# RACE IN FRANCE

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# IMMIGRATION AND THE SALIENCE OF RACIAL BOUNDARIES AMONG FRENCH WORKERS

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In recent years, surveys have consistently shown relatively high levels of racism and xenophobia in France. In particular, a 1999 Harris poll conducted for the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme revealed that 68 percent of the respondents in a national sample declared themselves somewhat racist; 61 percent believed that there are too many foreigners in France; 63 percent believed that there are too many Arabs (up 12 percent compared with 1998); and 38 percent believed that there are too many blacks (up 8 percent compared with 1998).[1] Against the backdrop of a long, difficult, and partly repressed colonial past, a full 28 percent of French voters have, since 1983, voted at least once for the openly racist and anti-Semitic National Front.[2] These results clash with the popular image of a republican France, wherein the dominant political ideology affirms that the ascribed characteristics of citizens are irrelevant to their participation in the polity.

This chapter revisits the question of French racism by examining the differing status of North African immigrants and blacks as victims of French racism. I draw on in-depth interviews with French workers and on national surveys to show that French workers draw stronger boundaries toward immigrants—and more specifically North African immigrants—than toward blacks. I advance an explanation for the lower salience of this latter group that takes

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into consideration the cultural resources that workers have access to and the structural and historical context in which they live. In particular, I suggest that because it is based on assimilation, the French political culture of republicanism provides special ammunition for arguments against North Africans: it presumes (and aims to achieve) a national community with overlapping cultural and political boundaries, such that all members of the national community share the same political culture, which de facto distinguishes the national in-group from out-groups. At the same time, this widely available ideology weakens the boundaries drawn against blacks by affirming the principle of color-blindness and the irrelevance of ascribed characteristics in the French polity.

French patterns of exclusion contrast with those found in the United States, where blacks are the prime victims of racism—hence, the interest in analyzing the French case with reference to the American. To do so, I will refer at times to my book *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*.[3] This study compares how 150 French and American workers evaluate various groups in moral and cultural terms, and whether these definitions lead them to include immigrants, blacks, the poor, and the upper-middle class in their "imagined community" of "people like us."[4]

This essay is based on forty-five in-depth interviews conducted with non-college-educated, low-status white-collar workers and blue-collar workers living in the suburbs of Paris.[5] Respondents were chosen randomly using the phone books of twelve working-class towns.[6] The interviews lasted approximately two hours and were conducted by myself at a time and place chosen by respondents. The interview schedule aimed at identifying inductively the boundaries that workers draw toward other groups, i.e., how they define "us" and "them." More specifically, I asked people I interviewed to describe their friends and foes, role models and heroes, and likes and dislikes. I also asked them to describe the types of people, abstract and concrete, to whom they felt superior and inferior, similar and different. From there, I identified the differences that are at the center of individual maps of perception as well as the differences that are not salient. I also identified inductively the most salient principles of classification and identification that operate behind workers' definitions of their symbolic community. This method allows me to generate, in the larger study, a comparative sociology of boundaries and ordinary models of the definition of community that documents patterns of inclusion/exclusion based on morality, race, class, and citizenship across groups.

In the first section of the essay, I sketch and explain the views of French workers on Muslims. In the second part, I describe their views on blacks and explain why the boundaries workers draw toward the former group are stronger than those they draw toward the latter. Due to space limitations, I provide minimal information on the *language* used by workers to draw boundaries against immigrants and blacks. For more details, the reader should consult *The Dignity of Working Men* (chapter 5).



## French Workers on Muslims

During the course of the interviews I conducted with white native French workers, half of the blue-collar workers and a few white-collar workers drew strong boundaries toward North Africans.[7] In doing so, they used three primary arguments having to do with the North Africans' lack of work ethic and abuse of public resources; their cultural incompatibility with the French; and their inability to assimilate, which violates the sacred tenets of the French republican political culture.

With regard to the first argument, immigrants are viewed as lacking a sense of responsibility and a strong work ethic[8] and as having access to a larger share of the collective wealth than they are entitled to. The French state is perceived as favoring them in the name of fighting their social exclusion, and this violates workers' sense of group position.[9] While American workers who are racists criticize blacks for not being self-reliant and for depending on welfare,[10] French racists seem less concerned with critiquing welfare programs per se—they, too, are the beneficiaries of many public programs[11]—than with how state resources are distributed. This issue is nