En France : Territoires Et Sociétés* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2000), Jacques Brun et al., *La Ségrégation Dans La Ville : Concepts Et Mesures* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), Pierre Bruno, *Existe-T-Il Une Culture Adolescente?*, *Réflexions Du Temps Présent* (Paris: In press, 2000), Michel Kokoreff, *La Force Des Quartiers : De La Délinquance À L'engagement Politique* (Paris: Payot, 2003), Jean-Marie Petitclerc, *Les Nouvelles Délinquances Des Jeunes : Violences Urbaines Et Réponses Éducatives* (Paris: Dunod, 2001).

¹² Report: The Promotion and Housing of Socially Handicapped Families, *Comté de Liaison pour l'Aide et Resorption des Bidonvilles*, 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 748 W 7.

distinct?”¹³ The reports contrasted the “totality of delinquents” with the particularities of “foreign” delinquents.¹⁴ In general, the “causes [of delinquency] are multiple and complex (poor education, lack of parental authority, violence encountered in the media and at the movies).”¹⁵ Delinquency was “the barometer of social inadaptation.”¹⁶ However, for “immigrants...delinquency begins much earlier at seven to ten years old.” From ten to fourteen years of age, “immigrant delinquency takes the form of mini-gangs. Aggressions are more structured and usually take the form of shoplifting or stealing mopeds.”¹⁷

Concern about juvenile delinquency was often linked to “zones with a high density of foreigners.”¹⁸ State officials were increasingly concerned about the potential for the “ghettoisation” of French neighborhoods: “the acceleration of the segregation of North African families in Marseille and rejection from the host population contribute to the rapid development of adolescent delinquency. Delinquency is directly related to the situation of the ghetto.”¹⁹ Marseille neighborhoods, and several housing developments, had been nicknamed the “Chicago of Marseille,”²⁰ and officials were increasingly concerned with the specter of American style urban racial conflict.

In most French cities, “neighborhoods in crisis” were associated with the peripheral areas encircling cities, or the banlieue. In Marseille, in contrast, the

¹³ Report: The Promotion and Housing of Socially Handicapped Families, *Comté de Liaison pour l'Aide et Resorption des Bidonvilles*, 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 748 W 7.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Report: Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention, Ministry of Youth and Sports, April, 2, 1973, Centre des Archives Contemporaines, Fontainebleau, 19790367 Article 13.

¹⁷ Report: Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention, Ministry of Youth and Sports, April, 2, 1973, Centre des Archives Contemporaines, Fontainebleau, 19790367 Article 13.

¹⁸ Report: The Promotion and Housing of Socially Handicapped Families, *Comté de Liaison pour l'Aide et Resorption des Bidonvilles*, 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 748 W 7.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Minutes from Marseille City Council Meeting, March 28, 1975. Marseille Municipal Archives, 599 W 217. See also : Marseille Municipal Archives 599 W 219.

neighborhoods in crisis were associated with the northern part of the city. Cities like Paris and Lyon are characterized by a city center surrounded by a ring of banlieues, however Marseille's neighborhoods are characterized by a north-south division. In Marseille, neighborhoods north of the port have historically been associated with the working classes, and later with post-colonial migrants, while those south of the port associated with the bourgeois and middle classes.²¹ In Marseille, the *quartiers nord*s are a generic term for designating the thirteenth-sixteenth *arrondissements* of the city. These *arrondissements* are very heterogeneous and are composed of old villages, pavilions dating from between the world wars, and large high rise *grands ensembles*. Between 1962 and 1975, roughly 15 years, the populations of these *arrondissements* grew sharply by about 60,000 people each. Most of these new residents moved into public housing.²² While Marseille may differ geographically from other French cities, like Paris and Lyon: "Custom and rumor designated...neighborhoods in crisis, [as] a kind of urban no-man's-land dominated by two archetypal figures: the delinquent and the immigrant."²³ While the two figures of the delinquent and the immigrant captured public anxiety about the no-man's-land of the banlieues, making sense of *how* these urban spaces came to be constructed as "neighborhoods in crisis" requires unpacking postcolonial migration to France, the role of institutions charged with housing "foreign" families, and the economic realities of the housing market in the 1960s.

According to a 1976 report, "seven Marseille neighborhoods have a foreign population higher than 20%. Two of those neighborhoods are downtown, and the others

²¹ Michel Anselme, *Du Bruit À La Parole: La Scène Politique Des Cités* (La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 2000).112

²² Ibid.112

²³ Ibid.111

are more peripheral and are principally situated in the north of the city.”²⁴ The perception that a high concentrations of “foreigners” lived in the banlieue was based in the reality that families labeled “asocial” or “foreign” tended to be housed on the periphery of cities rather than downtown. During the 1960s in Marseille, the municipal government initiated a series of urban development programs aimed at modernizing the city center, and relocating “asocial” families, especially those living in slums and tenements, to the *quartiers nord*s. These urban projects displaced thousands of people. The 1960s also marked the end of the Algerian War for Independence, and the mass arrival of harkis and pieds noir in France. Over 10% of those part of the exodus of the summer of 1962 remained in Marseille, increasing the population by a third.²⁵ In the 1970s and early 1980s, families from France’s overseas territories in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean (DOM-TOM) also began migrating to France in larger numbers. Although France implemented a ban on further immigration in 1974, families from the DOM-TOM technically had French citizenship and were relatively free to move between mainland France and the DOM-TOM. In Marseille, the population of families from the Comores began to grow in the late 1970s.²⁶

Two institutions, *Société Nationale de Construction de Logements pour les Travailleurs* (SONACOTRA) and the *Fonds D’Action Social* (FAS), were charged with housing those displaced from downtown as well as new arrivals from former colonies and the DOM-TOM. These institutions tended to house these “foreign” or “asocial” families

²⁴ Report: The Promotion and Housing of Socially Handicapped Families, *Comté de Liaison pour l’Aide et Resorption des Bidonvilles*, 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 748 W 7.

²⁵ Anselme, *Du Bruit À La Parole: La Scène Politique Des Cités*.113

²⁶ For an account of the recent history of migration from the Comores to Marseille, as well as Comorian communities in the city: Karina Slimani-Direche, "Les Comoriens À Marseille : D'une Mémoire À L'autre," Editions autrement.

on the outskirts of French cities, in large, concrete *cités*. Therefore, 1970s anxieties about high concentrations of “foreigners” in Marseille neighborhoods stems in part, from the ways in which families understood as “immigrants” were re-housed from the 1950s through the 1970s.

Another reason how “immigrants” came to be understood as concentrated in certain areas stems from fluctuations in the housing market and property prices. In Marseille, for example, the population increased from 680,000 to 850,000 between 1956 and 1962. The city had already initiated programs for the mass construction of housing prior to 1956 and had developed plans for new housing, schools, and commercial development (grocery stores, drug stores, etc). In areas marked for new development, the construction of HLMs, compounded with increased demand for new housing, caused the cost of property marked for commercial redevelopment to rise dramatically.²⁷ As a result, many commercial developers who had been slated to build grocery and drug stores simply backed out. The city of Marseille had been relying on revenue from this commercial development to help repay loans to the central government. In the absence of this revenue, the city decided to simply build and rent out more housing in order to not default on loans to the central government. As a result, many new developments that had previously been intended to include schools, housing, and commercial shops, just had more and denser housing.²⁸ Moreover, this new housing was often constructed out of prefabricated materials, and of lesser quality than first intended. These HLMs were also constructed roughly around the same time as the wave of migration after decolonization.

²⁷ “Study of Three Neighborhoods,” no date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, Beta 745.

²⁸ Ibid.

For organizations like SONACOTRA, this public housing was a convenient solution for migrant families.²⁹

The institutional and economic factors—particularly the role of FAS/SONACOTRA, and the spike in property values—is one way to make sense of how “immigrants” were understood to be concentrated in certain Marseille neighborhoods.³⁰

A close reading of the Saint Marcel neighborhood in northern Marseille will help elucidate how the particularities of everyday life play in to these realities, and how residents imagined this “concentration of foreigners” in terms of the crisis of their neighborhoods.

The Saint Marcel neighborhood is northeast of downtown Marseille and flanked by several large, rocky hills on one side, and a valley, on the other. In the early nineteenth century, the area was mostly agricultural, however it industrialized rapidly in the late nineteenth century with the construction of several factories. Between 1872 and 1910, the population doubled from 2,427 to 5,381 residents.³¹ This surge in population was mostly due to the influx of foreign migrants. During this first wave of migration, most who settled in Saint Marcel came from Italy. During the 1920s and 1930s, Greeks and Armenians also settled in the neighborhood.³² Most of these migrants built their own cottages and worked at the factories.

Migration from Italy slowed in the first half of the twentieth century and most French and recent migrant families lived in the village of Saint Marcel. The village was

²⁹ “Study of Three Neighborhoods,” no date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, Beta 745.

³⁰ For institutional histories of both SONACOTRA and the FAS : Marc Bernadot, “Sonacotra: 1956-1992” (Sorbonne, 1997), France. Fonds d'action sociale pour les travailleurs migrants. [from old catalog], *Le Fonds D'action Sociale Pour Les Travailleurs Migrants* ([Paris]: Ministère du travail, 1972), Elkarati Noureddine, *Les Grandes Etapes De L'histoire Du Fonds D'action Sociale* (EHESS-ENS ULM, 1988).

³¹ “*Macro et Macro Frontiers à Marseille*,” Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 8 J 354.

³² Ibid.

incorporated into the city of Marseille after 1953, and in 1962, the city began to construct several large high rise HLMs. Between 1965 and 1974, 2,000 housing units were built in the neighborhood, or 71% of all public housing in Saint Marcel. Two of the largest buildings (approximately twenty stories), Néréides and Bosquet, were constructed in 1971 and 1972 respectively and housed many displaced from downtown Marseille as well as *rapatriés* from Algeria. In Néréides, 59% of families living in this new public housing were long term French residents, 28% were rapatriés, 6% were Algerian, and the remaining 7% were Portuguese, Comorians, or Vietnamese. In Bosquet, 73% of the households were long term French residents, 3% were rapatriés or “pieds-noirs,” and 27% were a mix of Algerians and Portuguese.³³ The construction of Nereides and Bosquet also corresponded with the beginning of the 1970s recession, the closing of the Saint Marcel factories, and high levels of chronic unemployment.³⁴

A Saint Marcel resident of the old village reflected on the neighborhood since the construction of the HLMs in a late 1970s interview: “This used to be a tranquil place, there were never any problems, but now, it’s over and everyone complains about insecurity. The cités are the problem...All the cottages near the cités complain of burglaries and depravity”³⁵ This resident contrasted life before and after the HLMs: “Problems are recent here..They arrived with the arrival of certain people. It’s embarrassing to say that because it seems to give credence to racists, but it’s not at all like that. You put all the gypsies and the poor together in the cités and of course there will be problems.”³⁶ The resident thus associated the problem of insecurity with the

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

population living in the HLMs. She was also cautious to qualify her comments as not racist, but as fact. The resident concluded this portion of the interview, exclaiming: “Each time there’s a shit-storm in Marseille—there’s no other way to put it—it’s here! It’s a real shit-storm!”³⁷

While one resident imagined problems to be “recent,” another remembered ethnic segregation between Italian migrants and French villagers during the early nineteenth century: “when the Italians first arrived, they lived in the part of the village known as Petit Piémont (Little Piedmont).” This resident remembered tensions arising from intermarriage between Italians and French: “Italians couldn’t intermarry with French and I can speak with knowledge because my father is originally Italian, and my mother is French, and it was a great problem when they married. For both the Italian family of my father, and the French family of my mother, it was a big problem.”³⁸ In contrast to the first resident interviewed, this resident did not distinguish the “newer problem” of the *cités*, with a tranquil past, but instead integrated the “recent problems” into the longer history of migration in the neighborhood.

Another resident distinguished the older Saint-Marcel residents from the younger *cité* residents:

“Of course there are problems with youths from the Saint-Marcel *cités*. There are the bars for the neighborhood people, for example my 87 year old father goes to his café and it’s always, ‘Bonjour monsieur Anas, please have a seat.’ Then another bar opened—the Diplomat—and this where the youth from the *cités*, usually immigrants, go. The people who go there usually bet on horses, not for drinking, not for playing cards.”³⁹

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

This resident contrasted the bars frequented by ‘neighborhood people,’ with those for the ‘youth from the *cités*.’ While distinction between the two bars seems unclear, in the mind of this resident, there was a very clear contrast between his father’s bar, and those of the “young immigrants.” The resident concluded his interview by asking: “you see the difference between the two bars?”⁴⁰

In Saint-Marcel during the 1970s, some remembered the longer history of migration, especially early twentieth century tensions between recent Italian migrants and more established French families. Others, however, described ‘the immigrant problem’ in terms of the more recent history of post-colonial migration and the construction of public housing. My close reading of the Saint Marcel neighborhood illustrates the ways that categories of “immigrant” and “delinquent” take on personal significance for the residents of this neighborhood. As Body-Gendrot argues “the abstract categories created by national rhetorics have faces and names in the neighborhoods of cities.”⁴¹

THE NEW DANGEROUS CLASSES

As some Saint Marcel residents called neighborhood problems “recent,” discussion in the media, academic circles, and among state officials similarly described the steep escalation in youth crime as the “new juvenile delinquency.”⁴² In particular,

⁴⁰ « *Macro et Macro Frontiers à Marseille*,” Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 8 J 354

⁴¹ Sophie Body-Gendrot and Marilyn Gittell, *Social Capital and Social Citizenship* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2003).26

⁴² For discussion of the legislative history of juvenile delinquency see: Susan Terrio, “You’ll Get Your Day in Court: Judging Delinquent Youth at the Paris Palace of Justice,” *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 26 (2003). For discussion of the new juvenile delinquency see also: Francis and Catherine Gorgeon Bailleau, eds., *Prévention Et Sécurité: Vers Un Nouvel Ordre Social?* (Saint-Denis La Plaine: Delegation interministérielle à la ville, 2000), Alain and Xavier Rauffer Bauer, *Violences Et Insécurité Urbaines* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999), Sophie Body-Gendrot, *The Social Control of Cities? : A Comparative Perspective*, Studies in Urban and Social Change (Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), Bordet, *Les "Jeunes De La Cité"*, François Dubet and Didier Lapeyronnie, *Les Quartiers*

several centers for sociological studies began to interrogate juvenile delinquency in relation to the situation in the banlieues.⁴³ The *Centre d'Analyse et d'Intervention Sociologique* and particularly the work of Francois Dubet played a pivotal role in shaping how juvenile delinquency was examined, and his work, *La Galère*, “the nightmare” or “purgatory” was influential to government urban redevelopment policies in the 1980s.⁴⁴

Dubet was a student of sociologist, Alain Touraine, who founded the *Centre d'Analyse et d'Intervention Sociologique*, or CADIS in 1970.⁴⁵ Touraine was part of the post 1945 generation of sociologists who often worked on state modernization efforts.⁴⁶ In the 1960s, and especially after 1968, Touraine shifted away from state commissioned work, founding CADIS, and developing a new “sociological method of intervention.”⁴⁷ In particular, Touraine developed a theory of social movements, which emphasized the role sociologists play in putting “a theory of social action to work.”⁴⁸ Touraine’s theory of social movements, and the emphasis on praxis, or putting theory into action, influenced many of the studies conducted at CADIS.⁴⁹ Touraine and his researchers incorporated this method in their studies of worker, anti-nuclear, and student movements.

D'exil, L'épreuve Des Faits (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992), Pascal Duret and Muriel Augustini, *Anthropologie De La Fraternité Dans Les Cités*, 1. éd. ed., *Le Sociologue* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1996), Hugues Lagrange, *De L'affrontement À L'esquive* (Paris: Syros, 2001), Jean-Pierre Rosenczweig, *Justice Ta Mère! : Justice Et Injustices Vues Par Un Juge En Réponse Aux Jeunes* (Paris: Carrière, 2002), Jean-Pierre Rosenczweig and Pierre Verdier, *La Parole De L'enfant : Aspects Juridiques, Éthiques Et Politiques* (Paris: Dunod : Jeunesse et droit, 1999).

⁴³ Terrio, "You'll Get Your Day in Court: Judging Delinquent Youth at the Paris Palace of Justice." 142

⁴⁴ François Dubet, *La Galère : Jeunes En Survie*, Mouvements (Paris: Fayard, 1987).

⁴⁵ The center was originally called the Centre d'Etudes des Mouvements Sociaux de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, but the name was changed to the Center of Analysis for Sociological Intervention in 1981. <http://www.ehess.fr/cadis/francais/pages/chercheurs/pres-touraine.html>, June 19, 2009.

⁴⁶ Alain Touraine, Jon Clark, and Marco Diani, *Alain Touraine, Consensus and Controversy*. Falmer Sociology Series (London ; Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press, 1996).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.55

⁴⁹ “The sociologist seeks to increase the capacity for action of individuals in the intervention groups...he tries to bring to light the collective action’s highest meanings, the one bringing it nearest to becoming a social movement. This effort should produce intelligibility among actors and thus increase their freedom.” Ibid.59

Dubet also drew on this theory of social action in his study of juvenile delinquency in the banlieue.

Identifying a common experience was central to the theory of sociological intervention and Dubet set about pinpointing the environmental and experiential factors that best encapsulated the banlieue and the effect on youth. Based on his examination of everyday life in the banlieue, of unemployment, poverty, recidivism, and conflict with police, he labeled the experience of living in the banlieue as “*galère*” or “purgatory.”⁵⁰

The experience of *la galère* was particular for young people living in the banlieue: “*la galère* is the form of the marginality of youth linked to the end of the industrial world that can neither create stable systems of identification nor assure the integration of newcomers.”⁵¹ Although *la galère* affected all young people living in the banlieue, the experience was particularly acute for young “immigrants”:⁵² “*La Galère* is not an experience specific to immigrant youth, but they live it in a particularly acute way...overall, immigrant youth are...more than the others, excluded and unemployed.”⁵³

Dubet argued that youth from the banlieues and by extension, immigrant youth, formed what he called “the new dangerous classes.”⁵⁴ Dubet invoked Louis Chevalier’s classic study of the “dangerous classes” of nineteenth century Paris. Chevalier’s dangerous classes were produced in the shift from traditional to industrial society. They were the transient and uprooted mass of the new working classes, drawn to newly

⁵⁰ Dubet, *La Galère : Jeunes En Survie*.

⁵¹ Ibid.23

⁵² In constructing *la galère* as a collective experience, Dubet conducted interviews with five sets of youths from five different banlieues. They were a mix of immigrants and French and between 18 and 25 years of age: “The youth who came to our groups were really the image of the problem we wanted to study: they were most often unemployed, or following internships, four of them had achieved the baccalaureat, most had committed delinquent activities, some had done drugs or had been addicts, and several had been to prison.”Ibid. In other words, in defining his sample, Dubet chose youth who fit his image of *la galère*.

⁵³ Dubet, *La Galère : Jeunes En Survie*.15

⁵⁴ Ibid.23

industrialized cities in search of employment. They lurked in the no-man's-land, or the urban fringes of the city. By the late nineteenth century, these working classes had settled on the city outskirts known as the *banlieue rouge*, historical bastions of communist support.⁵⁵ For Dubet, these dangerous classes were being replaced by a new kind of dangerous class, of young immigrants plagued by unemployment. For Dubet, “today, the *galère* is an action of dangerous classes... [*galère* is] violence and the feeling of living in a jungle.”⁵⁶ *Galère* “is the plaguing and emotional feeling of being enraged.”⁵⁷

The banlieue of Dubet's *galère* was also related to the specific moment of post-industrialism. *La galère* was a symptom of a world in transition, a shift from the industrial to the post-industrial: “the *galère* appears as the *banlieues rouges* breakdown, when modes of social regulation unravel and economic exclusion is exacerbated by unemployment.”⁵⁸ In the *banlieue rouge*, the working classes identified with a certain experience of work and mobilized to defend their interests. In contrast, the *banlieue of galère* was characterized by the common experience of unemployment.⁵⁹ *Galère*

⁵⁵ For discussion of the banlieue rouge see: Annie Fourcaut, *Un Siècle De Banlieue Parisienne (1859-1964): Guide De Recherche*, Collection "Villes Et Entreprises" (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988), Annie Fourcaut, *La Banlieue En Morceaux : La Crise Des Lotissements Défectueux En France Dans L'entre-Deux-Guerres* (Grâne, France: Créaphis, 2000), Annie Fourcaut, *Bobigny, Banlieue Rouge* (Paris: Editions ouvrières : Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1986). Tyler Edward Stovall, *The Rise of the Paris Red Belt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). For studies that integrate the late twentieth century banlieue into the longer history of the banlieue as an unruly, undisciplined space see: Frédéric Dufaux, Annie Fourcaut, and Rémi Skoutelsky, *Faire L'histoire Des Grands Ensembles : Bibliographie, 1950-1980*, Collection Sociétés, Espaces, Temps (Lyon: ENS éditions, 2003), Annie Fourcaut, Emmanuel Bellanger, and Mathieu Flonneau, *Paris-Banlieues, Conflits Et Solidarités : Historiographie, Anthologie, Chronologie, 1788-2006* ([Paris]: Creaphis, 2007), Annie Fourcaut and École normale supérieure de Fontenay-Saint-Cloud. Centre d'histoire urbaine., *La Ville Divisée : Les Ségrégations Urbaines En Question : France XVIIIe-Xxe Siècles* (Grâne (France): Créaphis, 1996).

⁵⁶ Dubet, *La Galère : Jeunes En Survie*.23

⁵⁷ Ibid.24

⁵⁸ Ibid.23

⁵⁹ For discussion of the relationship between social exclusion and post-industrialism see: Loic Wacquant, "Urban Marginality in the Coming Millennium," *Urban Studies* 36, no. 10 (1999).

emerged “in the hole and void left by the destruction of older forms of class consciousness and by the absence of new movements.”⁶⁰ The *banlieue rouge* was shifting to the “banlieue of fear” a territory characterized by acts of violence committed by immigrant juvenile delinquents. Dubet thus drew on a model of class conflict in the attempt to explain the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and what he called *galère*.

A key characteristics of the “new dangerous classes” was a new kind of juvenile delinquency.⁶¹ But what was so new about the new juvenile delinquency? Juvenile delinquency has historically been studied as a working class problem. In his work on the late nineteenth century, Donzelot demonstrated the ways in which concerns about children were linked with “deviant” and “pathological” working-class characteristics including “indigence, sloth, and promiscuity.”⁶² Nineteenth century concerns about the relationship between city life and criminality described a “social milieu theory,” or the notion that “bad traits created by the environment in one individual could be passed down to the next generation, eventually resulting in a degenerate population.”⁶³ An increase in criminality, especially among younger urban populations indicated “such a decline into degeneracy.” During this period, juvenile justice tended to follow punitive approaches to youth crimes. In particular, juvenile delinquents were incarcerated in work camps as an attempt to remove them from their degenerate environments.

⁶⁰ Dubet, *La Galère : Jeunes En Survie*.24

⁶¹ Scholarship on juvenile delinquency has focused on the historical construction of the category “childhood” as a special phase distinct from adulthood. Although childhood has been recognized as a period distinct from adulthood, historical approaches to juvenile justice have often fluctuated between treating juvenile delinquents as adults or as children. In other words, juvenile justice has often vacillated between punitive versus rehabilitative approaches to youth crimes. See: Erik H. Erikson, *Enfance Et Société* (Neuchâtel, : Delachaux & Niestlé, 1959), Sarah Fishman, *The Battle for Children : World War II, Youth Crime, and Juvenile Justice in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁶² Terrio, "You'll Get Your Day in Court: Judging Delinquent Youth at the Paris Palace of Justice."142

⁶³ Fishman, *The Battle for Children : World War II, Youth Crime, and Juvenile Justice in Twentieth-Century France*.20

By the early twentieth century, juvenile justice shifted from a punitive to a more rehabilitative approach.⁶⁴ Delinquency was increasingly treated as a social—not a criminal—problem. Juvenile delinquents required intervention from a cluster of experts, including social workers, judges, and teachers. After a 1945 law definitively decriminalized juvenile delinquency, juvenile justice stressed rehabilitation. However, with the spike of “immigrant” youth crimes in the 1970s, some government officials recommended overturning the 1945 law, and returning to a more punitive form of juvenile justice. Since the 1970s, juvenile justice in France has shifted toward more punitive rather than rehabilitative measures including a greater tendency to try juveniles as adults, and harsher punishments for offenses.⁶⁵

If nineteenth century juvenile delinquency was associated with the working classes, the new juvenile delinquents were increasingly described as “foreign” or “immigrant” youth, and they were associated with the banlieue. What was “new” about juvenile delinquency was a discussion about public safety that shifted explanations of delinquency as “a socioeconomic problem to [a] focus on delinquency as a cultural lack that threatens public safety and French values.”⁶⁶ If nineteenth and early twentieth century discourses on deviancy naturalized the link between degeneracy and the working classes, late twentieth century discourse naturalized the links between “immigrant” populations, race, and criminality.

⁶⁴ This resulted from a new consensus that adolescence was an anarchic, but temporary state coupled with increasing public concern about exploitative conditions in child work camps. A series of laws spanning from 1912 to 1945 began to emphasize social intervention over incarceration.

⁶⁵ Terrio, "You'll Get Your Day in Court: Judging Delinquent Youth at the Paris Palace of Justice." 139

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 137

FROM DELINQUENTS TO BEURS: THE SECOND GENERATION

In the summer of 1981 on the outskirts of Lyon, clashes between banlieue youth and police was referred to as the “Minguette rodeos.” Media coverage showed youths rioting and torching cars and these images seemed to give credence to Dubet’s theories about new juvenile delinquency and *galère*. However, after this “hot summer” of 1981, young people from different neighborhoods around France,⁶⁷ including Minguettes, organized a series of concerts called “Rock Against Police.”⁶⁸ These concerts were aimed at protesting police brutality but also “to help other issues to emerge in a more visible way, particularly the social dynamic of the cités.”⁶⁹ After a Rock Against Police concert in Lyon, young residents from this *cité* formed SOS Avenir Minguettes to focus on neighborhood problems like housing evictions and unemployment.⁷⁰

In Minguettes, in 1983, a local youth was killed by police which sparked another wave of protest in the neighborhood. This time, however, young residents from SOS Avenir Minguettes staged a hunger strike from March 28 to April 8, 1983. They demanded that local government authorities form a special commission—in collaboration with residents—to address problems in their neighborhoods. Their protest caught the

⁶⁷ Concerts were held in Vitry Sur Seine, Marseille, Paris, and Lyon. Saïd Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*, Epi/Habiter, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1994).36-7.

⁶⁸ Between 1981 and 1983, youth from different neighborhoods around France organized a series of free concerts: “Rock Against Police” “the idea wasn’t just to organize concerts as the single goal, but for the music: “we drew from the example of the experience of the British who organized large concerts: Rock against Racism. But with two differences: large concerts held on neutral ground, like Hyde Park, didn’t serve to do anything: the people came as consumers. We always organized our concerts in our territory, where police battered our friends. We preferred Rock against Police to Rock against Racism because everyone calls themselves antiracists” quoted in Ibid.36. From “Les Lascars s’organisent” Interview de Rock against Police in *Questions clefs*, no. 2, 1982. Ibid. 53. “these actors defined themselves as “immigrant youth and proletariats of the banlieues...It was a movement expressing the rage of the cités through the common tool of rock” there were. “there was a discourse of radical critique of society, which reflected the lived experience of exclusion” Ibid. 37

⁶⁹ “Les Lascars s’organisent” Interview de Rock against Police in *Questions clefs*, no. 2, 1982. Quoted in Ibid. 53.

⁷⁰ “Les Lascars s’organisent” Interview de Rock against Police in *Questions clefs*, no. 2, 1982. Quoted in Ibid. 53

attention of local authorities, and also elicited a visit from the office of the prime minister.⁷¹

Three months later, a member of SOS Avenir Minguettes who had participated in the hunger strike, was critically wounded by a police bullet to the stomach.⁷² This time, the youth association organized a protest on a much grander scale: a march for equality and against racism—“inspired by Martin Luther King and Gandhi”—that would begin in Marseille on October 15, 1983, and end in Paris on December 3, 1983.⁷³ A pamphlet circulated by SOS Avenir Minguettes in Marseille called for “equality in the right to a life, equality in the right to respect, equality in the right to happiness.”⁷⁴

The media coverage of this emerging youth movement gave “youth from the cités, particularly those of foreign origin... a [new] social visibility... the thugs, rioters, and delinquents were transformed into ‘nice Beurs.’”⁷⁵ More specifically, media attention began to focus on what was being called the “second generation.” In a 1980 *Le Monde* article, Tahar Ben Jelloun, author and professor, born in Morocco, described”

“What we call the second generation... This generation wasn’t foreseen. It was born by chance and forgotten. It is there, without ties, without roots, with a vague, vacillating and mitigating identity. It is also without a future because it is without work and without bearings. It’s past is hazy, grey and hollow... a double rejection: after family, it’s France who has rejected it.”⁷⁶

⁷¹ The policeman who shot the youth was described as “a little too nervous.” Dubet, *La Galère : Jeunes En Survie*.340

⁷² Ibid.340

⁷³ Pamphlet, “Marche Pour l’Egalité et contre le Racisme,” Archives BDR, 1451 W 11.

⁷⁴ Pamphlet, “Marche Pour l’Egalité et contre le Racisme,” Archives BDR, 1451 W 11.

⁷⁵ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D’un Mouvement Avorté*. 46 and 68

⁷⁶ *Le Monde*, 25 July, 1980, also quoted in Catherine Wihtol de Wenden and Rémy Leveau, *La Bourgeoisie: Les Trois Âges De La Vie Associative Issue De L’immigration* (Paris: CNRS, 2001).26. Writings by Tahar Ben Jelloun include : Tahar Ben Jelloun, *Hospitalité Française : Racisme Et Immigration Maghrébine*, L’histoire Immédiate (Paris: Seuil, 1984), Tahar Ben Jelloun, *Le Racisme Expliqué À Ma Fille* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).

This “unforeseen” generation was often difficult to describe: some had French nationality, were from the French departments and territories (DOM-TOM), or had come to France at a young age. This generation was also difficult to count, as some were French, while others did not have French citizenship.⁷⁷

What these youth called the “march for equality and against racism” would be coined in the press as the “march of the Beurs.” Beur is a slang term coined by youth who’s parents often came from former colonies in North Africa. It is an inversion of the derogatory French word “Arabe.” Some activities described the term “Beur” in terms of the second generation of north Africans (from Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) living in France. For other Beurs referred not only “Maghreb migrants, but also migrant children from Africa, Portugal, etc...the term expressed the emergence of a multicultural urban identity.”⁷⁸ In other words, “Beur” could signify the group of young French with parents from North Africa, or the collective of all young people living in France’s *cités* who shared the common experience of unemployment, discrimination, and police brutality.

What became known as the “Beur generation” was also often characterized in the press and political sphere in terms of a generational rupture between these youth and their immigrant parents: “Beurs were often considered ... fundamentally different from their parents.”⁷⁹ This rupture was often signified in terms of the ‘myth of return.’ Immigrant parents were portrayed as wishing to eventually return to their countries of origin while their children did not. Immigrant parents were steeped and unchanging in their traditions and cultures while their children were good candidates for assimilation into French

⁷⁷ Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau, *La Bourgeoisie : Les Trois Âges De La Vie Associative Issue De L'immigration*.22

⁷⁸ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.69

⁷⁹ Ibid.23

culture. Therefore, this second generation did not perpetuate this myth of return; most had spent all their lives in France. The political activism of the Beurs was viewed as confirmation that they wanted to become French.

While some characterized the Beur movement as a rupture with their parents' generation, others have situated the movement within the longer legacy of immigrant activism. As Bouamama argues, and as I have shown in chapter five, the youth movement "had roots in the Algerian War, and in the actions of the immigrant workers of the 1970s."⁸⁰ For example, migrant workers staged a series of labor strikes, particularly, the Penaroya strike of 1970, the Renault strike of 1971, and the Chausson strike of 1971 and 1975. They also protested against poor living conditions, in rent strikes against SONACOTRA between 1974 and 1978. Moreover, after the immigration ban of 1974, and increased restrictions on residency and work permits, recent migrants staged a series of hunger strikes for residency permits for clandestine immigrants from 1977-1980.⁸¹

While many young immigrants participating in the march situated themselves within the legacy of immigrant activism, the roots of the movement can also be traced to "the first experience of youth from the *cités* at the end of the 1970s."⁸² Many of the activists of the Beur generation initially participated in the local ranks of the communist party but found that "questions of anti-racism and of immigration were far from being priorities for the PCF... The PCF was instead interested in 'larger' more global struggles... [and] these young activists also experienced racism within the party."⁸³ In other words, the PCF was concerned with issues of class inequality while these young

⁸⁰ Ibid.24

⁸¹ Ibid.27

⁸² Ibid.24

⁸³ Ibid.32

activists also wanted to address systemic inequalities specific to their own experiences. These associations did not seem to address the specific context and experience of living in “immigrant neighborhoods.” Disaffected youth would begin to articulate an agenda that integrated debates about race and culture into ongoing social problems like unemployment.

This wave of activism occurred during a moment of social reform as the socialists took power in 1981. Led by Francois Mitterrand, the socialists initiated sweeping reforms, including more attention to “immigrant” issues.⁸⁴ For many recent migrants, the 1981 election was perceived as a moment of possibility for greater political rights. A series of immediate reforms reinforced this hope: in 1981, a 1939 law restricting immigrant associations was overturned allowing the right for non-French nationals to form organizations. Some restrictive measures in the 1974 ban on immigration were eased, allowing for easier familial regroupment which helped to reunite separated families. Moreover, strict deportation laws were eased, which ceased the deportation of young immigrants who had illegally entered France before the age of 10, but had lived most of their lives in France.⁸⁵ During the “wave of May 1981, a double idea dominated these youth and recent immigrants; on the one hand, there was the certitude that a step had been taken towards equal rights... On the other hand, there was widespread hope of a ambitious social policy capable of curbing the degradation of living conditions.”⁸⁶ In other words, youths and recent migrants interpreted the election as a concrete step towards real social and political change. Many believed these initial reforms would lead to greater inclusion in the nation as employed and viable citizens.

⁸⁴ See chapter seven for discussion of reforms in women’s issues.

⁸⁵ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D’un Mouvement Avorté*.43

⁸⁶ Ibid.43

The 1983 March for Equality and against Racism was part of this moment of optimism for greater political participation and social reform. The march began in Marseille, from the *cit  de transit*, La Cayolle.⁸⁷ This cluster of rundown Reduced-Norm-Housing units was chosen because it symbolized the degraded everyday experiences and housing conditions of many families in France. The march made its way to Paris, travelling through key cities like Dreux, the recent site of the election of the National Front. The march garnered much media attention from regional and national papers, and television.

After the march, many immigrant youths returned to their neighborhoods energized to continue to advocate for social change. While the March for Equality and Against Racism had included activist youth with a multiplicity of goals, in the aftermath of the march, these groups were unable to reach consensus on their main agenda. Many activists struggled to find a unifying theme for their message: some were proponents of a general anti-racist campaign, some wanted to start a lobby specifically for north African youth, others wanted to promote a new kind of France based on multiculturalism. Out of this splintering of interests, three main groups emerged from the march for equality: SOS Racisme, France Plus, and Memoire Fertile.

SOS Racisme was the largest organization to emerge out of the 1983 march for equality. SOS Racisme was directed by Harlem Desir, born in Paris to a Martinician father and Jewish mother.⁸⁸ Desir had close ties with the left and SOS Racisme received

⁸⁷ Ibid.63

⁸⁸ For Harlem Desir's account of the early years and mission of SOS Racisme, see his memoir: Harlem D sir, *Touche Pas   Mon Pote* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1985).

most of its financial and political support from the socialist government.⁸⁹ The minister of culture, Jack Lang, as well as other socialist notables including Georgina Dufoix and Laurent Fabius, were especially supportive of SOS Racisme. They were included as “godfathers” (*parrains*) or key advisors in the ranks of the nascent organization. SOS Racisme promoted a general message of anti-racism and slogans like “Hands off my buddy” (*Touche pas à mon pote*) and “I like whom I Want” became ubiquitous anti-racist messages.⁹⁰ For the socialists, SOS Racisme was intended as a response against the rise of the radical right, and one way to re-integrate large swaths of the younger generations into the folds of the left.

Racist attacks and murders of immigrant youth had been increasing since the 1970s, and were often attributed to a rising radical right. Xenophobic, anti-immigration and ultra nationalist organizations had been on rise since the early 1970s,⁹¹ and in 1972 Jean Marie Le Pen formed the National Front. Initially considered a fringe group, the party continued to gain membership and began to move into mainstream politics, exploding into the national spotlight during the 1983 municipal campaigns.⁹² The rise of the radical right became the main rallying point of SOS Racisme. The National Front offered SOS Racisme a definitive position on which to frame its message of anti-racism. In particular, SOS Racisme was intended as a broad youth movement founded on universal principles of equality and a moral imperative against racism.⁹³ As part of this broad moral claim, anti-Semitism also fit neatly into SOS Racisme’s agenda, with many

⁸⁹ Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau, *La Bourgeoisie : Les Trois Âges De La Vie Associative Issue De L'immigration*.34

⁹⁰ For discussion of SOS Racisme’s antiracist agenda see: Dominique Sopo, *S.O.S. Antiracisme* (Paris: Denoël, 2005).

⁹¹ See chapter four.

⁹² Françoise Gaspard, *A Small City in France* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁹³ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.123

Jewish Youth associations participating in the organization: “SOS presented itself and was presented as the public word of antiracism and of youth.”⁹⁴

SOS Racisme was supposed to harness the energy of the Beur generation, as well as frame the terms of the movement.⁹⁵ However, many participants of the 1983 March were critical of Harlem Desir for “presenting himself as the inheritor of the marches of 1983 and 1984.”⁹⁶ Many of those involved in the 1983 March for Equality and organizations like SOS Avenir Minguettes, had mobilized to explicitly address discrimination in everyday life. For them, SOS Racisme’s broad moralist message of anti-racism did nothing to address the problems of housing, unemployment and police brutality. As one activist, Kaissa Titous remembered “don’t touch my buddy! This was no longer the fight for equality.”⁹⁷ In other words, many felt that SOS Racisme had taken the teeth out of the movement for equality: “SOS Racisme replaced the turbulent mobilizations of immigrant youth by a movement against racism in general.”⁹⁸

Of those who disagreed with the anti-racist premise of SOS Racisme, some were proponents of forming an organization to promote the specific interests of the north-African community in France. The second main organization to grow out of the 1983 march was France Plus, a Maghreb lobby aimed at promoting the inclusion of north-African candidates on electoral ballots. Based for the most part in Paris, France Plus

⁹⁴ Ibid.119

⁹⁵ SOS Racisme’s debut event was a large concert at the Place de la Concorde in Paris, on June 15, 1985 [<http://www.sos-racisme.org/1985.html> 5/30/09] . Patterned after the Rock Against Police concerts organized around France between 1981 and 1983 by local youth organizations like SOS Avenir Minguettes, the Concert de la Concorde drew a crowd of 300,000. The concert was covered by all the major television news stations, as well as the print media. Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, played a key role in the organization of the concert.

⁹⁶ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.119-120

⁹⁷ Kaissa Titous, *J'ai claqué la porte à SOS Racisme*, quoted in Ibid.44

⁹⁸ Ibid.120. For discussions of anti-racism as a critique of anti-fascism instead of systemic racial discrimination see: Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack' : The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, Black Literature and Culture (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

viewed political representation of Maghreb French within the government as the main way to promote advancement. While France Plus was premised on the advancement of a particular ethnic community, they largely promoted integration, or the assimilation of Maghreb into mainstream French culture and society through election to public office. France Plus was also largely supported by the socialist government, and between 1983 and 1989, SOS Racisme and France Plus were the two competing organizations that dominated the national spotlight.⁹⁹

For those young activists critical of both SOS Racisme's broad anti-racism, and France Plus's assimilationism, many felt excluded from the mainstream. These activists criticized SOS Racisme and France Plus for being national organizations with no real ties to local neighborhoods: "SOS Racisme and France Plus pretended to be national representatives of immigrant populations and youth from the cités. However they didn't have the local anchorage necessary for a dynamic national regrouping."¹⁰⁰ These activists formed a third, less publicized branch of the movement: Memoire Fertile.

Memoire Fertile focused on social issues specific to the problems of France's cités. One of their key issues was a "new citizenship," or the right for non-nationals to vote in local municipal elections: "The essential issue was a new citizenship founded not on nationality, but on residence, rooted in the commune and the neighborhood."¹⁰¹

Memoire Fertile organized four conferences in four cities—Lille, Marseille, Anger, and Paris—between 1986 and 1987. They tried to center the debate on social issues.¹⁰² In

⁹⁹ Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau, *La Bourgeoisie : Les Trois Âges De La Vie Associative Issue De L'immigration*.34

¹⁰⁰ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.189

¹⁰¹ Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau, *La Bourgeoisie : Les Trois Âges De La Vie Associative Issue De L'immigration*.51

¹⁰² Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.211

particular, Memoire Fertile “tried to orient the debate toward the social question and refused to engage with the discourses of integration and assimilation.”¹⁰³

For Memoire Fertile, the “new citizenship” was also explicitly about multiculturalism. In particular, Memoire Fertile rejected what they perceived as outdated, and hackneyed myths of a homogenous French culture into which immigrants assimilate, thereby becoming French. In this moment, Memoire Fertile debated new perceptions of French-ness and argued that a multiplicity of cultures were part of the political, social, and cultural “make-up” of France.

THE RIGHT TO DIFFERENCE: DEBATING MULTICULTURALISM

Members of Memoire Fertile “insisted on the existence of a multicultural France, and a rupture with the myth of a homogenous nation.”¹⁰⁴ The organization insisted that the recognition of multiple cultures and communities should no longer be viewed as an obstacle to the political unity of the nation; they rejected the French assimilationist “melting pot.”¹⁰⁵ For Memoire-Fertile, multiculturalism was inseparable from equality. Equality was not framed as a moral imperative, but as a necessity, and a requirement for living in a multicultural society. Members of Memoire Fertile were not just proponents

¹⁰³ Ibid.216

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.102-3

¹⁰⁵ Saïd Bouamama, *J'y Suis, J'y Vote : La Lutte Pour Les Droits Politiques Aux Résidents Étrangers* (Paris: Esprit frappeur, 2000).60. For further discussion of multiculturalism and the right to difference see : Ian Shapiro et al., *Ethnicity and Group Rights*, Nomos ; 39 (New York: New York University Press, 1997), Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship : A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford Political Theory (Oxford New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1995), Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys : Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular : Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (Oxford, UK ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Cécile Laborde, "The Culture(S) of the Republic: Nationalism and Multiculturalism in French Republican Thought," *Political Theory* 29, no. 5 (2001), Danilo Martuecelli, "Les Contradictions Politiques Du Multiculturalisme," in *Une Société Fragmentée*, ed. Michel Wievorka (Paris: La Découverte, 1996).

of a right to culture, they also defined equality as the recognition of cultural difference in the pursuit of social and political equality: The right to difference without social, economic, and political equality, would only reify injustice.

Central to Memoire Fertile's multiculturalism was a new citizenship premised on what they called "immigrant access" to equality.¹⁰⁶ The new citizenship was a departure from traditional concepts of citizenship based on nationality: "citizenship could be accorded to foreigners adhering to the republican contract, who pledged allegiance to civic solidarity, and a modern vision of citizenship dissociated from nationality."¹⁰⁷ This new citizenship was defined as concrete, participative and plural.¹⁰⁸ The new citizenship would focus on issues concerning all habitants, especially housing, employment, families, education, and racism: "it valorizes the 'here and now', and favors a citizenship based in residence which transcends the barriers of nationality."¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the new citizenship was based on ordinary citizens and everyday life and promoted action "from below." As Said Bouamama described: "It is in the street, in society where we construct action."¹¹⁰ Lastly, the new citizenship was plural, drawing from multiple cultures and people who all work to "find a mode of effective participation."¹¹¹ For Memoire Fertile, citizenship was not something acquired, but practiced. The new citizenship was meant to legitimate a new, more informal political space, the neighborhood.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.102-3

¹⁰⁷ Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau, *La Beurgoisie : Les Trois Âges De La Vie Associative Issue De L'immigration*.67

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.89

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.89

¹¹⁰ Ibid.51

¹¹¹ Ibid.89

¹¹² For additional discussion of the new citizenship, particularly debates about local voting rights see: Etienne Balibar, *Droit De Cité*, Monde En Cours (La Tour d'Aigues (Vaucluse): Ed. de l'Aube, 1998), Richard Balme, *Les Nouvelles Politiques Locales : Dynamiques De L'action Publique* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1999), Azouz Begag, *Espace Et Exclusion : Mobilités Dans Les Quartiers Péripheriques*

If Memoire Fertile envisioned a multiculturalism based in neighborhood participation, the socialists and SOS Racisme advocated a multiculturalism based on a new kind of visibility. In the early years of the organization, SOS Racisme promoted a vision of a diverse France through intense media attention. The president of SOS Racisme, Harlem Desir, was heralded as the new face of France. For example, SOS Racisme's debut event was a concert at the Place de la Concorde in Paris, funded by the Ministry of Culture. The event broadcast live and was covered by all the major television networks. In front of a crowd of 300,000, Desir appealed to "French of all cultures... To French Jews and French Muslims... To immigrants of first and second generations."¹¹³ The event and speech were meticulously staged, and as Desir spoke, the camera panned from a close-up of his face, to the panoramic view of the crowd. After several close ups of young audience members, many of them displaying "Hands off my buddy" banners, the camera re-focused on the Eiffel Tower looming proudly in the distance.¹¹⁴ Finally, the camera cut quickly to the Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, looking approvingly at Desir and the crowd as if thinking: "these are the faces of France."

Members of Memoire Fertile were critical of this brand of multiculturalism, and what they called the socialist "folkloric" approach: "the reconnaissance of multiculturalism tended to transform into the folklorisation of cultures and the promotion of the dimension of 'culture' to the detriment of social and political claims."¹¹⁵ In other words, Memoire Fertile criticized the socialists for divorcing social and political

D'Avignon, Logiques Sociales (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), Azouz Begag, *La Ville Des Autres : La Famille Immigrée Et L'espace Urbain* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1991), Catherine Neveu, *Citoyenneté Et Espace Public : Habitants, Jeunes Et Citoyens Dans Une Ville Du Nord* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2003), Catherine Neveu, *Espace Public Et Engagement Politique : Enjeux Et Logiques De La Citoyenneté Locale* (Paris: Harmattan, 1999).

¹¹³ <http://www.truveo.com/F%C3%A0te-SOS-RACISME-%C3%A0-la-Concorde/id/3967468234>, 5/29/09

¹¹⁴ <http://www.truveo.com/F%C3%A0te-SOS-RACISME-%C3%A0-la-Concorde/id/3967468234>, 5/29/09

¹¹⁵ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.186

questions from multiculturalism. For *Memoire Fertile*, the recognition of cultural difference was also an engagement with systems of social and political equality. For *Memoire Fertile*, multiculturalism was not just the “celebration of cultures.”¹¹⁶

If *Memoire Fertile* defined the right to difference in terms of social, political, and cultural equality, the National Front also affirmed the right to difference asserting that: “All cultures are noble, on the condition that they preserve their originality and their specificity. Cosmopolitanism, the melting pot—the *mélange*—[are] destroyers of the right to difference.”¹¹⁷ The National Front affirmed the right to difference in terms of the preservation of the integrity of French culture, or the idea that foreign cultures should remain foreign. Otherwise, “French culture was in danger of disappearing because of immigration.”¹¹⁸ Immigrants and appeals to multiculturalism or the ‘mixing’ of cultures threatened French culture. The National Front touted “a dogma of the impossibility of peaceful coexistence of different cultures.”¹¹⁹ Specifically, the radical right espoused a new kind of racism not premised on biological inferiority, but on cultural integrity.¹²⁰

With this message about the right to difference, and in particular, a convincing threshold argument that France had reached its carrying capacity for foreign cultures, the National Front won huge victories in the municipal elections of 1983. The issues of immigration and insecurity dominated the elections of many French cities, including: Levallois, Dreux, Grenoble, Marseille, Aulnay, Roubaix, as well as the eighteenth

¹¹⁶ While the Ministry of Culture under André Malraux was dedicated to promoting “French high culture,” Jack Lang’s vision was to celebrate culture both “high” and popular. This opened up new funding recourses for local artists not affiliated with the official national dance companies, opera houses, and theatres, as well as groups seeking support for “cultural” celebrations.

¹¹⁷ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.156

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*156

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*156

¹²⁰ See: Martin Barker, *The New Racism : Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe* (Frederick, Md.: Aletheia Books, 1982). Gilroy, *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack' : The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*.

arrondissement of Paris.¹²¹ The victory of the National Front in the municipal elections of 1983 marked a turning point for the socialist majority. In the 1986 national elections, the socialists did not retain enough seats to maintain power and had to form a coalition government with the center right, Chirac led RDR/UDF parties (Rally for the Republic/Union for French Democracy) from 1986-1989.

The National Front did not just achieve a political, but also an ideological victory: “The terms of the debate were inverted. The extreme right became anti-assimilationist and culturalist; the left renewed an old tradition of the negation of minorities.”¹²² In other words, with the entry of the National Front into mainstream politics, the socialists retreated into the safe territory of the left. If the National Front espoused a politics of the right to difference, through the exclusion of immigrants, the socialists returned to an historically leftist approach, of encouraging the inclusion of immigrants through a politics of assimilation.¹²³ Immigrants had the right to participate in the French public sphere as abstract individuals, but they could not participate as differentiated members of cultural or ethnic groups.

The socialists as well as organizations like SOS Racisme retreated to a politics of “color-blind republicanism.” After 1983, but during the cohabitation (1986-1989) and the first headscarf affair of 1989, national discourse on the left contrasted “French” republicanism, with “un-French” multiculturalism. Locally, however, urban reforms

¹²¹ Bouamama, *Dix Ans De Marche Des Beurs : Chronique D'un Mouvement Avorté*.49. See also, Dossiers Municipales Elections, 1977, 1979, 1989 in the Bouches-du-Rhone Departmental Archives, 183 J

¹²² Ibid.157

¹²³For discussion of immigrant “assimilation” see: Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot : Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, Contradictions of Modernity ; V. 5 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). For discussion of Republican policies of assimilation during the Third Republic see: James R. Lehning, *Peasant and French : Cultural Contact in Rural France During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen : The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976).

initiated by the socialist government did not promote universal republicanism. Instead, urban renovation programs targeted neighborhoods based on the ethnic or cultural composition of residents living there. While national debates return to an integrationist model, local policies pinpointed areas for rehabilitation in terms of ethnic and racial categories.

THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

While national focus shifted to an emphasis on assimilation, at the local level, perceptions of racial and ethnic difference became one key way that neighborhoods were labeled “in crisis.” After the 1981 election, the socialist government targeted rundown neighborhoods through a series of urban reforms known as the “Social Development of Neighborhoods” (DSQ). The DSQ, which later became *la politique de la ville*, or the politics of the city, emphasized the rehabilitation of certain city spaces. Neighborhoods that qualified for renovation had to meet several criteria: they needed to have a high density of “foreigners,” high levels of juvenile delinquency, unemployment, and a “lack of cultural development.”¹²⁴ In this section I examine the origins of the DSQ reforms and the complicated ways in which neighborhoods came to be targeted for rehabilitation based on the perceived ethnic make-up of the residents living there.

The origins of the DSQ stem from late 1960s critiques of *les grands ensembles*, new urban planning methods, and the work of centers of sociology in Paris and Marseille. As mass concrete residential construction mushroomed around the periphery of French cities in the mid 1960s, critiques of these *grands ensembles*, and in particular, their effect

¹²⁴ *Circulaire du ministère de l'Urbanisme et du Logement, décret du 28 Octobre 1988*. Quoted in Doytcheva, *Une Discrimination Positive À La Française : Ethnicité Et Territoire Dans Les Politiques De La Ville*.⁴⁴

on everyday domestic life began to appear in the press and among sociologists. The critique focused on the ways in which the Ministry of Urbanism had imposed a technocratic, top-down model for modern living. “*Sarcellite*,” the mysterious illness of nerves that exclusively affected housewives living in cités, became a ubiquitous term signifying how the physical space of these HLMs could have profound psychological effects on its inhabitants.¹²⁵

This critique of the centralized state in the management of everyday life took on special significance during the events of 1968. A new generation of academics began to pose new questions about where politics happened.¹²⁶ Urban space and everyday life emerged as new realms for political engagement. This new brand of urbanism was a critique of the top-down planning model of the 1950s, and an emphasis on the necessity of resident participation in the construction of urban space. Two sociological research centers played a key role in these debates about new methods for urban planning: Paris based CADIS and its work on immigrant juvenile delinquency, and the Marseille based *Centre Etude Recherche Formation Institutionnelle Sud Est*, or CERFISE. CERFISE focused on the study of resident participation in urban rehabilitation programs. Both centers would play a key role in shaping urban policies aimed at rehabilitating the banlieues in the 1980s and 1990s.

¹²⁵ For discussion of “*Sarcellite*” see: Richard Derderian, “The Banlieues as Lieux De Mémoire: Urban Space, Memory, and Identity in France,” in *Géopolitique Et Mondialisation*, ed. Pierre Lagayette (Paris: Sorbonne, 2003), Loïc Vadelorge, “Villes Nouvelles Et Grands Ensembles,” *Histoire Urbaine* 17, no. 3 (2006), Alain Vulbeau, “De La Sarcellite Au Malaise Des Banlieues: Trente Ans De Pathologie Des Grands Ensembles,” *Lumières de la ville* 5 (1992).

¹²⁶ For discussion of the New Left see: Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy : The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Stuart Hall, “The ‘First’ New Left: Life and Times,” in *Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left Thirty Years On*, ed. Robin Archer (London: Verso, 1989). For the French left see: Tony Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility : Blum, Camus, Aron, and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Tony Judt, *Marxism and the French Left : Studies in Labour and Politics in France, 1830-1981* (Oxford New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1986), Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect : French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

While research centers like CADIS studied the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, CERFISE developed the study of the neighborhood itself, in particular the role residents could play in rehabilitating their own neighborhoods.¹²⁷ Sociologist Michel Anselme founded CERFISE in Marseille in 1975, and the center was commissioned by the city of Marseille to study the problem of run down public housing.¹²⁸

The municipal government had been struggling with the problem of rundown public-housing and neighborhoods with large populations of post-colonial migrants. In a series of meetings to address the “promotion of migrants,” local officials discussed “the very particular nature of the problems posed by these socially handicapped populations and the necessity to find specific solutions.”¹²⁹ Local officials described families using the language of adaptation: “migrant families are not all at the same level. There are some adapted families, but also many un-adapted families.”¹³⁰ Local officials hesitated to perform costly renovations on apartment complexes inhabited by families. Municipal authorities discussed methods for controlling these “un-adapted” families which included increased police surveillance: “we can control minorities who cause trouble by utilizing the services of the undercover police.”¹³¹ Others discussed the merits of eviction. During one meeting, Secretary General Jean Poggioli reported on the eviction of twelve families in the Frais Vallon cité in the north of Marseille: “eight were evicted for the non-

¹²⁷ While sociologists like Dubet focused on the collective experience of the banlieue, or *la galère*, Michel Anselme and his researchers argued against the pathologization of the banlieue and the residents living there. For example, Anselme penned a series of articles discussing how neighborhoods perceived to have high immigrant density have been *constructed* in public imagination. He wrote that the perception of the neighborhood in *crisis* was itself a construction, and he rooted that perception in its historical context.

¹²⁸ CERFISE was the Marseille based center of CERFI which was originally founded by Félix Guattari.

¹²⁹ Memo from G. Lacroix, *Inspecteur Général des Services Techniques* to Social Workers of La Cayolle, *Cité provisoire de la Cayolle*, January 3, 1978, Marseille Municipal Archives, 753 W 60, pg. 2

¹³⁰ Meeting minutes, *Service de Liaison et de Promotion des Migrants*, Préfecture des Bouches-du-Rhône, January 7, 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 753 W 60. Pg. 6

¹³¹ Meeting minutes, *Service de Liaison et de Promotion des Migrants*, Préfecture des Bouches-du-Rhône, January 7, 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 753 W 60. Pg. 5

payment of rent, two for misusing property, one family was evicted because of a juvenile delinquent.”¹³² Despite these attempts, one official noted that the “habitants [of these neighborhoods] are not very well known” and suggested that the solution was not “only renovation, but a restructuration” of how the city approached the problem.¹³³

In 1976, Anselme and his researchers at CERFISE completed a preliminary study of Petit Seminaire, one of Marseille’s most dilapidated *cités* in the northern neighborhoods. While municipal officials tended to discuss residents in terms of their social handicaps—and as problems that needed to be solved by state authorities¹³⁴—Anselme and his researchers proposed a novel approach: to include residents in redevelopment projects. Rather than treat residents as social problems, the study recommended working with the residents of the *cité* to rehabilitate their homes. Based on Anselme’s initial study, in 1976, the city approved an experimental program—or “test operation”—to renovate Petit Seminaire.¹³⁵

Petit Seminaire is situated in Marseille’s *quartiers nord*s. The *cité* was constructed between 1958 and 1960, and was part of the “Operation Million” project.¹³⁶ The *cité* had 240 apartments, but in 1976, fewer than 170 families lived in the buildings. Of the nearly 70 vacant apartments, most were extremely degraded, and often sheltered homeless people and squatters.¹³⁷ As Anselme described, “The space around the *cité* was a large field dotted with abandoned cars. The facades of the buildings were all uniformly

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Meeting minutes, *Service de Liaison et de Promotion des Migrants*, Préfecture des Bouches-du-Rhône, January 7, 1976, Marseille Municipal Archives, 753 W 60. Pg.4.

¹³⁴ See, for example: Dossiers on Grand Arenas, La Cayolle, and Cité Provisoire in the Marseille Municipal Archives, 753 W 60.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ The Million Project was initiated by Pierre Courrant, head of the Ministry of Urbanism, in 1955. The project aimed to definitively address the housing crisis by the mass construction of HLMs. The goal was to construct a million HLMs, at the cost of only 1 million francs per building. See chapter three and four.

¹³⁷ Anselme, *Du Bruit À La Parole: La Scène Politique Des Cités*.52

grey, leprous.”¹³⁸ In 1976, the OPHLM responsible for managing the property was largely absent as the office did not maintain an on-site location for families to make repair requests, or report problems.

Anselme also described the families living in Petit Seminaire: “a lot were rapatriés from North Africa as well as families re-housed after the redevelopment of downtown and the bulldozing of insalubrious habitat.”¹³⁹ According to Anselme:

“The families were mostly: gypsies originally from Spain, but with French nationality, gypsies who had come from Algeria, Algerians, some Maghreb with French nationality, and then the usual base of people from Marseille: Armenians, Italians, Italo-Maltese, Spanish, Corsicans, etc, and a large number of pieds-noirs. It was a very heterogeneous population.”¹⁴⁰

Anselme and his team were involved in the rehabilitation of Petit Seminaire from 1975 to 1986. During this time they acted as intermediaries between residents, the housing office, and construction crews. After submitting the first reports to the city in 1976, construction began in earnest in late 1979, including electrical re-wiring, plumbing repairs, painting, and clearing away debris. In a 1980s article, Anselme reflected on CERFISE’s theoretical motivation for the project: “We imagined...a vast construction site where habitants would have the possibility to participate...to invest themselves in one way or another in this movement to transform their cité...we felt it possible to re-qualify the space of housing, to transform the image of the cité to that of the habitants, and to reintegrate the habitants into the urban community, to dynamize this cohabitation of the city...”¹⁴¹ Resident participation was a key goal for the CERFISE center and was

¹³⁸ Ibid.24

¹³⁹ Ibid.24

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.24

¹⁴¹ Ibid.33

the main recommendation in reports to the city of Marseille, and later, to the central state.¹⁴²

Anselme and his team facilitated participation by promoting resident meetings where habitants could voice their opinions, concerns, and problems. In particular, Anselme described the organic nature of how these meetings evolved: “Everyone had the chance to speak if they wanted.”¹⁴³ In these first resident meetings, Anselme noted: “The noise! Everyone talking at once—exasperation, frustration, complaints about the traffic, laughter, expletives...In any case, the essential thing for us, was that the habitants spoke.”¹⁴⁴ After several cacophonous meetings, “some rules emerged for organization: who could speak and how decisions about the rehabilitation would be reached.”¹⁴⁵

Anselme and his researchers at CERFISE linked the importance of resident participation to the formation of a public sphere in Petit Seminaire: “The emergence of a public sphere (*espace*) in the cité became the ritualization of resident meetings.”¹⁴⁶ The key role of the weekly meetings was to facilitate a forum for resident dialogue.

Participation in a public sphere thus became a key concept at work in urban planning. For example, in 1971, the Ministry of Urbanism published a circular entitled “Habitat and Social Life” outlining the need “to furnish a standard of living (*cadre de*

¹⁴² For other studies of resident participation in Marseille’s northern neighborhoods see: Michel Anselme, *Entrevues Citadines: Les Flamants, Marseille* (Marseille: Cerfise, 1988), Michel Anselme, “La Formation Des Nouveaux Territoires Urbains Et Leur “Crise”: Les Quartiers Nord De Marseille,” *Peuples Méditerranéens* Avril-Juin, no. 43 (1988), Jean-Louis Parisis, *Office Public D’Hlm De Marseille, Paroles De Locataires 1919-1989* (Avignon: A. Barthélemy, 1989), Michel Peraldi, “Les Noms Du Social Dans L’urbain En Crise,” *Peuples Méditerranéens* Avril-Juin, no. 43 (1988).

¹⁴³ Anselme, *Du Bruit À La Parole: La Scène Politique Des Cités*.63

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.36-7, 94

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.62

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.90. For discussion of Habermas and alternative public spheres see: Craig J. Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

vie) appropriate to the wishes of the population.¹⁴⁷ The MRU subsequently created the Habitat and Social Life Commission to evaluate the “problem of habitat” in the Grands Ensembles. The commission’s reports reflected the critique of the new urbanists, recommending the need to encourage resident participation: “It is thus necessary to assess the opinion of these habitants including facilitating dialogue between renter and management organisms (OPHLMs) and encouraging the participation of neighborhood associations.”¹⁴⁸

One of the earlier ways that “participation” was encouraged was through a 1977 housing policy reform. Based on the recommendations of the “Habitat and Social Life” commission, the central state agreed on the need for a more “personalized housing allocation.”¹⁴⁹ The central tenet of the 1977 policy reform was a shift in how funds were allocated for housing. Until 1977, public housing funds were allocated based on the need to construct or renovate buildings. Under the previous *aide à pierre*, funding was tied to building materials. In 1977, the housing reform introduced *aide à personne*. Funds for housing would instead be tied to residents’ needs. Under the previous policy, if a building was condemned, funding went to the city, or the owner of the building, to buy materials for renovation. Under the new policy, if a building was condemned, funding would go to the residents to either renovate or move out.

The 1977 housing policy shift, as well as the CERFISE studies, raise interesting questions about the place of the resident within the new urban policies. For example, in a

¹⁴⁷ Report, Ministère de l’Équipement et du Logement, December 15, 1971, Centre des Archives Contemporaine, Fontainebleau 19790367 Article 9

¹⁴⁸ Report by, André Trintignac, *Administrateur Civil chargé de mission*, « *Les Dispositifs de Concertation sur les Problèmes de l’Habitat*, » *Groupe Permanent de Coordination “Habitat et Vie Sociale”*, February 1974. Centre des Archives Contemporaine, Fontainebleau 19790367 Article 9

¹⁴⁹ *Le Monde*, January 24, 1975; *L’Union*, January 24, 1975; *Ouest France*, January 23, 1976; *Le Monde*, July 24, 1976.

1985 article, Anselme wrote that: “the rehabilitation of Petit Seminaire with the residents [became] the conditions for their insertion.”¹⁵⁰ The goal of participation was not just to include residents in the renovation of their everyday lives, but also to encourage their “insertion.” The formation of a public sphere became the way of inserting or integrating the marginalized into the fabric of the city, and by extension, the nation.¹⁵¹ Studies like Anselme’s *Petit Seminaire* influenced state efforts to not only rehabilitate neighborhoods in crisis, but also to rehabilitate *the residents* living in these neighborhoods. For example, the 1977 housing policy reform demonstrates the ways in which emphasis on resident participation also increased attention to individuals: The residents of run-down neighborhoods also became the objects of rehabilitation policies.

In 1982, the “Habitat and Social Life” commission launched the “Social Development of Neighborhoods” (or *Developpement Social des Quartiers*, DSQ): “The Ministry of Urbanism and Housing has reoriented its agenda toward urban innovation, the struggle against social segregation, and the rehabilitation of degraded neighborhoods.”¹⁵² The DSQ commission articulated the program’s goals including: “the struggle against processes of exclusion in urban space and the insertion of populations in difficulty, the promotion of social, economic and cultural programs for the amelioration of living conditions in the city, the prevention of delinquency.”¹⁵³ “Insertion” became a key goal for the DSQ programs.

¹⁵⁰ Anselme, *Du Bruit À La Parole: La Scène Politique Des Cités*.90

¹⁵¹ For discussion on discourses of integration see: Vincent Ferry, Piero- D. Galloro, and Gérard Noiriel, *20 Ans De Discours Sur L’intégration* (Paris: Harmattan, 2005).

¹⁵² See Dossier on the *Developpement Sociale des Quartiers*, Bouches-du-Rhône departmental archives 1451 W 111.

¹⁵³ *Circulaire du ministre de l’Urbanisme et du Logement, décret du 28 Octobre 1988*. Quoted in Doytcheva, *Une Discrimination Positive À La Française : Ethnicité Et Territoire Dans Les Politiques De La Ville*.44

To qualify for DSQ funds, neighborhoods had to be officially labeled “in difficulty” (*quartiers difficiles*) or “sensitive neighborhoods” (*quartiers sensibles*). Urban areas would have to submit to a “social and urban diagnostic” which tested “the weakness of the social tissue: including economic and urban, cultural resources, local demography.”¹⁵⁴ A neighborhood was identified in need of rehabilitation in terms of its degraded infrastructure, but also in terms of its “populations in difficulty.” Phrases like “populations in difficulty,” populations with a “lack of cultural resources,” and areas with a “high density of foreigners,” appear ubiquitously in DSQ documents. These kind of phrases point to the ways in which residents became objects of policy in the DSQ. These phrases also point to the euphemistic ways in which perceptions of race were integral to targeting “neighborhoods in crisis.”

In the first phase of the program, from 1981-1983, the commission selected 22 neighborhoods as the first recipients of special DSQ funds. Between 1984 and 1988 the number of neighborhoods receiving DSQ funds increased to 148. These neighborhoods were selected because of “the gravity of the problems posed, the accumulation of handicaps, [and] the isolation of the neighborhood from the rest of the metropolitan area.”¹⁵⁵ The DSQ policies attempted to address a comprehensive set of “problems” including unemployment, poverty, and lack of infrastructure, through “a spatial definition of a perimeter of action.”¹⁵⁶ These programs attempted to address and remedy particular “social problems” through targeting urban spaces. In naming “neighborhoods in difficulty” in terms of the populations living there, these urban policies also linked social problems, like unemployment, to these particular populations. Euphemisms like

¹⁵⁴ *Circular du Premier Ministre du 22 mai 1989*, quoted in Ibid.49

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 45

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.41

“populations in difficulty” or areas with a “high density of foreigners,” racialized residents by pathologizing them as prone to joblessness, juvenile delinquency, and crime.¹⁵⁷

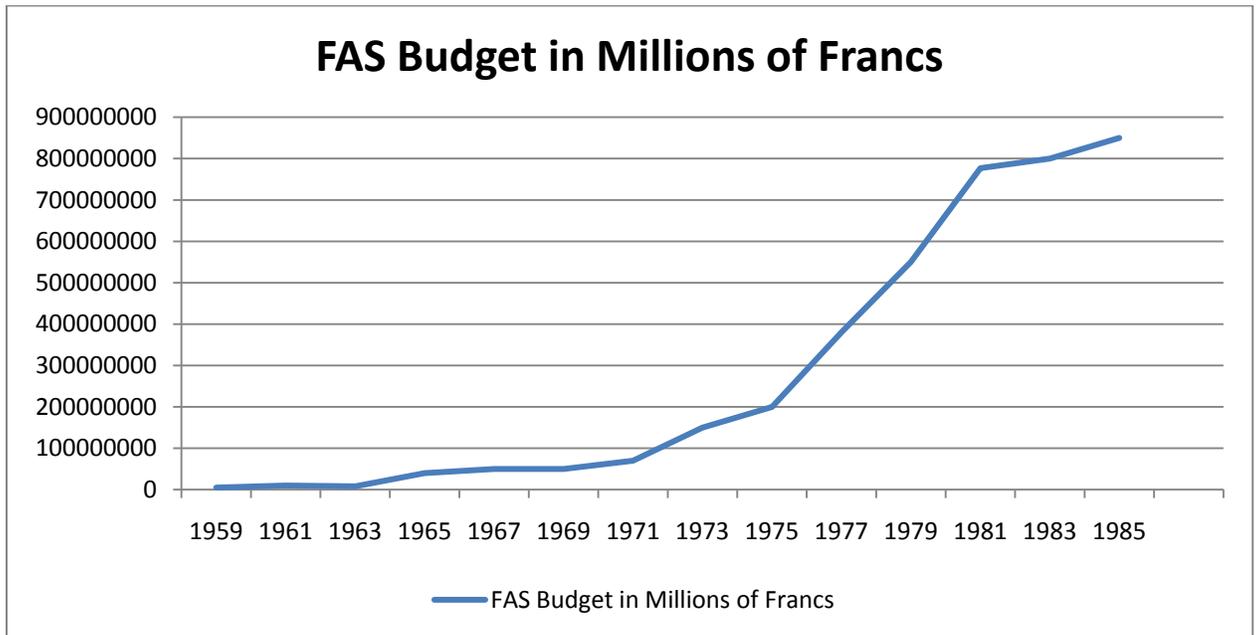
In the early phase of the DSQ, the goal was to rehabilitate the neighborhood as well as the residents. This implied that funding would target both “insertion programs” encouraging resident participation as well as construction projects to renovate buildings and infrastructure. Budget analysis reveals that more resources were channeled into rehabilitating “bodies” through social education programs, than to renovating buildings.

The Fonds d’Action Social (FAS) was one main institution charged with the insertion programs of the DSQ. The institution had historically dealt with the housing and social education of asocial, Algerian, and immigrant families. As I have explained in chapters three and five, the Fonds D’Action Social was initially created under the auspices of the Constantine plan during the Algerian war for independence. Between 1958 and 1962, the FAS was mandated to create and fund social welfare programs for Algerian families living in the metropole. The goal was both to demonstrate the benefits of “French-ness” as well as facilitate a pathway for Algerian families to become more “French” through domestic education and family planning programs for wives, mothers, and daughters. After 1962, and end of the Algerian war, the FAS expanded to administer to all migrants—but still focused on issues of housing and social education.

¹⁵⁷ For studies on social exclusion and neighborhood rehabilitation see: Mustafa Dikec and Wiley InterScience (Online service), *Badlands of the Republic : Space, Politics and Urban Policy* (Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2007), Jacques Donzelot, *Face À L'exclusion : Le Modèle Français* (Paris: Editions Esprit : Distribution-diffusion, Le Seuil, 1991), Jacques Donzelot, Catherine Mével, and Anne Wyvekens, *Faire Société : La Politique De La Ville Aux Etats-Unis Et En France* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), Jacques Donzelot, *Quand La Ville Se Défait : Quelle Politique Face À La Crise Des Banlieues?* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), Georges Lançon and Nicolas Buchoud, *Ces Banlieues Qui Nous Font Peur : Une Stratégie D'action Pour Former La Gestion Des Quartiers D'habitat Social*, Collection Questions Contemporaines (Paris: Harmattan, 2003), Damian Moore, *Ethnicité Et Politique De La Ville En France Et En Grande Bretagne*, Collection Sécurité Et Société (Paris: Harmattan, 2001).

Table VI.1 below shows the FAS budget from 1959 to 1985. Between 1977 and 1983—roughly corresponding with the establishment of the DSQ programs, the FAS budget increased dramatically.

Table VI.1 Budget increase of FAS between 1959-1985¹⁵⁸



¹⁵⁸ Data from Josset, FAS, 1991

Table VI.2 Number of associations financed by FAS from 1964 to 1981¹⁵⁹

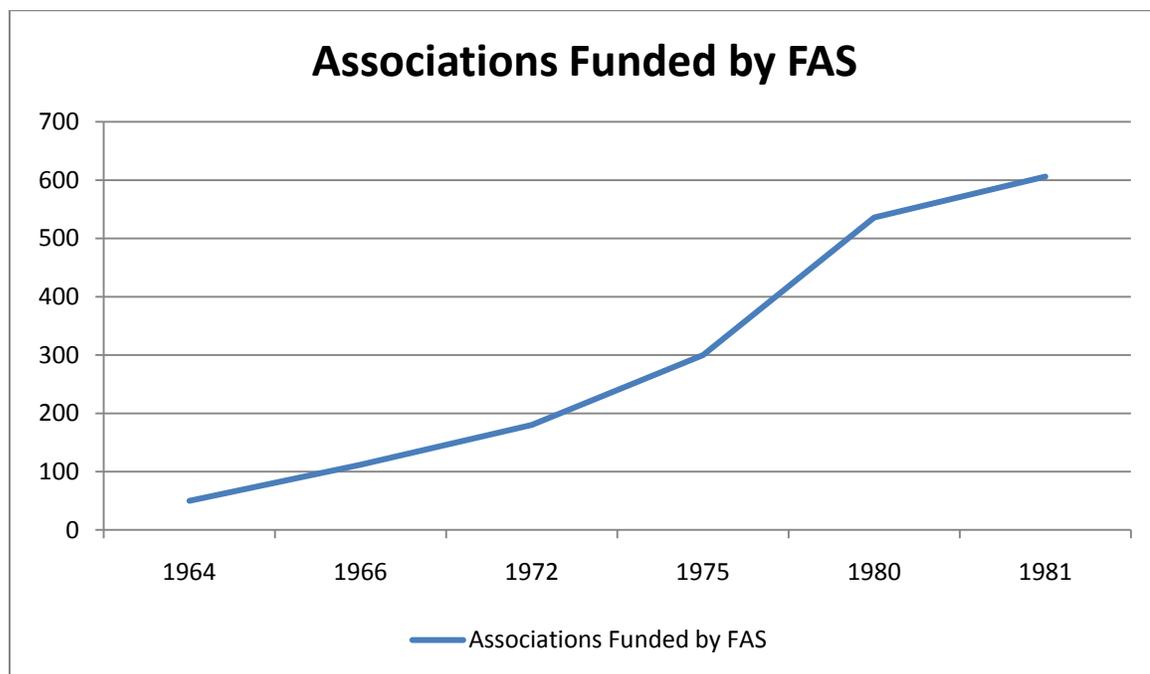


Table VI.2 show the dramatic increase in the number of local associations funded by FAS between the 1960s and 1980s. The FAS often worked closely with the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the Ministry of Culture to create and implement programs based in neighborhood youth and activities centers, or “Houses of Youth and Culture” (*Maisons de Jeunesse et Culture*). Since the 1980s, “insertion” programs have focused on cultural activities including hip hop dance classes,¹⁶⁰ sports, and job-training. These neighborhood centers also offer cooking, sewing, and literacy classes for women.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Data from Josset, FAS, 1991

¹⁶⁰ For discussion of hip hop dance as a French youth movement see: Hugues Bazin, *La Culture Hip-Hop* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1995), Alain-Philippe Durand, *Black, Blanc, Beur : Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture in the Francophone World* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2002). For hip hop dance as a tool for cultural integration see: Sylvia Faure and Marie-Carmen Garcia, *Culture Hip-Hop, Jeunes De Cités Et Politiques Publiques* (Paris: La dispute, 2005).

¹⁶¹ See chapter seven.

Table VI.3 Funding for housing versus insertion programs¹⁶²

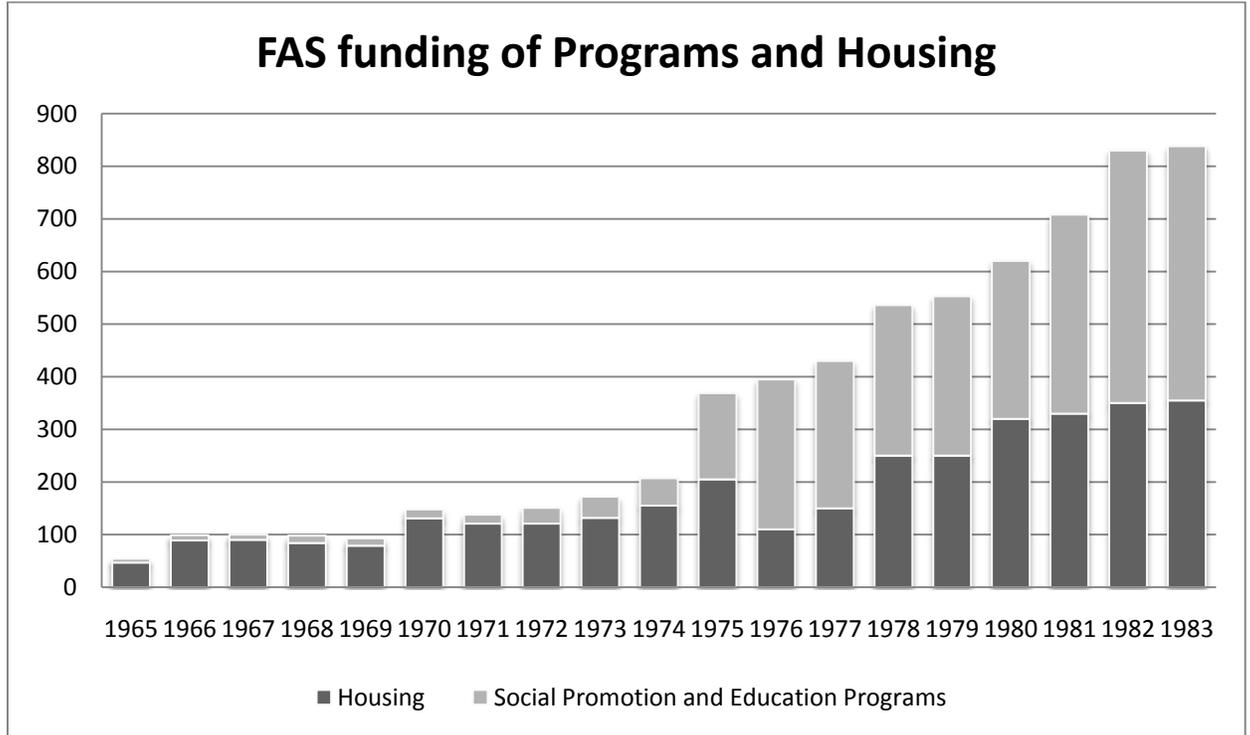


Table VI.3 shows how the FAS spent its budget: From 1965-1975, the FAS allocated more funding for housing. However, beginning in 1976, which coincided with the first housing commissions on the banlieue, the FAS began to spend more money on social promotion and education programs than on housing and repairs. In 1982, with the start of the Social Development of Neighborhoods, the amount of money FAS spent on insertion programs spiked. More than half of the FAS budget went to social and cultural education programs. In other words, more money was spent on the “bodies” of those living in neighborhoods in crisis than the “buildings.”

¹⁶² Data from Josset, FAS, 1991

THE BODY POLITIC: INTEGRATING BANLIEUE YOUTH THROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTERS

The FAS, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports,¹⁶³ focused particularly on social promotion of youth living in DSQ funded sites. A 1975 report detailing the agenda of the Ministry of Youth and Sports focused on “the general action in the prevention of juvenile delinquency...It is necessary to increase recreational activities for youths in order to prevent social in-adaptation.”¹⁶⁴ A 1976 report, the Ministry of Youth and Sports reaffirmed that “a large number of the problems encountered by youth are due to the absence or inadequate number of recreational centers...these difficulties are inextricably linked to...factors of in-adaptation...[including] the lack of socio-cultural and sportive centers.”¹⁶⁵ In other words, the Ministry of Youth and Sports linked the lack of cultural and recreational programming in rundown *cités* to the problem of juvenile delinquency. Banlieue youth increasingly became the focus of DSQ initiatives.

¹⁶³ The Ministry of Youth and Sports was first established under Leon Blum’s Popular Front government in 1936, received very limited funding for much of the fourth republic, and was re-established during the fifth republic under Georges Pompidou in 1963. As a new generation of urban planners began to critique the impersonal mass-modernization projects of the 1950s, many also noted that most of the *grands ensembles* were hastily constructed with no recreational equipment or gathering points for youth living in the *cités*. In the 1960s, discussions about the lack of recreational centers for youth living in the *grands ensembles* focused mostly on the important role of “play” in child development. For example, in a series of meetings and round table discussions about *les grands ensembles*, local urban planners and Marseille municipal officials listened to the testimony from a child psychologist who explained: “for the child, playtime is very important...playtime is a means of expression for the child and becomes a means of development.” Although local officials discussed the importance of recreational facilities for youth in the 1960s, finite budgets continued to limit the construction of recreational facilities in the construction of public housing. See: Exposé de Jean Viau, Table Ronde du 5 Février 1962. Les Equipement Collectifs des Nouveaux Ensembles d’Habitation. Testimony of Docteur Despinoy. Pg. 12. Marseille Municipal Archives 531 W 48

¹⁶⁴ *Fiche Prevention, VIIe Plan, Ministre de la Qualité de la Vie : Jeunesse et Sports*, March 12, 1975. Pg. 1, Centre des Archives Contemporains, Fontainebleau, 19790367 Article 13

¹⁶⁵ *Rapport du Group, Inadaptations et Animation de la Vie Sociale, Commission Affaires Sociales Jeunesse*, November 1976, pg. 3, Centre des Archives Contemporains, Fontainebleau, 19790367 Article 13

In the early 1980s, the Ministry of Youth and Sports received increased funding for youth activity centers in rundown neighborhoods around France. According to a ministry report on the “Insertion of Youth,” “Sports are part of the struggle against the marginalization of populations subjected to the effects of the social and economic crisis.”¹⁶⁶ More specifically, “the practice of sports permit youth in difficulty to become conscience of the importance of the body in the quest for a place in society.”¹⁶⁷ The ministry focused on the physical bodies of banlieue youth, and on recreational activities as a means to mold them into the national body politic: “Sportive practices...also favor the acquisition of a code of good social conduct; in brief, they are factors of insertion, and better still, integration.”¹⁶⁸

A study commissioned by the Ministry of Youth and Sports defined integration as the “assembling of different parties to a system and assuring their compatibility as well as the good functioning of the complete system.”¹⁶⁹ The report described “socialization” as an important part of integration “which is the process by which the child internalizes diverse elements of the surrounding culture (values, norms, symbolic codes and rules of conduct) and integrates himself into social life.”¹⁷⁰ For the Ministry of Youth and Sports, recreational activity centers encouraged integration and “the objective of integration is to enter youth into contemporary French society.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Charrier, Dominique, *Activités Physiques et Sportives et Insertion des Jeunes : Enjeux Educatifs et Pratiques Institutionnelles*, Report commissioned by the *Ministere de la Jeunesse et des Sports*, 1997. Bibliothèque Alcazar à Marseille. P. 35

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 37

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 5

¹⁶⁹ Charrier, Dominique, *Activités Physiques et Sportives et Insertion des Jeunes : Enjeux Educatifs et Pratiques Institutionnelles*, Report commissioned by the *Ministere de la Jeunesse et des Sports*, 1997. Bibliothèque Alcazar à Marseille. P. 33-34

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

As part of the DSQ initiatives, and the later *politique de la ville*, local youth and activities centers called *les Maisons des Jeunes et Cultures* (houses of youth and culture, or MJCs) received funding from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Culture and the FAS. As neighborhood extensions of the state, MJCs would attempt to integrate banlieue youth through recreational programming. In Marseille, many MJCs were established in the late 1970s, and were integrated into the DSQ and *politique de la ville* programs of the 1980s and 1990s. As the director of the Corderie MJC—in Marseille’s seventh arrondissement—wrote in a 1989 annual report: “the MJC is close to the realities on the ground, the grand social problems,” and is therefore able “to service a large number of residents by actions that favor social progress.”¹⁷² The director expressed the center’s “opposition to: intolerance, racism, segregation, and exclusion in all its forms” and affirmed “popular and associational programs... as the indispensable bases of real social progress.”¹⁷³ In another report discussing the center’s goals for 1989, MJC employees articulated a main “priority of youths and culture.”¹⁷⁴ According to the report, the center, “increasingly prioritizes youth and their access to culture...the center is a place of expression, of liberty, and a place that struggles against all social, educative and cultural inequalities.”¹⁷⁵ Lastly, the director articulated the relationship between recreational programming and citizenship: “we are more than a recreational center, but a space for the apprenticeship of citizenship.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid. 5

¹⁷⁴ *MJC Corderie, Rapport d'orientation pour 1989*, Marseille Municipal Archives, 895 W 8

Pg. 1

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ *Rapport Moral, MJC Corderie, Assemblée Generale pour 1988*, February 23, 1989, Marseille Municipal Archives, 895 W 8, pg. 1

The DSQ programs of the 1980s and 1990s were intended to rehabilitate “neighborhoods in crisis” by renovating degraded infrastructure and housing as well as encouraging the insertion of residents into the body politic. In practice, the state devoted more resources to promoting the insertion of banlieue youth than on projects to improve rundown buildings. Several institutions, the FAS, the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the Ministry of Culture funded programs that focused particularly on the bodies of banlieue youth: by building youth centers and increasing recreational programming, banlieue youth could be encouraged to become better citizens through disciplining their bodies.¹⁷⁷

Like the earlier studies of the CERFISE center, working with and listening to residents remained a central theme of the DSQ policies. In addition to encouraging the practice of “good citizenship,” local MJC’s also affirmed the importance of working with and responding to the needs and recreational requests from the local community. For example, according to an annual report from the Corderie MJC in Marseille: “The MJC counts 600 regular participants and permits a large number of Marseillais, from different origins and communities, to participate in a cultural life.”¹⁷⁸ MJC’s developed programming that “responded to the needs [of the] neighborhood.”¹⁷⁹

As working with local residents was an important part of the DSQ initiatives, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the FAS began funding programs that appealed to banlieue youth. In addition to establishing facilities for soccer, arts and crafts, and other

¹⁷⁷ For studies on state efforts to integrate youth through neighborhood programming and recreational activities see: Dominique Schnapper, *Activités, Physiques Et Sportives Et Insertion Des Jeunes: Enjeux Éducatifs Et Pratiques Institutionnelles*, ed. Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports (Paris: La Documentation française, 1997), Tissot, *L'état Et Les Quartiers : Genèse D'une Catégorie De L'action Publique*.

¹⁷⁸ Rapport Moral, MJC Corderie, Assemblée Generale pour 1988, February 23, 1989, Marseille Municipal Archives, 895 W 8. Pg. 4

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 3

programming, the ministry and the FAS identified hip hop culture as an important emerging street art and sport.¹⁸⁰

HIP HOP AND THE BODY POLITIC

In the mid 1980s, French youth began participating in the developing hip hop culture. First emerging in the United States in the late 1970s, hip hop developed out of New York neighborhoods like Brooklyn and the South Bronx, which had large communities of African-Americans, Puerto-Ricans as well as migrants from Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.¹⁸¹ During block parties, DJs began to fuse musical genres like reggae and funk, and several built special large sound systems to accommodate their musical experimentation. Pioneering DJs including Grandmaster Flash (born Joseph Sadler, a Jamaican immigrant) began extending the breaks in songs—letting the vocals drop out so the baseline can dominate—in response to enthusiastic crowds who wanted music to last longer so they could keep dancing. Some dancers began creating special moves to fill up these extended breaks in songs. They called themselves B-Boys and B-Girls although they are often referred to as break dancers. In order to liven up the audience, masters of ceremonies (MCs) began to help DJs by rhyming impromptu—or free styling—over the music. MCs also began writing and recording full lengths songs of spoken word, or rap.

¹⁸⁰ Faure and Garcia, *Culture Hip-Hop, Jeunes De Cités Et Politiques Publiques*.4

¹⁸¹ For studies on early hip hop in the United States see: Johan Kugelberg, Joe Conzo, and Bambaataa Afrika, *Born in the Bronx : A Visual Record of the Early Days of Hip Hop* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), Joseph Glenn Schloss, *Foundation : B-Boys, B-Girls, and Hip-Hop Culture in New York* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Carla Stalling Huntington, "Hip Hop Dance : Meanings and Messages," McFarland & Co.

As this underground movement continued to develop in the United States in the early 1980s, many artists believed hip hop culture was also a means for social critique. Hip hop activists, particularly former South Bronx gang member, Afrika Bambaata, began organizing block parties around his neighborhood in the name of “knowledge, wisdom, understanding, freedom, justice and equality.” He called his informal association of activists the Zulu Nation and this group emphasized hip hop as a specific and authentic culture, expressed through the three artistic modes of music, dance, and art (graffiti). Branches of the Zulu Nation sprang up throughout New York, spreading to Los Angeles and other U.S. cities in the early 1980s. In 1983, Bambaata toured Europe with members of his Zulu Nation which included DJs, graffiti artists, MCs (or rappers) and B-Boys (or break dancers).

Many French hip hop artists describe Bambaata’s Rock Steady Tour as their first important introduction to hip hop culture. Franck II Louise, founder of the first French hip hop dance group, Paris City Breakers, met Bambaata after a performance in one of Paris’ banlieues:

“when I discovered hip hop. I found myself...I was capable of doing something...The idea of Bambaata was huge—everyone knew it—it’s to make positive all the resentment one has against the system. Ok, we are responsible, we can’t just sit back...we take ourselves in hand, we develop our own culture, and we make use of it.”¹⁸²

Similar to the United States, French hip hop developed as a means for social critique, particularly among banlieue youth whose parents or grandparents came from former French colonies or the DOM-TOM. Many French hip hop artists built on Afrika Bambaata’s activism and perceived hip hop as an international culture and mode of

¹⁸² Claudine Moise, "Dire La Danse Hip Hop; Questions De Creation Et De Transmission," *Histoire du Corps* (1998). 19

expression that could best give voice to the local concerns and particularities of everyday life.¹⁸³

In Marseille, a vibrant underground hip hop culture began to thrive in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Some musical groups, like IAM and La Fonky Family achieved national recognition while other musical and dance groups performed in local open mic events or benefit concerts.¹⁸⁴

The composition of many Marseille hip hop groups reflected the city's history of migration from southern Europe and former colonies as well as the geographical areas where new arrivals often settled or were placed by local housing authorities. Many hip hop artists, including members of IAM, grew up in Marseille's northern or downtown neighborhoods. For example, IAM was originally formed in late 1985 under the name Lively Crew, the group's original members MC Akhenaton (Philippe Fragione) and DJ Kheops (Eric Mazel) both grew up in the northern neighborhoods of Marseille. Fragione's family originally came from Italy, while Mazel's mother was Spanish. In 1988 the group changed its name to B Boys Stance and was joined by Freeman (Malek Brahimi, born in Algiers, but grew up in Marseille) a hip hop dancer who began to MC, Imhotep (Pascal Perez born in Algiers), Shurik'n (Geoffroy Mussard born in Réunion) and Kephren (born in Paris to Senegalese parents).

¹⁸³ For studies on international and francophone hip hop culture see: Durand, *Black, Blanc, Beur : Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture in the Francophone World*, Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise : Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, Music/Culture. (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), Bazin, *La Culture Hip-Hop*, Jean Calio, "Le Rap : Une Réponse Des Banlieues?" ENTPE : Aléas, Steve Cannon, "Paname City Rapping: B-Boys in the Banlieues and Beyond," in *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, ed. Alec G. and Mark McKinney Hargreaves (New York: Routledge, 1997), Felicia McCarren, "Monsieur Hip-Hop," in *Blackening Europe: The African American Presence*, ed. Heike Raphael-Hernandez (New York: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁸⁴ Several French hip hop sites featuring music and dance have become important forums for live chat, blogging, and discussion. See for example: www.style2ouf.fr and www.streetlive.fr.

The acronym IAM—which has several meanings—most often refers to: *Invasion Arrivée de Mars*, or Invasion from Mars. In this sense, Mars is a metaphor for Marseille, but is also a double entendre referring to a foreign, alien invasion. In songs like “I Come from the Planet Mars” IAM draws attention to the diverse origins of its members and the ways in which the city of Marseille functions as both urban center and gateway into France:

“I come from Marseille, the city
...that means the logic, unique heat of my beats
...and the siege of the Alliance *Afro-Asiatique*
New rap music, point strategic (*stratégique*)”
...To come from the Planet Mars and not someplace else
Symbolizing the return of the children of the sun
the grey tar streets
...Pounded by prostitutes when the night dawns
It’s from there where I came, there where was I born, rise, up rise
And in some years where my life will end
In this city of 10,000 projects, a thousand and one girls
Where the concrete towers burn
...I come from Marseille!”

The themes of invasion and xenophobia also feature in IAM lyrics:

“Mythic, mystic, nightmare of Xenophobes
...without warning the truth reveals itself to you
A subject taboo
...In Marseille, you’re fucked
..some advice, old guy, try
To assimilate the ballistic linguistics
The phraseologists, kamikaze mythologists
Rhymeologists, scientists and technologies of style
Of rap advanced”

Locality, or the importance of the city and the neighborhood, are common themes for Marseille hip hop groups. For example, Le Rat Luciano (Christophe Carmona) of La Fonky Family was born—and still lives—in the Panier. His father came from Martinique

and his mother is of Spanish descent. As he explained in an interview for the French hip hop website www.streetlive.fr, “I’m *Espangole-Martiniquais*, voilà. But this [the Panier] is my *bled* [native village]. My neighborhood is my *bled*.”¹⁸⁵

As groups like IAM and La Fonky Family achieved national recognition, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the FAS began to view hip hop as one way to socialize youth by reaching out to them on their own terms. Youth in rundown neighborhoods had been practicing hip hop where they could: dancing in abandoned buildings or *terrains vagues* (wastelands or fields) and free-styling on street corners. As part of the urban rehabilitation programs of the late 1980s and 1990s, the Ministry of Youth and Sports created spaces for the practice of hip hop—particularly for music and dance—in youth and recreation centers around France. The goal was to bring hip hop inside and off the streets. As Sylvia Faure and Marie-Carmen Garcia argue, “it became indispensable, in the beginning of the 1980s, to promote new approaches to socialization, notably through the sportive, cultural and artistic practices of youth.”¹⁸⁶ As the ministry attempted to socialize banlieue youth on their own terms, this approach revealed “a tension between a politics of supervision—and an attempt to control youth from the cités—and the institutional support for the practice” of hip hop.¹⁸⁷ On the one hand, hip hop developed as an international movement that critiqued and commented on the particularities of everyday life. In Marseille, hip hop groups commented on the lack of jobs, rundown neighborhoods, discrimination, and violence. Hip hop was also a way to express their local identities as “Marseillais.” On the other hand, state ministries viewed hip hop as

¹⁸⁵ Le Rat Luciano interview for www.streetlive.fr. Uploaded by author on May 8, 2010 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mq8OeSaoJEw&feature=related>.

¹⁸⁶ Faure and Garcia, *Culture Hip-Hop, Jeunes De Cités Et Politiques Publiques*.14

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.10

one way to encourage banlieue youth to integrate by providing them with neighborhood facilities and practice space in youth centers.¹⁸⁸

A series of photographs documenting the activities of the Corderie MJC shows how the center became an important space of local youths interested in hip hop. According to the caption of one photograph, “the hip hop youths are always here!” The photos in the album show young men practicing outside the center:

Figure VI.1 B-Boys practicing outside youth center¹⁸⁹



Another set of photos shows teenagers utilizing the space within the center:

¹⁸⁸ In addition to Faure and Garcia’s *Culture Hip-Hop*, Loïc Lafargue de Grangeneuve, *Politique Du Hip-Hop : Action Publique Et Cultures Urbaines* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2008). and Roberta Shapiro, “The Aesthetics of Institutionalization: Breakdancing in France,” *Journal of Arts Managements, Law and Society* 33, no. 4 (2004) also discuss the recent role of the state in institutionalizing hip hop in France.

¹⁸⁹ MJC Corderie photo album, no date, Marseille Municipal Archives, 1181 W 80

Figure VI.2 Practicing Hip Hop in the Corderie MJC¹⁹⁰



Like the Corderie center in Marseille, MJCs became a space for local youth to gather and practice. Neighborhood youth moved fluidly between outdoor areas—*terrains vagues* and street corners—and the dance studios of youth centers. The MJC also became the site where the state began to institutionalize hip hop as a way to integrate banlieue youth into the body politic. DSQ programs helped legitimate this emerging “street art” and artists and local youth utilized hip hop to critique the aims of socialization amidst ongoing problems of unemployment, job and housing discrimination.

In the final section of this chapter, I explore the debates and tensions following the 1995 murder of a Comorian teenager and member of a Marseille hip hop group. In

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

the demonstrations following the murder, Marseille youth privileged hip hop culture and activism over other youth movements, particularly the activities of older organizations, notably SOS Racisme.

THE MURDER OF IBRAHIM

On February 21, 1995, a seventeen year old boy, Ibrahim Mogni was shot in the back and killed in one of Marseille's northern neighborhoods, La Savine, in the fifteenth arrondissement. He was returning home with two friends around midnight when the boys were pursued by two vehicles "sporting National Front stickers."¹⁹¹ Ibrahim and his friends had formed a hip hop group called B. Vice, and had been practicing in a local youth center before they were attacked. According to one of the boys pursued, "They fired on us like we were rabbits. They pulled out their guns and opened fire. Without any apparent reason."¹⁹² As another youth recounted, "One car seemed to be protecting the other. They made a half turn and drove back towards us. One man got out of the car and shot four times with a pistol. Without exiting the car, another shot. And Ibrahim was hit."¹⁹³ As another friend expressed, "they never gave Ibrahim a chance."¹⁹⁴

In the days after Ibrahim's murder, a *Provençal* reporter went to the local MJC in the La Savine neighborhood and described the "mixed emotions on the faces of thirty youths who met in the small local musical association of La Savine...in one corner, a young Comorian cries quietly. Another—Comorian or not, what does it matter?—sitting

¹⁹¹ *Le Provençal*, February 20, 1995

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Le Provençal*, February 23, 1995

on the ground, his head in his hands. A third bites his lips.”¹⁹⁵ Remembering Ibrahim, the president of the musical association said, “Ibrahim was never a guy who bummed around.”¹⁹⁶

In addition to Ibrahim’s close friends, the *Provençal* reporter also interviewed La Savine residents and learned that the boys had been passing in front of a wall recently plastered with National Front posters when they were attacked.¹⁹⁷ According to residents of La Savine, young men, dressed in military fatigues and boots had been putting up National Front posters around the neighborhood for some time. As one resident interviewed near the scene of the murder stated: “this was bound to happen.” Speaking of the “mood of the neighborhood for several weeks,” this resident said, “we saw the men who put up National Front posters often. They were always wearing military fatigues. While some put up the posters, the others would stand guard like this,” as the newspaper article described, “the young man stood at attention, with his legs straight and slightly spread, his hands on his hips.” As the owner of a neighborhood bar recounted “there were precedents...the occupants of an R18 car (the same model witnessed at the scene of Ibrahim’s murder) attacked a young Maghreb man one month ago.” According to this local business owner, “The police ignored my call.”¹⁹⁸ These residents described a marked increase in the presence of the National Front in their neighborhood and ongoing neglect by the police.¹⁹⁹ In the week after Ibrahim’s murder, two young men claiming

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ In addition to achieving mainstream legitimacy in France as a national party, National Front members were also an increasing presence in “immigrant neighborhoods,” and employed intimidating tactics like sending militant young males to plaster neighborhoods with posters.

membership within the National Front surrendered to the authorities, stating they had attacked Ibrahim and his friends in defense of the posters they had just put up.²⁰⁰

The murder of Ibrahim by local members of the National Front elicited an outpouring of grief from Marseille residents, condemnation from local leaders, and attention from national organizations, especially SOS Racisme. In the week following the murder, the family and friends of Ibrahim organized a peaceful march down the Canebière, Marseille's main avenue, and "15,000 people participated in the demonstration."²⁰¹ According to the wishes of Ibrahim's family, many carried banners which read "justice and security for all." As the *Provençal* reported, marchers included members of the Comorian community "which is 50,000 strong in Marseille," but also "anonymous Marseillais who this tragedy also touched and mobilized."²⁰² Marseille notables and local leaders also marched with the family, including Mayor Robert Vigouroux, who asserted that "My place is here, to demonstrate against a murder, against all racism, and to help all Marseille communities listen to each other."²⁰³ The president of SOS Racisme, Fode Sylla, also flew from Paris to participate in the march and denounced the racism of the National Front: "I am very indignant and shocked," the *Provençal* quoted Sylla.²⁰⁴

Ibrahim was a member of a local hip hop musical group, B. Vice, and the media also focused on the role of hip hop in Ibrahim's life as well as his participation in neighborhood campaigns against discrimination and blight. As the *Provençal* reported, "The group B-Vice, of which young Ibrahim was a member, is one of the most active in

²⁰⁰ *Le Provençal*, February 25, 1995.

²⁰¹ *Le Provençal*, February 26, 1995

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Le Provençal*, February 26, 1995

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

the Marseille rap scene.” B.Vice, which emerged out of a local musical association based in the La Savine MJC “regularly gave concerts and participated in rap festivals in Marseille and the region. The festivals were often organized for humanitarian causes, against exclusion, or the prevention of aids.”²⁰⁵

According to the *Provençal* B.Vice wrote “songs without aggression but without complacency.”²⁰⁶ Their music expressed the “*mal vie* of the banlieues: unemployment, drugs...these songs were sometimes crude—like reality—they hit hard and tell...the everyday lives of these youths.”²⁰⁷ According to this article for the “group B.Vice of which Ibrahim was a part... rap is more than a musical style but a means of non-violent expression.”²⁰⁸ As one member of the group, Soly, was quoted “before, they were minstrels and troubadours. That’s exactly the role that we play, storytellers of what happens in society.”²⁰⁹

In memory of Ibrahim, B.Vice and the Marseille hip hop community organized several open mic nights: “The idea has been in the air since Saturday: reunite a maximum of Marseillais rappers for an open mic in memory of Ibrahim. An homage, of course, but also a means to collect funds for the family of the unfortunate boy.”²¹⁰ The nationally recognized and locally celebrated IAM “concretized the idea, using their influence to obtain the Café-Musique-Julien for the evening.”²¹¹ In addition to IAM, local groups including “Toko, Namor, La Fonky Family, Up Town, Black and White, Soul Swing and B. Vice rapped through the night, denouncing injustice and expressing

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ *Le Provençal*, February 25, 1995.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ *Le Provençal*, February 28, 1995.

²¹¹ Ibid.

their disgust of racism.”²¹² As one member of Soul Swing stated, “What happened to Ibrahim doesn’t surprise us but it still revolts us...What’s particularly repugnant is that he was shot in the back. We know the guys of B. Vice, they aren’t the kind that causes trouble.”²¹³

In addition to their homage to Ibrahim, participants in this open mic nite also affirmed hip hop as the mode of expression that best gave voice to the concerns of neighborhood youth. More specifically, these hip hop activists criticized other organizations, particularly SOS Racisme: “What’s happened tonight is about rap, we speak because we are closer to young people than SOS Racisme... We, by our words, we raise awareness about what goes on.”²¹⁴ The Marseille hip hop community as well as Ibrahim’s family criticized national organizations like SOS Racisme for the attempt to capitalize on the murder and what Ibrahim’s parents called “the exploitation by SOS Racism of the death of the young boy.”²¹⁵ Where SOS Racisme, led by Harlem Desir, had emerged in the early 1980s as the “face” of the new multicultural France, by the 1990s, SOS Racisme had focused on a politics of anti-racism that focused largely on opposition to the National Front. Although SOS Racisme had grown out of the activism of the so-called ‘Beur’ generation of the early 1980s, by the 1990s, local Marseille youth asserted that SOS Racisme did not actually understand their everyday lives. For many, hip hop—partially supported by local state-funded youth centers—became the cultural expression that best gave voice to anxieties about discrimination, racism, and unemployment.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ *Le Provençal*, February 26, 1995

²¹⁵ *Le Provençal*, February 25, 1995

CONCLUSION

This chapter examined how state officials, researchers, and the media constructed certain urban areas as “in crisis” and how problems like unemployment and crime were associated in changing ways with the specter of the “immigrant.” Beginning in the late 1970s, degraded urban areas were increasingly linked with the problem of “immigrant juvenile delinquents,” and the state initiated urban rehabilitation projects at the local level. By examining the urban renewal programs of the mid-1980s, I demonstrated how perceptions of racial and ethnic differences were integral to how the state constructed “citizens” and “immigrants” despite the formal taboo of recognizing such difference. Although national discourses stigmatized the recognition of difference in the public sphere, local policies targeted racial difference or “immigrant populations” as one way to label degraded urban areas. Beginning in the early 1980s, “immigrant youth” from around France began to mobilize, arguing that their neighborhoods were indeed in crisis. For these activists, a key solution to social problems was to embrace multiculturalism. They argued for a break with the outdated model of French Republicanism that only recognized citizens as abstract individuals. For these young activists, the way to fulfill the French republican promise of equality was to embrace the reality that France was multi-cultural: they advocated for political and cultural recognition within the French nation, and for the rehabilitation of their neighborhoods.

By the mid 1990s, the DSQ urban rehabilitation programs devoted more resources to managing the bodies of banlieue youth than renovating rundown buildings and infrastructure. Increased funding for youth centers and recreational programming—particularly for hip hop music and dance—attempted to better integrate disadvantaged

youth by appealing to local expressions of ‘street culture.’ While such funding helped institutionalize hip hop music and dance, activists and local youth benefitted from this programming by utilizing hip hop culture as a means to critique state urban redevelopment plans as well as ongoing problems including unemployment and discrimination.

CHAPTER VII

Autonomie, Egalité, Dignité: **National and Neighborhood Campaigns for Women's Rights from the Glass-ceiling to the Headscarf**

“Married or not, mother or not, a woman is first a person in her own right,” wrote Yvette Roudy after she was appointed the first head of the *Ministère des Droits de la Femme* (Ministry of the Rights of Woman) in 1981.¹ The ministry was established as part of a sweeping wave of reform initiated by the socialists when they came to power under President Francois Mitterrand. As Roudy stated upon her appointment to the ministry, “If France is the country of the rights of man, it should also become the country of the rights of women.”² Most members of the new Ministry of the Rights of Woman (MDF) had been active in the women’s liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s and all had strong ties to the socialist party. The overarching aim of the MDF’s ambitious agenda was to promote what they called the “autonomy” of women. Leaders of the MDF wanted to definitively rework women’s place within the social contract by retooling

¹ Yvette Roudy quoted in Amy Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*, Pitt Series in Policy and Institutional Studies (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995). 196

² Yvette Roudy quoted in Jane Jenson and Mariette Sineau, *Mitterrand Et Les Françaises : Un Rendez-Vous Manqué* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1995). 9

welfare institutions, guaranteeing equal pay, and fundamentally changing gendered attitudes in France.³

In addition to sweeping reforms, an important goal of the socialist agenda was to welcome new constituencies to the party, and the MDF funded a series of local programs to address issues particular to “immigrant” women. The ministry sought to promote the autonomy of “immigrant” women by funding neighborhood women’s associations, and by encouraging them to break with their “oppressive” cultures. However, the MDF was also receptive to the requests and needs articulated by women at the local level. Some women asked for better professional training, others requested funding to establish day care or cultural centers. The agendas of local branches of the MDF thus reflected the concerns of local women. In Marseille neighborhoods, for example, many immigrant women formed associations that encouraged autonomy *and* embraced the cultural diversity of residents. While many members of the national ranks of the MDF viewed “immigrant” culture as a barrier to women’s independence, local women’s associations did not perceive culture and autonomy to be mutually exclusive.

The efforts of the MDF were occurring in a moment when French voters were becoming increasingly anxious about chronic employment and new forms of poverty. In the early 1980s, socialist efforts to address this “crisis of the welfare state” often focused on *égalité*, or promoting individual rights to equality. For example, the MDF worked to insure women’s *égalité* by passing anti-discrimination legislation in the workplace and

³ For discussion of the historical tensions concerning French women’s movements, the particularities of women’s bodies, and the universalism of French republicanism see: Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). For discussion of key themes within French feminism and the women’s liberation movement: Nancy Fraser and Sandra Lee Bartky, *Revaluing French Feminism: Critical Essays on Difference, Agency, and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), Françoise Gaspard, Claude Servan-Schreiber, and Anne Le Gall, *Au Pouvoir, Citoyennes: Liberté, Égalité, Parité* (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1992).

within housing institutions. However, by the mid 1980s, as public anxieties about national decline increased, the socialist agenda began to shift from a focus on *égalité* to *solidarité*, or solidarity. This shift reflected a return to older socialist traditions—grounded in social Catholicism—that imagined solidarity in terms of the family and the nation. By the mid 1980s, the MDF was increasingly marginalized within the socialist government. In 1986, the socialists lost their majority and formed a coalition government with Jacques Chirac’s center right party. The MDF was one of the casualties of the cohabitation. It was stripped of its ministry status, reduced to a “commission on women’s issues,” and its budget was severely cut.

By 1989, many feminist leaders found their campaign to fundamentally change the status quo for women severely limited. Also in 1989, three French-Muslim girls were expelled from middle school for refusing to remove their headscarves. This first headscarf affair became a key rallying point for many French feminists. In a peculiar shift, women leaders and feminists who had previously fought for equality within what they called a discriminatory, patriarchal French system, now seemed to tout French republicanism as the paradigm of equality. Despite the feminist historical critique of how inequalities are constitutive of French republicanism, the condemnation of the headscarf—as a manifestation of radical Islam—became an affirmation of republicanism and the supposed national commitment to the “equality of men and women.”⁴

While studies have discussed how French feminists shifted from a critique of the French system to a critique of Muslim culture, recent scholarship has not yet, however, discussed the “reasons for the abandonment of the themes of job and wage

⁴ Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007).172-172

discrimination, glass ceilings, and domestic violence.”⁵ This chapter examines the brief moment when the Ministry of the Rights of Women was established as an important new state feminist institution, how women leaders of the MDF viewed their agenda as a second wave of the women’s liberation movement, and how their plans to fix problems like the glass ceiling, wage discrimination, and violence, were thwarted by the return to a focus on the traditional family in the late 1980s. I also examine how new feminist discourses emerged out of local women’s associations of recent migrants.⁶ This new feminism linked the legacy of the French empire to contemporary debates about “immigrant” culture, and everyday discrimination against post-colonial migrants in France.⁷ They also criticized mainstream feminists for “abandon[ing] their critique of the status quo in France and rush[ing]” to condemn the headscarf as a symbol of the oppression of immigrant, particularly Muslim women.⁸ This new feminist critique has begun to link issues of race and the colonial past with questions of gender discrimination.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ For discussion of new feminist critiques linking contemporary discrimination in France to the colonial past see: Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," in *After Identity: A Reader in Law and Culture*, ed. Dan Danielson and Karen Engle (New York: Routledge, 1995), Miriam Ticktin, "Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Meet," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33, no. 4 (2008), Pierre Tévanian, *Le Voile Méditerranéen : Un Faux Débat, L'affaire Du Foulard Islamique* (Paris: Raisons d'agir, 2005).

⁷ For discussions of the historical relationship on the intersections gender, race, and empire see: Antoinette M. Burton, *Burdens of History : British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1994), Antoinette M. Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire : Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), Antoinette M. Burton, *After the Imperial Turn : Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham, [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2003), Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class : Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992), Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation : Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 2000), Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, *At Home with the Empire : Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power : Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945, Politics, History, and Culture* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2001).

⁸ Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*.171-173

“A MINISTRY NOT LIKE THE OTHERS”

Most members of the new Ministry of the Rights of Woman had been involved in the women’s liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Many women who participated in the protests of 1968 were part of the emerging “new left” generation.⁹ These women activists built on the new left critique of traditional democracy and elite power, and turned this critique against the left itself. They “denounced the sexual division of activist work (‘loudspeakers for the men, typewriters for the women’) and the power relations in the organizations of the extreme left.”¹⁰

Within state institutions and national political parties, other activists began to work from within the system for policy reform. In 1962, several women members of the socialist party formed the *Mouvement Démocratique Feminin* to lobby for women’s issues within the party. Key members of the group, including Marguerite Thibert, Marie-Therese Eyquem, Colette Audry, Genevieve Rocard, Gisele Halimi and Yvette Roudy, would play important roles in the future campaigns of the mid 1970s and 1980s.¹¹ While women activists worked with the parties of the left, feminists also lobbied for change within the center right parties. For example, in 1965, a small policy group of women experts within the De Gaulle administration advocated for expanded women’s rights and attempted to “draw government attention to the problem of sex-based discrimination in

⁹ 343 women (including Simone de Beauvoir) signed the manifesto, “I’ve had an abortion.” Which was published in *Le Nouvel Observateur* in April 1972

¹⁰ Françoise Picq, *Libération Des Femmes : Les Années-Mouvement* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1993).37

¹¹ Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*. 37

employment.”¹² Based on the efforts of these state feminists, in 1974, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing established a commission on “Woman’s Condition.”¹³

During the 1960s, French feminists who formed the *Mouvement Démocratique Féminin* were closely allied with François Mitterrand a key leader of the non-communist left.¹⁴ For many activists, Mitterrand’s position on women’s issues was distinct from other politicians on the right or left. He distinguished women from their roles as wives and mothers, privileging women’s workplace and political rights over the domestic sphere.¹⁵ He also realized that “winning over a younger generation of women would be crucial to the success of the Left in upcoming elections.”¹⁶ Mitterrand cultivated ties with the women socialists and activists of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1981, when Mitterrand was elected president, and the socialists came to power, he established the Ministry of the Rights of Woman, and appointed feminist activist and longtime socialist, Yvette Roudy, head of the ministry.

Between 1981 and 1986, the MDF had the largest budget of any previous women’s commission.¹⁷ For example the budget increased from 9.27 million francs in 1981 to 128.9 million francs in 1986 (approximately 1.5 to 21.5 million dollars).¹⁸ Members of Roudy’s staff, Louise Brocas and Simone Iff, described the environment at the MDF: “that staff worked in a highly unconventional manner, operating more like consciousness-raising groups of the feminist movement than meetings of a government

¹² Ibid. 195

¹³ Picq, *Libération Des Femmes : Les Années-Mouvement*. 38

¹⁴ Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*. 36

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. 198

¹⁸ However, the MDF’s budget was never more than about 0.01 percent of the total state budget. Ibid.

ministry... this new state feminism had more overtly political motivations.”¹⁹ As Minister Roudy explained in a 1984 press conference, “We are a ministry not like the others.”²⁰

In 1981, one of the first initiatives of the MDF was to create a special commission to evaluate the situation of French women. The report identified the issues of greatest concern for women in France: “contraception and abortion, professional equality, the fight against sexism, the larger presence of women in political assemblies.” The report “also insisted on the active role that women should take themselves, collectively and individually in changing their condition.”²¹ This document became a key reference for subsequent MDF campaigns.

A central aim of the MDF was to definitively purge the “vestiges of the Napoleonic Civil Code” from French law.²² MDF members were critical of the ways in which the civil code did not protect women as individuals, but in terms of their roles as wives and mothers.²³ For example, although women were granted the right to vote in 1944, the post World War Two welfare state continued to institute key elements of the

¹⁹ In addition to the ministry’s emphasis on activism, Roudy tended to appoint members who had been loyal to the movement and to the socialist party. For example, “one of Roudy’ first actions was to...replace administrators with her own people. In many cases, appointments to delegations were used as a way of rewarding party service. Pascal Crozon, regional delegate of the Rhones-alpes, was appointed in 1984 for her contribution to the Rhone-Alpes federation of the PX.” Ibid. 198. As Mazur argues, “The subsidies given to certain feminist groups and to feminist studies conferences meant that the roudy ministry had a great deal of control over feminist action in the 1980s.” Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*.198-9.

²⁰ Jenson and Sineau, *Mitterrand Et Les Françaises : Un Rendez-Vous Manqué*.

²¹ Ibid. 190

²² Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*. 41

²³ Ibid.32

old civil code, promoting a *femme au foyer* welfare model.²⁴ For example, until 1965, women required consent from their husbands to obtain credit or work outside the home.²⁵

One of the MDF's initial reforms addressed the issue of surnames and paternity. Under the Napoleonic code, children could only legally take the surnames of their fathers. Legislation passed in 1985 reworked the code and permitted children to legally take their mother's surname.²⁶ The MDF was thus a significant departure from earlier women's groups, like the "commission on the condition of women," because it separated family policy and women's rights policy.²⁷ However, the MDF also built on many of the reforms of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, the Equal Pay law of 1972 was viewed to be largely symbolic, and the 1985 Roudy law on professional equality was intended to give real teeth to the earlier reform by establishing funding for professional training and development for women.

By building on earlier reforms, the MDF also hoped to fundamentally change gendered attitudes in France. The MDF utilized the media, particularly mass advertising, as one way to diffuse information regarding its agenda. One of the first media campaigns of the MDF was to encourage more women to use contraception by neutralizing the taboo about talking about birth control. Contraception was legalized in 1965, but as Yvette Roudy noted in a 1981 press conference, "[birth control] has not entered entirely into

²⁴ For scholarship on the gendered welfare state, specifically the distinction between guaranteeing rights and protecting needs see: Jane Lewis, "Women's Welfare : Women's Rights," Croom Helm, Carole Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State," in *Democracy and the Welfare State*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton: Princeton, 1988).

²⁵ Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*.

²⁶ Important reforms and removal of last vestiges of Napoleonic civil code: "1970 and 1972 laws on parental authority, the Veil law on voluntary termination of pregnancy (voted in 1976 and adopted in 1979), divorce law reforms in 1976, the new rape law in 1983, the Roudy law on professional equality between men and women in 1985 and the Reform of the Civil Code, which notably allows children to legally use their mother's name" Picq, *Libération Des Femmes : Les Années-Mouvement*. 41

²⁷ Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*. 196

common usage.”²⁸ According to statistical data compiled by INSEE, women—notably young women—were still not making regular use of contraception despite its being legalized in 1965. In the 1970s, many associations, notably the *Mouvement Français pour le planning familial* (MFPPF) had tried, with little success, to launch public awareness campaigns about birth control. As these organizations noted, the diffusion of information about contraception was often overshadowed by the 1975 law legalizing abortions which also stipulated that abortions could not be utilized as a method of contraception. Moreover, few politicians and government officials backed these public awareness campaigns of the 1970s for fear of losing supports from pronatalists, who remained an important constituency.²⁹

Where earlier campaigns promoting birth control and family planning had failed, the MDF’s 1981 campaign was largely successful. The MDF disseminated information about contraception through television advertisements and posters in metro and train stations. More than fifteen million pamphlets were distributed in city halls and post offices around the nation listing addresses of local family planning agencies. Brochures detailing contraceptive methods and products were also distributed, and Agnes Varda, the famed new wave filmmaker, was commissioned to make a short film about contraception.³⁰ According to statistics compiled by the INSEE, and family planning agencies around France, the campaign seemed to work. In one year, the number of women who phoned or visited planning centers doubled. Statistics also showed a marked increase in birth control use, particularly among young women—a targeted demographic

²⁸ Quoted in Jenson and Sineau, *Mitterrand Et Les Françaises : Un Rendez-Vous Manqué*. 192

²⁹ Ibid. 193

³⁰ Ibid. 193-7

for the MDF—who began to use some method of contraception from their first sexual experience.³¹ Despite some resistance from catholic and family groups who condemned this “campaign against the child,”³² the public awareness “initiative affirmed the efforts of the ministry.”³³

The contraception campaign, as well as new anti-gender discrimination and equal pay laws were an important part of the MDF’s efforts to promote women as citizens, irrespective of their marital or family status. The title of the ministry’s publication *Citoyennes à part entière* (Citizens in their own right) reflected the “concerns of the socialist feminists to promote women’s rights independently of any established familial role.”³⁴ Autonomy was thus a key term that appeared frequently in MDF correspondence and publications. The MDF would promote the autonomy of women by changing stereotypical attitudes about women’s equality and ability.

As the goal of the MDF was to promote the autonomy of all women, the MDF also focused on the situation of “immigrant” women in France as part of the larger project. While the population of migrant families settling in France had grown steadily since the 1950s and 1960s, after 1974, the familial population spiked dramatically as male workers took advantage of the family regroupment loophole in the 1974 immigration ban. Families from former colonies had become increasingly visible in France, and the MDF targeted “immigrant” women as a promising new constituency for the socialist party. Many of the women the MDF labeled “immigrants” were from former

³¹ Ibid. 194

³² *Confederation Nationale des Association Familiales Catholiques*, 1981 le Monde article, quoted in Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Mazur, *Gender Bias and the State : Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France*.196-7

colonies—like Algeria—or overseas territories (DOM-TOM). Thus some had French nationality—particularly those from the DOM-TOM, while others did not.

A 1983 special issue of the *Cahiers du Feminisme* titled “Immigrant Women: They no longer want to remain silent” described the particular situation of migrant women in France.³⁵ According to the journal:

“immigrant women, *magrebines*, Portuguese, Africans, etc...[are] hidden away in their HLM, their isolation and dependence on men aggravated by their ignorance of French. These women are assigned the role of guardians of tradition from their countries of origin...They constitute the first wave of immigrants who came from rural areas, often illiterate and without qualifications, coming from countries where women are without right and are totally in submission to patriarchal authority.”³⁶

According to this journal, isolation was a key problem among migrant women. Kept at home, “immigrant women” were alienated from public life. In the publications of feminist journals as well as the reports conducted by the MDF, “isolation” was a key issue affecting the autonomy of “immigrant women.”

The distinction between first and second generations of migrant women was another key issue. An article in *Migrants Formation* focused on young girls who were “torn between strong traditions at home, and life outside the home” and their families.³⁷ While “immigrant parents are lenient with sons they are very strict with daughters [and] think education is more important for sons than for daughters.”³⁸ For women of north or sub-Saharan African origin, the journal addressed the “difficulties specific” to these

³⁵ “Immigrant Women : They no longer want to remain silent,” *Cahiers du Feminisme*. No. 26, Autumn 1983. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 115

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ « Les Femmes et les Jeunes Filles immigrés » in the journal *Migrants Formation*, no date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

³⁸ Ibid.

populations.³⁹ These women “are principally wives of migrant workers, mothers of several children who have generally never worked either in France or their country of origin.”⁴⁰ As one MDF report stated, “everyone knows that the socio-religious customs of North Africans gravely compromise the adaptation of daughters to the educational system and their professional insertion.”⁴¹

However, as the author wrote in the *Cahiers du Feminisme* article, “things are beginning to change among immigrant women.”⁴² In particular, the journal focused on the second generation of immigrant women “especially female *maghrebines* [who are] breaking with older customs, are more qualified, better educated, and have new aspirations.”⁴³ The article also conflated “Muslim culture” with “immigrant culture” by detailing the testimonies of two young girls who struggle to negotiate between a patriarchal Muslim culture and a progressive, equitable, French society:

“Latifa: autumn 1982, attempted suicide, she no longer supports the attitude of her parents. 15 days in the hospital, returns to family. ‘Since adolescence, it’s all deteriorated. I have absolutely no liberty. My parents want to impose their customs on me. I feel like I must maintain the role of a women waiting to be married. My parents want me to marry a Moroccan customs agent.’

Saleha: Summer of 1982, she asks for protection and temporary shelter in a women’s shelter because her father was trying to force her to go to Algeria. Her family goes back to Algeria but she stays with her brother in France, attending professional training classes. The father refuses to let her take a job, saying that she should use her capacities to raise children.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *Centre d'Information et d'Orientation, Academie Aix-Marseille, Report : Actions Experimentales en vue de L'information, L'orientation, et l'insertion professionnelle des enfants de familles immigrees.* May 1984. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 117

⁴² “Immigrant Women : They no longer want to remain silent,” *Cahiers du Feminisme*. No. 26, Autumn 1983. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 115

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The solution, proposed by this journal and by the regional and national branches of the Ministry of the Rights of Woman, was to encourage and facilitate greater autonomy for women of immigrant origin, particularly maghrib women. A 1983 circular from the Secretary of State in charge of the Family asserted the need for “a better insertion of women, notably young women of the second generation...permitting access to a sufficient social autonomy.”⁴⁵

Promoting the autonomy of all women was a key goal of the MDF. While rhetoric about the autonomy of French women often focused on the structural barriers to access, rhetoric about “immigrant” women discussed the cultural barriers to autonomy. In other words, for immigrant women, achieving autonomy was more a cultural than structural problem. To better achieve autonomy, the MDF focused on funding local initiatives for all women, and special programs for “immigrant women.” For “immigrant women” to achieve greater autonomy, they would need to show a demonstrable break with older traditions and accept: “the right to education, the right to freedom of conduct and body, the right to live outside marriage, and the right to contraception.”⁴⁶ The MDF, in partnership with the FAS, drafted social education programs aimed at “adapting [immigrant women] to a new social and familial economy (including sewing, cooking, and sanitary education) which are the rudiments of French culture.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Quoted in « Les Les Femmes et le Jeunes Filles immigrés » in the journal *Migrants Formation*, no date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

⁴⁶ *Centre d'Action Municipale Pour l'emploi et la formation des jeunes femmes et filles du maghreb en terre Provençal*, Report submitted to *Delegation Regionale des Droits de la Femme*. July 4, 1984. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 117

⁴⁷ « Les Les Femmes et le Jeunes Filles immigrés » in the journal *Migrants Formation*, no date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

PROMOTING AUTONOMY: NEIGHBORHOOD BRANCHES OF THE MDF

Efforts to promote the autonomy of “immigrant women” were part of the MDF’s larger project to establish and fund local institutions that worked with women’s groups and local authorities. By 1983, there were 136 local centers around France called *Centre d’Information sur les Droits des Femmes*, or CIDF.⁴⁸ According to the charter of the CIDF, these institutions would “collaborate with the regional Delegation of the Rights of Woman and represent them at the departmental or local level.”⁴⁹ As “a liaison between local collectivities and public organisms,” the CIDFs had the “goal to inform women—free of charge—and the public in general, regarding women’s rights in all domains” including “family law, labor law, social legislation, professional information, and sexual life.”⁵⁰ By working with social workers, municipal authorities, and neighborhood associations, the local CIDF would “aid women by informing and orienting them regarding their rights.”⁵¹ Moreover, by “promoting the rights of women at different levels: the neighborhood, city, department, region” local CIDFs would work to change public attitudes about women.⁵²

Local CIDFs initiated multifaceted campaigns including: professional training and development, drivers training, in-services on home and car repair, and funding local women’s associations. For example, a newspaper article reporting on the Aix-en-Provence CIDF, stated in its headline that “women can do it all too.” The article described a training session on the rudimentaries of home and car repair. Over two days,

⁴⁸ Jenson and Sineau, *Mitterrand Et Les Françaises : Un Rendez-Vous Manqué*. 191

⁴⁹ *Charte du Centre d’Information sur les Droits des Femmes*, no date, page 9, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Stage d’insertion, Amicale Laique du Mourillon*, 1984, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 1117

women learned to “lay tile, unclog a sink...change a tire.” According to this article, the session was part of the local initiative “of which the goal is to teach women their rights and means for resolving social and familial problems.”⁵³

Like the national Ministry of the Rights of Woman, local CIDs often used the language of autonomy in their promotion of women’s rights. For example, in a local CID established in 1983 and based in northern Marseille neighborhoods, the office described “The social objective [and] general goal is the autonomy of women.”⁵⁴ This local CID would “offer women a place for dialogue and exchange; put at women’s disposition, by all appropriate means, the information that they need in order to exercise their rights and facilitate their everyday life.” In addition to working with local women, this CID would also “participate in the local definition [of the] political agenda with the goal to ameliorate the rights and situation of women.”⁵⁵ In another CID located in the Panier neighborhood near downtown, this office similarly described “the goals of our CID [are] to offer women a place for exchange and dialogue...to permit in the definition and work of the local plan, a politics that ameliorates the rights and situation of women.”⁵⁶

Local and national branches of the MDF also encouraged women to participate in neighborhood initiatives.⁵⁷ CIDs tailored programs to fit the needs and requests of local women. For example, in the thirteenth and fourteenth arrondissements north of

⁵³ Newspaper article, not title, no date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 27

⁵⁴ *Annual Report, Centre d’information sur les droits des femmes, 13th and 14th arrondissements, Le St. Barthelemy*, 1987, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Rapport d’Activité, CIDF Belsunce Panier*, 1986, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

⁵⁷ *Charte du Centre d’Information sur les Droits des Femmes*, no date, page 9, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

downtown Marseille, the neighborhood CIDF described in an annual report that neighborhood women had not participated very much in social programming. The CIDF explained that local authorities have had “difficulty communicating with the public concerned.”⁵⁸ The “systems and methods that [government employees and social workers] draw from don’t always correspond to the social practices”⁵⁹ of women residents. In other words, the social welfare system in place did not necessarily address the needs of the local population of women in living in these northern neighborhoods. The CIDF explained the “difficulties of social workers to communicate with the public concerned” in terms of “differences stemming from differences of culture and origin.”⁶⁰ According to the report, this resulted “in few women getting involved” in local initiatives.⁶¹

For this CIDF, “a key goal...was to work on mechanisms of communication” with the local population. In particular, the CIDF, in partnership with other state run welfare institutions and associations, attempted to improve communication with local residents by increasing efforts to incorporate women residents in local initiatives.⁶² The CIDF began listening more carefully to the concerns of women living in the thirteenth and fourteenth arrondissements with the goal to provide assistance and training based on the concerns of women in the neighborhood.

Over several months, the CIDF gathered information from women residents of the neighborhood to determine their general concerns. According to the director of the CIDF

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

in a 1986 report, “from documentation conducted since 1984, the CIDF can effectively respond to the demands of women in the following areas: family law, employment law, professional training, sexual and social life.”⁶³ According to the CIDF’s documentation, most women inquired after employment, followed by questions about family law, social security, housing, and immigration law.

Table VII.1 CIDF Documentation of Women’s Requests and Questions⁶⁴

Sector	Front Desk	Letter	Telephone	Total
Family Law	40	4	28	72
Labor Law	15	-	4	19
Social Legislation	33	4	7	44
Immigration	21	-	3	24
Professional (employment and training)	204	10	35	149
Everyday Life (rent, consumerism)	36	1	24	61
Sexuality, Health	2	-	1	3
Miscellaneous	14	-	-	14
Total	365	19	102	486

By encouraging local women to participate in defining their social needs, the kinds of training or programs that emerged in different neighborhoods often reflected the more local concerns of female residents. This attention to the local concerns of women also reflected the questions and concerns of migrant women. While the national MDF and feminist publications described “immigrant culture” as the main factor leading to the

⁶³ *Annual Report, Centre d’information sur les droits des femmes, 13th and 14th arrondissements, Le St. Barthelemy, 1987*, page 1-2, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

⁶⁴ Ibid.

“isolation” of migrant women, the efforts of local CIDs to listen to women’s needs revealed that most “immigrant” women were more worried about housing and jobs.

According to a CID report, in these northern Marseille neighborhoods of the thirteenth and fourteenth arrondissements, most residents were recent migrants from Algeria, Morocco as well as the Comorian islands in the Indian Ocean. This population reflected the influx of migrants from north Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, and the increase in migration from the Comores in the 1970s and 1980s.

In addition to seeking advice on social welfare and employment, these women requested a “place for inter-ethnic dialogue and exchange.”⁶⁵ In response to women’s requests for more inter-ethnic activities, the CID hosted three neighborhood week-long forums in 1986. According to the CID, “residents who participated asked to discuss the cultural origins of the populations living in their neighborhoods.”⁶⁶ On May 18-22 and 26-27, 1987, the CID hosted in-services to discuss “similarities and differences between Maghreb and Comorian communities.”⁶⁷ According to the annual report, the participants outlined “some themes for discussion” which included the “history of French colonialism in both Algerian and Comorian colonies.”⁶⁸ The women participants also discussed “distinctions in religion [or] how both communities are largely Muslim, but have different customs for practicing Islam.”⁶⁹ Based on the requests of women residents for more opportunities for cultural exchange, other local CIDs similarly hosted

⁶⁵ Annual Report, *Centre d’information sur les droits des femmes, 13th and 14th arrondissements, Le St. Barthelemy*, 1987, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

⁶⁶ *Bilan de l’action “Les Mécanismes de communication,” Centre d’Information des Droits de la Femme, Thirteenth and fourteenth arrondissements, Marseille*, 1987, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

multicultural programs and workshops.⁷⁰ For example, the CIDF located in the Panier neighborhood in downtown Marseille worked with women “to promote a climate of tolerance and acceptance of different cultures.”⁷¹ Women in Marseille neighborhoods—many from former colonies or the DOM-TOM—requested forums and workshops to discuss issues of culture and ethnicity. For both the local and national branches of the MDF, encouraging women to participate and take initiative in defining their everyday needs, was a central goal. Although the national MDF tended to describe “immigrant culture” as a barrier to autonomy and social welfare, local CIDFs honored local women’s requests, organizing a series of multicultural discussions.

FUNDING “IMMIGRANT” WOMEN’S ASSOCIATIONS

The MDF also encouraged immigrant women to form their own organizations. A memo drafted from the Ministry of the Rights of Woman called for “developing the autonomy of immigrant women, particularly by...supporting the associations of African women.”⁷² As the government had passed the 1981 law permitting immigrants to form associations, the MDF took advantage of this new legislature to promote immigrant women associations.

In the early 1980s, the FAS, the city of Marseille, and the Ministry of the Rights of Woman began to fund a number of associations of migrant women. One of the earliest associations, the *Mouvement des Femmes en Action* (MFA), was comprised of mostly

⁷⁰ *Rapport d’Activité, CIDF Belsunce Panier*, 1986, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 110

⁷¹ *Centre d’Activités Feminines, Maison pour Tous Leo Lagrange du Panier*, 1984, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 109

⁷² Letter detailing collaboration between the *Ministère des Droits de la Femme*, the *Conseil National des Populations immigrées*, and the *Fonds D’Action Social*. No date, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 117

second generation women of “maghrib origin” concerned with questions of women’s independence within their communities. Their mandate was to encourage young girls to “escape their prescribed status within maghrib families and affirm their independence.”⁷³ While this association was comprised of Maghreb women, other local associations were a mix of women from diverse backgrounds, and were usually tied to specific Marseille neighborhoods. For example the *Association des Femmes de Toutes Origines* (The Association of Women of All Origins) was located in one of the northern Marseille neighborhoods. Its activities including running a restaurant, and offering courses on sewing and literacy.⁷⁴ A 1984 report on “immigrant women in the region” explained that “there are a number of immigrant women who desire change and manifest this desire in the development of initiatives relative to achieving autonomy and to taking charge of social and economic problems.”⁷⁵

In 1985, a group of women in the Belsunce neighborhood located in downtown Marseille, proposed the creation of a women’s group called “*Solidarité-Association Femmes Immigrées et leurs Amis*” or Solidarity-Association of Women Immigrants and their Friends (SAFIA).⁷⁶ The organization was comprised of “about thirty young women and mothers of families.”⁷⁷ According to the president of the association, Zohra Benhamouda, the goal of the group was to “break through the isolation of women in the

⁷³ Jocelyne Cesari, "L'intégration Des Femmes Maghrébines Dans La Ville: L'exemple De Marseille," in *Marseillaises: Les Femmes Et La Ville (Des Origines À Nos Jours)*, ed. Yvonne Knibiehler (Paris: Cote-Femmes, 1993). 366-7

⁷⁴ Ibid. 367

⁷⁵ PACA Report, *Femmes immigrés dans la région*, 1984, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 117

⁷⁶ *La Deleegue Regionale a la Condition Feminine*, Memo regarding SAFIA, August 20, 1986, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 109

⁷⁷ *Projet Femmes, Belsunce/Porte d'Aix, Association 'SAFIA'*, no date, p. 4, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 109.

neighborhood, to celebrate their cultures, to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and to be a tool for the communication and participation in social life and the amelioration of standards of living.”⁷⁸

In their reports, SAFIA echoed the language of the central MDF, asserting that “isolation” was one of the central problems preventing the “autonomy” of migrant women: “The essential problem that the majority of women suffer in the neighborhood is that of isolation... Women only go out very little and their familial preoccupations are often demanding.”⁷⁹ However, while the MDF tended to describe the cultural origins of the problem of isolation of migrant women, SAFIA members focused on the structural barriers that excluded migrant women from social and economic institutions: “The structures or social institution in place for Belsunce women do not suffice, meeting places are lacking... [women also live in] dilapidated housing with poor amenities and limited budgets.”⁸⁰ The members of SAFIA proposed “to breakdown the cultural and social isolation of women in this neighborhood by establishing communication with social and institutional partners and actively participating in the amelioration of their way of life.”⁸¹ In particular, “this association proposes to establish a *salon de thé* in a neighborhood where all bars and public places are exclusively frequented by men.”⁸² The objective of the tea salon was “to create a place for exchange and meeting... [and to] legitimate the feminine character of the place.”⁸³ The tea salon would be the central meeting place

⁷⁸ Letter from President of SAFIA to the Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, January 3, 1985, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 109

⁷⁹ *Projet Femmes, Belsunce/Porte d’Aix, Association ‘SAFIA’*, no date, p. 4, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 109

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Underscore in the original, Ibid.

from which SAFIA members would plan “family outings as well as professional training sessions.”⁸⁴ In addition, SAFIA members proposed working with local municipal authorities and groups to “create a day care center.”⁸⁵

The SAFIA women defined the objectives of the group as a way to overcome “isolation,” but they also discussed their tea salon as a “pluri-cultural place for the different communities represented in the neighborhood. A place for the local expression of different ethnicities.”⁸⁶ According to one report, the women of the SAFIA group have “expressed their needs... necessary to their personal growth and their insertion in society.”⁸⁷ These needs included the desire to develop their “social and professional life” as well as the interest to develop a deeper knowledge of “their own cultures and traditions.”⁸⁸ In particular, the women of the SAFIA group wanted “to be recognized as whole citizens.”⁸⁹

The national MDF linked the problem of isolation to the problem of immigrant culture. For the MDF, breaking with “immigrant culture” was an important first step towards achieving autonomy. In contrast, local associations discussed isolation as the problem of the lack of dialogue among women from diverse backgrounds who shared similar concerns about jobs, housing, and social welfare. While the national MDF suggested that immigrant women would achieve autonomy by breaking with their cultures, local women’s associations embraced cultural practices and ethnic diversity as the means to facilitate greater independence. These tensions between the diversity of

⁸⁴ *Projet Femmes, Belsunce/Porte d’Aix, Association ‘SAFIA’*, no date, p. 5, Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives, 1451 W 109

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

local agendas and the national campaign of the MDF were due in part to the ways in which the national MDF encouraged local women's groups to articulate and express their own needs and concerns.

A NEW CHEF DE FAMILLE? FROM FALLEN WOMEN TO WOMEN IN DIFFICULTY

In addition to the MDF's efforts to promote the autonomy of "immigrant" women, the institution was concerned about a growing demographic of women living in poverty. Many were single mothers and chronically unemployed. For example, in March 1981, the unemployment rate was two times higher for women workers (9.5% of the population of active women compared to 4.9% for men).⁹⁰ The MDF called this growing demographic of single mothers in France "women in difficulty." In creating this category, the MDF was trying to change attitudes about women in France by showing that single motherhood was not a factor of some moral failing, but due to choice or structural circumstances. Some were single mothers because they chose to "do it all and do it well." Others were single mothers due to structural circumstances. As one 1984 MDF report stated: "Single mothers as *chefs de la famille* are in conflict with the familial and social norm of married women... But things are beginning to change..."⁹¹

New statistical data seemed to support MDF claims that traditional family composition was changing: marriage rates began to lower in 1972, and the number of divorces increased beginning in 1970. The traditional family model, grounded in

⁹⁰ Data compiled by INSEE quoted in Jenson and Sineau, *Mitterrand Et Les Françaises : Un Rendez-Vous Manqué*.210

⁹¹ Report: Femmes En Difficulté, GRAIF, 1984 Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

marriage, was being replaced by alternative practices including unmarried couples who cohabitated and also had children.⁹² The population census showed an increase of the number of single-parent families between 1968 and 1975, and an even higher increase between 1975 and 1982.⁹³ In 1968, single parent families (both men and women) numbered 658,280. In 1975 the number rose to 726,320 and to 846,820 in 1982. Overall, the number of single parent families increased 10.4% between 1968 and 1975, and 16.59% between 1975 and 1982.⁹⁴ Beginning in 1975, divorce became the number one reason for the rise of single parent families.⁹⁵ Both the 1968 and 1975 censuses revealed that single parent families were often working class or unemployed women between 25 and 29 years old.⁹⁶ Moreover, the number of children per single parent family increased between 1975 and 1982.

In the attempt to destigmatize single mothers and promote their “autonomy,” the MDF began establishing programs to address the structural circumstances of many single mothers: “In recent years, authorities have been confronted with dramatic situations of women without homes, unemployed, with no professional training, without resources, single with children.”⁹⁷ The report also discussed dominant stereotypes of the image of the “fallen woman:” “images of women in difficulty in the collective conscience are vague but mostly negative. Single moms, abandoned women, unemployed women, deprived women, without social anchorage: these are the clichés that circulate... Why did

⁹² Nathalie Martin-Papineau, *Les Familles Monoparentales : Émergence, Construction, Captations D'un Problème Dans Le Champ Politique Français, 1968-1988*, Collection Logiques Politiques (Paris: Harmattan, 2001). 10

⁹³ Ibid. 31

⁹⁴ Ibid. 43

⁹⁵ Ibid. 31

⁹⁶ Ibid. 48-49

⁹⁷ Report: Femmes En Difficulté, GRAIF, 1984 Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

she lose her social status? Why didn't she do better? In the eyes of the public, the single mother frequently becomes culpable—the one at fault... It's the woman that society punishes."⁹⁸ In creating a new category "Women in Difficulty," the MDF initiated a series of programs including professional training and development, and facilitated easier access to housing.

Regionally, local branches of the MDF in Marseille focused on the problem of housing "women in difficulty." In 1985, the Regional Delegation of the Rights of Woman organized a series of meetings with local representatives from women's shelters, and public housing offices to address "social housing for women and mothers in difficulty."⁹⁹ They identified the "primary axes of the housing problem: women's shelters do not have enough power to work with the HLM offices to find autonomous apartments for single women. The access to permanent housing is practically impossible which results in overcrowding in shelters where women are often separated from their children."¹⁰⁰ In short, women's shelters "only offer a short term solution" and it was very difficult for single women to gain access to HLMs. Historically, public housing offices favored "traditional" families. Single or divorced mothers were often not considered viable or desirable candidates for HLM housing.¹⁰¹ The report thus called on "the need to facilitate access to permanent and autonomous housing."¹⁰² The key outcome of these meetings was to create a special housing allocation program for women in difficulty.

⁹⁸ Report: Femmes En Difficulté, GRAIF, 1984 Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

⁹⁹ *La Delegation Regionale aux Droits de la Femme*, Meeting regarding Housing and Management. No date 1985. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

¹⁰⁰ *La Delegation Regionale aux Droits de la Femme*, Meeting regarding Housing and Management. No date 1985. Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

¹⁰¹ See dossier on housing applications Marseille Municipal Archives, 540 W 9

¹⁰² Report: Femmes En Difficulté, GRAIF, 1984 Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116

Women could work with the local MDF and social workers to complete a housing application. An MDF delegate would then work with the local HLM office to find new housing for women applicants. The housing form was completed by a social worker based on an interview with the woman applicant.¹⁰³ Like earlier household studies¹⁰⁴ from the 1950s, the form noted the number of children, profession, and salary. However, these forms differed in that they specifically underscored the status of women as divorced, separated, or unmarried with children. Many women applicants were unemployed, were victims of domestic violence, and had left their homes to seek refuge with their children in a women's shelter. In cases of absent fathers, the social worker often noted that the fathers were "in prison" or "abandoned the family," leaving them "without resources."¹⁰⁵ In all cases, the status of being "a woman in difficulty" was a prerequisite for gaining housing. This housing allocation program was part of the MDF's larger agenda to de-stigmatize the category "single mother" as well as to turn the older "chef de famille" model on its head.

Increasingly, within the regional and national MDF, debates about "women in difficulty" often focused on the special circumstances of "immigrant women." A social worker, Y. Roque described what she saw as the particularly difficult situation of immigrant women:

"Their chances of getting out from under are clearly less good if they are foreigners. They come like Amazons with their children or else call us up and ask: 'When can one get an appointment? I am fed up, I am leaving.' For those victims of domestic abuse who do leave their husbands, they face particular difficulty in the housing market: 'No Work, no housing'... Women who have temporary work are almost always rejected by subsidized housing projects (HLM)

¹⁰³ See Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116 : Housing Applications dossier

¹⁰⁴ See chapter three.

¹⁰⁵ See Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Archives 1451 W 116 : Housing Applications dossier

that don't consider their situation stable enough to be able to hold down an apartment. Furthermore, a woman alone with her children who comes up against these difficulties is much more penalized if she is a foreigner and colored."¹⁰⁶

According to a French welfare specialist writing in the journal of the Belgium Feminist Research institution (GRIF):

“the situation is more dire for foreigners or French citizens from the DOM-TOM... One is well aware of the difficulties of Magrebian women ... The difficulties of women from the Caribbean who are looking after several children, from different—and absentee-fathers, are less well known. Many women already have lived in women's homes and depend heavily on health and social security benefits. Their cultural resources are very low. They live without making plans for the future but very quickly feel guilty when faced with the problem of children.”¹⁰⁷

Regional reports submitted to Yvette Roudy focused increasingly on the particularities of “immigrant” women in difficulty. “Immigrant” women began to emerge as a specific category within the larger demographic of women living in poverty. According to MDF reports “immigrant women” were more likely to face housing and employment discrimination.

For social workers and MDF employees, “immigrant women” included those from the Maghreb—often from Algeria, Tunisia, and other countries in North Africa—as well as those from the Caribbean and the DOM-TOM. While Algerians, for example, were more likely to have Algerian citizenship, those from the Caribbean were most likely from Frances overseas territories, or the DOM-TOM. These women, therefore, technically had French nationality even though they were described as foreigners. MDF reporting thus conflated “foreignness” with perceptions of race. MDF reporting also

¹⁰⁶ Magdalena Franciscus, Report to Yvette Roudy quoted in Francoise Dasques, "Les Femmes Et Le Pauvreté," *Nouvelle Pauvreté, Nouvelle Société: Cahiers du GRIF* 30 (1985). 237

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 232

reflected assumptions about the cultural practices of “Caribbean” women, specifically the notion that women from the DOM-TOM have many children with different, absentee fathers. While the MDF tried to de-stigmatize “women in difficulty” by emphasizing the socio-economic circumstances affecting single mothers, when discussing the particularities of “immigrant women in difficulty,” the MDF tended describe pathologies somehow intrinsic to immigrant culture.

FROM WOMEN IN DIFFICULTY TO FAMILIES IN DIFFICULTY: “IMMIGRANTS” AND THE CRISIS OF THE WELFARE STATE

While CIDFs and local branches of the MDF continued to fund local women’s associations and facilitate easier access to housing, at the national level, heated debate about abortion rights began to reveal tensions between leaders of the MDF and members of the socialist government. After the success of the public awareness campaign about contraception, the MDF decided to tackle another important issue for women’s reproductive rights: abortions. Abortion was legalized in 1975 under the Veil law. However, under the 1975 law, abortions were not covered by national health care. According to the specifications of the law, abortion “was considered a non-ordinary act.”¹⁰⁸ Women were supposed to fund the procedure themselves, and by the early 1980s, a number of hospitals still did not provide the procedure.¹⁰⁹ According to the MDF, the 1975 Veil law “did not adequately respond to the demands of social justice.

¹⁰⁸ Jenson and Sineau, *Mitterrand Et Les Françaises : Un Rendez-Vous Manqué*. 198

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Women were still undergoing clandestine abortions.”¹¹⁰ The MDF wanted to modify the 1975 Veil law to extend health care coverage to fund all abortions.

The MDF joined with prime minister Pierre Mauroy and set about drafting new legislation to modify the 1975 Veil law. Almost immediately, however, they were met with opposition from socialist leaders, notably President Francois Mitterrand who was concerned about “treating abortion like any old medical procedure.”¹¹¹ Despite these internal tensions, Mauroy and the MDF continued to press for the revision of the bill, arguing that any real guarantee of women’s reproductive rights should include equitable access to abortion procedures. Finally, an exasperated Mitterrand asserted, “I am against this banalization of abortion and I will not allow anyone to force my hand on the matter!”¹¹²

As Jenson argues, “the controversy over IVG [*l’interruption volontaire de grossesse* or voluntary interruption of pregnancy] showed profound disaccord in the heart of the government as well as the heart of the left.”¹¹³ Faced with vociferous opposition from the catholic church and family associations, as well as the increasingly national presence of conservative and radical groups like the National Front, Mitterrand hesitated to jeopardize the socialist position by passing such a controversial amendment to the original 1975 abortion law.

The tension over the abortion bill also marked the moment when MDF influence within the socialist government began to diminish. Beginning in 1983, for example, Mitterrand began to consider budget cuts for the MDF. Ministry head, Yvette Roudy,

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 199

¹¹² Quoted in Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid. 202

was also excluded from Mitterrand's inner circle as she was invited less and less frequently to cabinet meetings and strategy sessions.¹¹⁴

The debates over abortion reform also reflected growing concerns about the crisis of the family and national decline. While the MDF utilized census data to demonstrate positive shifts in family composition away from a traditional familial model, others saw the same data as an indication that national decline was linked to familial decline. In 1983, Mitterrand appointed Georgina Dufoix—mother of four children and state secretary of the family—to head the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Solidarity.¹¹⁵ For Dufoix, the deterioration of social and familial ties was at the root of the crisis of the welfare state. Dufoix began to develop funding measures that benefited large families and “encouraged women to occupy themselves with their families.”¹¹⁶ In other words, Dufoix began to establish an agenda that focused on familial values and promoting the relationship between the strength of the family and the strength of the nation. While Roudy, as head of the MDF, spearheaded campaigns to “promote the autonomy of women and eliminate all traces of patriarchal domination” from French institutions, Dufoix promoted a return to more traditional family values. Within the socialist government, a second left was emerging that “gave preference to solidarity to the detriment of equality...inspired by a more traditional socialism...its roots in social Catholicism.”¹¹⁷ As Jenson argues, “this institutional duality began to marginalize those socialists who like Pierre Mauroy” and Yvette Roudy “were more interested in the

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 203

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 249

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 266

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 204

reduction of inequalities.”¹¹⁸ In other words, while socialists like Yvette Roudy were concerned with social reforms that promoted *égalité*, or individual and equal rights, others, like Dufoix, emphasized a more traditional set of social reforms that emphasized *solidarité* grounded in familial and national social solidarity.

Despite the socialist shift to more conservative positions, in the 1986 election, the socialists lost their majority and formed a coalition government with Jaques Chirac’s center right party. The Ministry of the Rights of Women was one of the casualties of the co-habitation. The institution was stripped of its ministry status which meant it no longer had a place in the president’s cabinet. Many leading members of the MDF, including Yvette Roudy, continued to participate in the now downgraded “commission on women’s issues,” but severe budget cuts prevented the commission from continuing to pursue its ambitious agenda of institutional change: “Within this politics of realignment, one could not hope to comprehensively treat the question of women.”¹¹⁹

The coalition government needed to address the ongoing problem of chronic unemployment and what was being called the new poverty.¹²⁰ The 1970s economic

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 205

¹²⁰ Dasques, "Les Femmes Et Le Pauvreté."231. For recent studies of the new poverty : Serge Paugam, "La Disqualification Sociale : Essai Sur La Nouvelle Pauvreté," Presses universitaires de France, Serge Paugam, *La Société Française Et Ses Pauvres : L'expérience Du Revenu Minimum D'insertion*, Quadrige . Essai, 390 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002), Serge Paugam, *Le Salarié De La Précarité : Les Nouvelles Formes De L'intégration Professionnelle*, Le Lien Social. Série "Documents D'enquête" (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2000), Serge Paugam, *Les Formes Élémentaires De La Pauvreté*, 2e éd. ed., Lien Social (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2005), Duncan Gallie, Serge Paugam, and European Commission. Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs. Unit E.2., *Social Precarity and Social Integration*, Employment & Social Affairs. Social Security and Social Integration (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003), Duncan Gallie and Serge Paugam, *Welfare Regimes and the Experience of Unemployment in Europe* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., "The Welfare State in Crisis : An Account of the Conference on Social Policies in the 1980s, Oecd, Paris, 20-23 October 1981," Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ; OECD Publications and Information

downturn had led to high rates of chronic unemployment, and the new poverty was associated with a demographic who could not gain access to the labor market. In 1988, Mitterrand introduced a new social welfare program called the *Revenu Minimum d'Insertion* (RMI), which allocated monthly allowances to French families living below the poverty line. As Mitterrand declared in his speech introducing the new policy, the RMI would help those who "...have nothing, can do nothing, are nothing."¹²¹ The RMI was an attempt to deal with mass and long-term unemployment, an attempt to reintegrate the "socially excluded" into the national fabric. According to the commission on the evaluation of the RMI: "The RMI forces us to interrogate the functioning and fundamentals of our system of social protection."¹²²

A key theme at the heart of the new RMI program was that social decline was linked to familial decline. As the national commission in charge with evaluating the RMI wrote in their report: "the vulnerability of social ties is engendered by massive unemployment and the precariousness of family life forms the crux of the crisis."¹²³ The disintegration of family life stemmed, in part, from a "particular economic and political context."¹²⁴ The RMI would help redevelop the "connection between familial solidarity

Center [distributor], Pierre Rosanvallon, *La Nouvelle Question Sociale : Repenser L'etat-Providence* (Paris: Seuil, 1995).

¹²¹ Mitterrand quoted in Paugam, *La Société Française Et Ses Pauvres : L'expérience Du Revenu Minimum D'insertion*, 2. éd. mise à jour, février 1995. ed., Recherches Politiques, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1993).

¹²² *Protection Sociale et RMI*, Commission national d'évaluation du RMI, Marie-Annick Barthe, Bernard Gazier, Frederique Leprince, Henry Nogues, Syros/Alternatives, Paris, 1992, accessed at the Musée Social. P. 29

¹²³ *Protection Sociale et RMI*, Commission national d'évaluation du RMI, Marie-Annick Barthe, Bernard Gazier, Frederique Leprince, Henry Nogues, Syros/Alternatives, Paris, 1992, accessed at the Musée Social. P. 29

¹²⁴ Ibid.

and social solidarity.”¹²⁵ The immediate “effect of the RMI is to respond to urgent situations through direct financing.”¹²⁶ Those who qualified for the RMI would receive monthly checks to purchase food and pay rent. The long term goal of the RMI was the “social insertion” of families and individuals through programs like job training and volunteer work. According to the commission, the ultimate goal of the RMI was to offer “the way out of the ghetto of welfare.”¹²⁷

Under the RMI, those eligible for assistance must be over 25 years old (thereby excluding the large demographic of unemployed youth) and assistance is based on the number of dependents (children). RMI funding is allocated based on an application completed and submitted by the head of the household.

The RMI gives a monthly living allowance to families who are not part of the work force. As critics of the French welfare system have noted, the pension system privileges job preservation over job creation, which has led, over the years, to stagnation in the labor market. Since welfare benefits are tied to employment, those who have trouble entering the labor market are thus excluded from access to welfare benefits. The RMI was an attempt to address the problem of the growing demographic of the chronically unemployed without taking on the larger issue of pension reform.

Although the RMI was intended to help all “socially excluded,” public opinion began to associate the RMI with post-colonial migrants. As *Le Monde* reported in 1997, “Foreigners are overrepresented amongst those receiving housing aid [and] amongst the

¹²⁵ *Protection Sociale et RMI, Commission nationale d'évaluation du RMI*, Marie-Annick Barthe, Bernard Gazier, Frederique Leprince, Henry Nogues, Syros/Alternatives, Paris, 1992, Musée Social. P. 39

¹²⁶ *Protection Sociale et RMI, Commission nationale d'évaluation du RMI*, Marie-Annick Barthe, Bernard Gazier, Frederique Leprince, Henry Nogues, Syros/Alternatives, Paris, 1992, Musée Social. P.98

¹²⁷ *Protection Sociale et RMI, Commission nationale d'évaluation du RMI*, Marie-Annick Barthe, Bernard Gazier, Frederique Leprince, Henry Nogues, Syros/Alternatives, Paris, 1992, Musée Social. P.109

RMIsts.”¹²⁸ A 2003 *Le Monde* article described “the long-term unemployed, or RMIsts, are often issued from immigration.”¹²⁹ In particular, media coverage often described “Most of the chronically unemployed [as] women from Sub-Saharan Africa or the Maghreb.”¹³⁰ In other words, RMI recipients were often associated with single “immigrant” mothers.

Media coverage, for example, from the more conservative magazine, *Le Point*, characterized “immigrant” families receiving the RMI as “more interested in the revenue than the insertion.”¹³¹ As one social worker quoted in the article explained, “The youth we deal with...have frequently grown up in unstructured, single-family, polygamous families, deprived of the affection of a father.”¹³² According to more negative press, RMI recipients were just practicing another form of “hereditary handouts...One begins to see these welfare families pass it on from one generation to the other.”¹³³

While one of the key goals of the Ministry of the Rights of Woman had been to focus on “women in difficulty,” the RMI was designed to provide monthly financial assistance and social “insertion” programs for “families in difficulty.” Despite these distinctions, the ways in which “immigrants” were associated with the two programs reveals how the new poverty and anxieties about national and familial decline were being associated with the “immigrant question.” While “women in difficulty” had been

¹²⁸ Philippe Bernard, *Le Monde*, April 1, 1997 ; see also : Philippe Bernard, *Le Monde*, December 8, 1992

¹²⁹ Francine Aizicovici, *Le Monde*, November 18, 2003

¹³⁰ Clarisse Fabre, *Le Monde*, October 23, 1996

¹³¹ *Le Point*, April 5, 1995

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

associated with “immigrant” women, “families in difficulty” were overwhelming assumed to be “immigrants.”¹³⁴

Both the social programs of the MDF and the RMI were intended to address the structural circumstances affecting either women or families “in difficulty.” However, as post-colonial migrants were increasingly associated with the so-called new poverty, the explanation for social problems like chronic joblessness began to focus less on structural barriers to work than on “immigrants” themselves. Media rhetoric and public opinion seemed to dwell on the pathologies of “immigrant culture” that resulted in high unemployment and rundown banlieue housing.

FROM THE GLASS-CEILING TO THE HEADSCARF

In 1989, in the same year that the RMI was implemented, three girls were expelled from a middle school (*college*) in the town of Creil for refusing to remove their headscarves.¹³⁵ As John Bowen explains, “The mass media jumped on the incident...the national press played up the connections between these scarves and broader dangers.”¹³⁶ As “immigrants” had been increasingly associated with national and economic decline, the headscarf became the symbol of this threat to French ways of life. Moreover, the headscarf became a symbol of the presence of a sizable population of Muslims—many

¹³⁴ While those of “immigrant origin are disproportionately more excluded from the unemployment insurance system,” they are more likely to receive RMI allocations. Moreover, unemployment has been a chronic problem for women, including women of immigrant origin. However, underemployment is also problem: “25% of African women and 17% of North African women working in France are under-employed” meaning they work part time and desire to increase their hours. As part time workers, they do not participate fully, if at all, in occupational insurance based regimes, and must rely on the RMI as a source of support.” Catarino, 11.

¹³⁵ John Richard Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves : Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).83

¹³⁶ Ibid.84

from former French colonies—living in France. The subsequent debates about headscarves reveal how “immigrants” were increasingly conflated with “Muslims.”

The headscarf debate became an important rallying point for women activists. French feminists, many of them former leaders within the MDF, participated in the debate by condemning the headscarf as oppressive and a violation of French principles of equality.¹³⁷ As former minister of the MDF, Yvette Roudy stated: “the headscarf (*foulard*) is the sign of subservience, whether consensual or imposed, in fundamentalist Muslim society... To accept wearing the *voile* (veil) is tantamount to saying ‘yes’ to women’s inequality in French Muslim society.”¹³⁸ In feminists’ condemnation of the headscarf, something peculiar happened: while women’s leaders and feminists had been fighting for equality within what they called a discriminatory, patriarchal French system, they began to tout the same system as an ideal paradigm of equality. Mainstream French feminists thus shifted from critiquing inequality in French society, to inequality in Muslim culture.

Since the first headscarf affair, what has followed has been an acute debate about French secularism which often contrasts French equality and progressivism with “immigrant” or Muslim oppression and backwardness. The assumption that equality in France has already been achieved became the grounds for encouraging “immigrant” or Muslim women to shed the oppressive ties of their culture. For example, mainstream French feminists have tended to support “immigrant” women’s groups—notably *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* (roughly translated as Neither Whores nor Submissives)—who also condemn the wearing of headscarves as a symbol of Islamic fundamentalism. Groups

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Quoted in Ibid. 209

like *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* have received much media attention and support from both the right and the left for their position that French Muslim women need to break with the oppression of their culture and accept French secularism.

Although the dominant discourse in France has focused on the condemnation of the headscarf, several associations have recently emerged who propose an alternative feminist discourse. Many developed out of the local “immigrant” women’s associations created during the 1980s. These organizations include national associations : *Les Indigènes de la République* (The Natives of the Republic), *Le Collectif Féministes pour l’Egalité* (The Feminist Collective for Equality), *Les Blédardes* (Girls from the Village), *Les Panthères Rouges* (The Pink Panthers), and local organizations, including SHEBBA, a women’s association in Marseille’s northern neighborhoods.¹³⁹

Many of these groups explicitly link critiques of France’s colonial legacy with recent debates about the headscarf, the state of French feminism, and the problem of unemployment, discrimination, and rundown housing. Women activists who participate in this alternative strand of feminist discourse criticize mainstream feminists for abandoning their earlier agenda to confront systemic gender discrimination. As Lila Benzid-Basset, a feminist and member of *Les Indigènes de la République* posted on the group’s website: “French feminism has diverted from its goals, its struggles.”¹⁴⁰ She continued, asking: “Has French feminism succeeded in achieving equality in all other domains in order to consecrate itself exclusively on the problems of immigrant women ?...What has become of the struggle for equal rights, for equal pay, for parity in

¹³⁹ Ticktin, "Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Meet."872

¹⁴⁰ Lila Benzid-Basset, *Féministes indigènes*, <http://www.indigenes-republique.org/spip.php?article16>, February 18, 2010

all layers in our society ?”¹⁴¹ In particular, Benzid-Basset criticized “The political usage of the Muslim woman.” As another activist wrote, “Veiled women have become, in the French imagination, the sign of all the bad that menaces the Republic and its values.”¹⁴²

Many of the activists involved in this emerging feminist discourse root the history of feminism in the French revolution, the legacy of empire, and the civil rights movements of the 1960s:

“Our indigenous feminist *lutte* (struggle) is rooted in the french feminism of Hubertine Auclert and other French feminists, in the Caribbean feminism...and the fight against slavery, in the feminisms of our African mothers and that of Djamila Boupacha and the independence of Algeria, in that of Rosa Parks, a simple seamstress that refused to give her bus seat to a white person and sparked the civil rights movement in the USA in 1955, in the feminism of the diversity of skin color...the struggle against all types and forms of patriarchy and against all types and forms of paternalism, all types and forms of racism...”¹⁴³

From this understanding of the history of feminism, these activists “refuse the paternalistic caress” of mainstream French feminists. They argue that they “don’t want to destruct the past...don’t want to forget that which [they] have inherited...”¹⁴⁴

Lastly, these *feministes indigènes* expand their agenda beyond the issue of the headscarf, to a larger critique of systemic discrimination in housing, employment, and education:

“On the subject of the cités and neighborhoods, habitants want to work toward a more decent life... It’s necessary to construct bridges, pathways, and not to destroy all hope. The construction of pathways is what the urbanists and architects of the modern movement forgot in their politics of zoning, in their projects for the grands ensembles that exclude.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² *De l’affaire du voile à l’imbrication du sexisme et du racisme, L’édito du dernier numéro de Nouvelles questions féministes, jeudi 16 mars 2006*, Natalie Benelli, Ellen Hertz, Christine Delphy, Christelle Hamel, Patricia Roux et Jules Falquet, <http://www.indigenes-republique.org/spip.php?article67>, February 18, 2010

¹⁴³ Lila Benzid-Basset, *Féministes indigènes*, <http://www.indigenes-republique.org/spip.php?article16>, February 18, 2010

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

While much national discourse has focused on feminist opposition to the headscarf, this emerging group of feminists articulates alternative interpretations. These “antidiscrimination feminists,” as Miriam Ticktin argues, “are...reworking the idea of what it means to be emancipated, bringing notions of race and racism to an intersectional analysis of gender, sexuality, class, and related forms of violence.”¹⁴⁶ Many of these women, although critical of both Islam and French republicanism, are against expelling girls who wear headscarves from school on the grounds that this further isolates French-Muslim girls from social life. Others do not see Islam, or the wearing of headscarves, to be in opposition to French republicanism. They argue that French public life is necessarily constituted by citizens with diverse backgrounds. These antidiscrimination feminists, including many so-called “immigrant women” from the banlieue, draw on the legacy of empire in their critique of the headscarf ban. In their varied writings, they describe how women have often been the historical site of the measure of civilization for colonized peoples, and how the headscarf debate is an extension of this colonial past.

CONCLUSION

In the early 1980s, the Ministry of the Rights of Woman established a comprehensive agenda to fundamentally change the status quo in France. During this period, the national MDF introduced key professional equality and anti-discrimination legislation and also funded local women’s associations. A central goal of the MDF was to listen to the needs of women, and CIDFs responded to local women’s requests by

¹⁴⁶ Ticktin, "Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Meet."874

providing special forums on professional training and inter-ethnic dialogue for communities within French cities, including Marseille. These efforts led to multiple interpretations of the meaning of “autonomy” for the national MDF, local CIDFs, and neighborhood women from former French colonies.

As the MDF continued to pursue its ambitious agenda, national tensions within the socialists over abortion reform reflected larger anxieties about national decline. As chronic unemployment and the recession continued, many began to link the decline of the family to the so-called crisis of the welfare state. The MDF began to be marginalized within the socialist government, and during the cohabitation that began in 1986, the MDF was stripped of its ministry status and its budget severely was cut. The government began to focus on social reforms that would promote familial solidarity by implementing the RMI program. While the MDF had tried implementing social reforms for women, the RMI reforms re-focused on the family. As reflected in national concerns over who benefitted from the RMI, immigrant families were increasingly associated with national decline and the crisis of the welfare state. The first headscarf affair of 1989 came to symbolize this national malaise about immigrants, Islam, and the need to protect French ways of life. The headscarf affair also became a key rallying point for women activists and former members of the MDF who had been marginalized under the cohabitation. Mainstream feminists shifted from critiquing inequality in French society to the inequality “intrinsic” to Muslim culture. While French feminists participated in national discourse by condemning the headscarf, locally “immigrant” women’s associations interpreted the headscarf differently. This new feminist discourse linked the legacy of the

French empire to contemporary concerns about everyday racial and gender discrimination against post-colonial migrants in France.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

In a 2002 interview for a *Le Figaro* article, Marseille Mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin “recalled with pride”¹ the creation of a special council, *Marseille-Espérance*, which brought together leaders of Marseille’s diverse communities “to establish a dialogue and a better comprehension among all Marseillais, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and men and women of good will.”² Marseille-Espérance was first created by Robert Vigoroux, Gaudin’s predecessor at city hall, but was institutionalized by Gaudin when he was elected to office in 1995.³ Members of Marseille Esperance are unelected, but are selected by the mayor to represent the city’s ethnic and religious communities, and meet with the mayor regularly to discuss their issues and concerns. Proponents of Marseille-Espérance have hailed the commission—despite its largely symbolic function—as an important first step in legitimizing France’s diverse ethnic communities as integral parts of public life. Critics of the council caution against what they say are the dangers of multiculturalism: if France recognizes diversity in the public sphere, this will lead to the balkanization of communities—what they call *communautarisme*—where allegiance would be tied to and maintained within ethnic enclaves rather than the nation as a whole.

¹ « Immigration : le cri d'alarme des maires, » *Le Figaro*, November 4, 2002

² Charter of Marseille Esperance quoted in « Espérance et tolérance, » *L'Express*, March 23, 2006

³ “Espérance et tolérance,” *L'Express*, March 23, 2006

Despite Gaudin's role in creating and institutionalizing Marseille-Esperance, he has also denounced a politics of difference and the dangers of *communautarisme*. In a 2001 interview for *La Tribune*, Mayor Gaudin articulated his concerns about the city's "invasion by the foreign population... Marseille *populaire*, it's not the Maghrebin Marseille, it's not the Comorian Marseille."⁴ Gaudin differentiated from real, hard-working, legitimate Marseillais, and other residents who distinguished themselves in ethnic terms.

On the one hand, Gaudin seems to recognize the ethnic and religious diversity of the city's residents, and embraces these differences as an important part of what makes residents Marseillais. On the other hand, Gaudin condemns the "foreign invasion" of the city. Why does Mayor Gaudin seem to both celebrate and denounce Marseille residents' diversity? Gaudin's comments in these two interviews point to an important tension within Marseille politics, as well as France as a whole—specifically, the ways in which the simultaneous recognition and disavowal of difference is part of the French political landscape.

For example, after the 2004 headscarf ban, many French-Muslim women argued that as French citizens, they have the right to cultural difference and religious expression. Other critics of the ban asserted that difference has always been a part of French public life and the ban unduly discriminates against French-Muslim women. In contrast, proponents of the ban argued that the wearing of headscarves fundamentally violates the meaning of French *laïcité*—roughly translated as secularism. According to those in favor of the ban, citizens are supposed to participate in French public life as abstract non-

⁴ *La Tribune*, December 5, 2001

differentiated citizens. Members of the radical right have asserted that recent migrants actually *do* have the right to difference, but their cultures are intrinsically different from French culture. By essentializing French-ness, the right argues that any attempt to recognize or “mix” other cultures with France’s immutable national culture risks fundamentally undermining the nation.

Through attention to local debates about social citizenship this dissertation helps shed light on some of these recent discussions about difference and the “immigrant question” in France. While recent scholarship on the problem of difference and citizenship has focused on debates about cultural rights, I argue that conceptions of social and material well-being are also integral to how post-colonial migrants conceive of citizenship.

Social citizenship—or the right to a quality of life and a certain standard of living—was first articulated by T.H. Marshall in relationship to the development of the post World War Two welfare state.⁵ More recent studies have attempted to “rethink” the social by suggesting that identities, cultures, and concepts of belonging are also articulated in relationship to material well-being.⁶ Other work has attempted to unpack the term itself, arguing against the social as a thing or domain, but as a process: a network of categories and associations.⁷ This project similarly conceives of the social as a

⁵ Marshall and Bottomore, *Citizenship and Social Class*, Bussemaker, *Citizenship and Welfare State Reform in Europe*.

⁶ Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History : What's Left of the Social?* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), Margaret and Fred Block Somers, "In the Shadow of Speemhamland: Social Policy and the Old Poor Law," *Politics and Society* 31, no. June 2003 (2003), Margaret and Fred Block Somers, "From Poverty to Perversity: Ideas, Markets and Institutions over 200 Years of Welfare Debate," *American Sociological Review* 70, no. April 2005 (2005).

⁷ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

process, a nexus of associations including: race, culture, material well-being *and* the actors and institutions that produce these categories.

Through attention to local debates about social welfare and modernization plans, this dissertation also brings together two important post-1945 developments: post-colonial migration and the rise of the French welfare state. After World War Two, France began to develop a comprehensive welfare state while working out the repercussions of decolonization. Families from former French colonies began to migrate in increasing numbers to the metropole as municipal technocrats and central state planners set about making France modern. Municipal technocrats and state planners had to make sense of how migrant families fit into their national vision for a modern France. An important part of modernizing France was to rethink the relationship between citizen and state by developing welfare institutions that would create basic living standards, thereby guaranteeing a certain quality of life. In addition to expanding social security, national health care and other programs, the mass construction of housing was also an important feature of this post war vision for a welfare state.

Modernization was never a top down process, and part one of the dissertation examines how modernization was shaped and contested by residents and municipal authorities from below. For example, chapter four discusses how Marseille residents imagined and debated the future of a modern France. From city council meeting minutes, resident letters, and housing applications I show that residents did not discuss modernization and the public good in universal terms, but in local ones. Who deserved the social right to housing and access to the welfare state depended on whom they thought belonged to their neighborhoods.

By examining local debates, I also demonstrate how city officials and Marseille families negotiated concepts of class and race and how common sense perceptions of ethnic and social difference have shaped and been institutionalized within the post-1945 French welfare state. From quantitative demographic studies, zoning maps, municipal memos and letters from neighborhood associations, I put post war reconstruction into local context in chapters two and three. Following World War Two, France faced a crippling housing shortage and state officials grew increasingly concerned about the large population of homeless families—a heterogeneous mix of displaced persons, metropolitan French, and families from the colonies—who squatted in abandoned buildings in Marseille and other cities. As state officials began to implement plans for the mass construction of housing and programs to re-house homeless families, they began to make distinctions about who deserved the right to housing. In particular, state officials distinguished between citizen squatters and asocials based on common sense assumptions about ethnicity and so-called degenerative domestic practices and norms.

While part one explores modernization during the post war boom, part two of the dissertation examines the trope of decline since 1962. After decolonization and the economic recession of the 1970s, the optimism of the immediate post war years faded as France confronted problems like chronic unemployment. Moreover, public discourse began to increasingly associate the so-called crisis of the welfare state with the “immigrant problem.”

Following these historical shifts, I also trace the emergence and transformation of important categories of difference in the post war period. For example, as the state initiated the mass construction of housing and local officials began to systematically re-

house families, post war concerns about asocial families shifted to anxieties about families from former colonies. For example, in the early 1950s, the social problem was understood in terms of working class French families, immigrants, and colonial subjects living in rundown housing around France. With the escalating colonial wars of independence—and rising anxieties about colonial subjects living in France—by the late 1950s, the social question was increasingly ethnicized and understood in terms of the specter of “north Africans” or “Algerians.” In the 1960s, after France pulled out of most of its colonies, former colonial subjects living in the metropole were re-imagined as foreigners or “immigrant workers.” By the late 1970s and early 1980s, public concerns about immigrant male workers shifted to “immigrant juvenile delinquents” living in banlieues. Unlike the immigrant male workers of the 1960s, immigrant youth were not going to eventually return to their countries of origin—most in fact were born in France. While the state had established welfare bureaucracies to temporarily house “immigrant workers” and their families in the 1960s, by the late 1970s, French authorities began to accept that post-colonial migrants had settled permanently in France. State officials thus began to fund institutions that dealt with the so-called problem of immigrant juvenile delinquency by establishing programs to rehabilitate “neighborhoods in crisis” by focusing, in particular, on the integration of banlieue youth. My attention to these shifting categories thus shows how concepts of race have been put into historical practice through negotiations between municipal and state officials, local organizations, and post-colonial migrants.

This project therefore engages with the problem of difference in France by showing how perceptions of ethnic difference are integral to how the state has

constructed “citizens” and “immigrants” despite the formal taboo of recognizing such differences. For example, chapter six examines how state officials, researchers, and the media constructed certain urban areas as “crisis neighborhoods” and how problems like unemployment and crime were associated in changing ways with the specter of the “immigrant.” Beginning in the late 1970s, degraded urban areas were increasingly linked with the problem of “immigrant juvenile delinquents,” and the state initiated urban rehabilitation projects at the local level. Although national discourses stigmatized the recognition of difference in the public sphere, local policies targeted racial difference or “immigrant populations” as one way to label degraded urban areas.

Lastly, I demonstrate how post-colonial migrants have played an active part in shaping welfare institutions. From the squatters’ movement of the 1940s, through the rent strikes of the 1970s, and the youth movements of the 1980s and 1990s, recent migrants have made claims for social rights—like access to better housing—by negotiating with municipal and central state institutions. Moreover, by focusing on neighborhood debates about concerns central to the everyday lives of Marseille residents, this project underscores how local spheres—the home, the neighborhood, the city—are key spaces for contesting citizenship. By focusing on these everyday negotiations, I show how the developing French welfare state was not only a product of municipal officials, politicians, urban planners, and social workers, but also a result of the actions of individuals and families in their local neighborhoods.

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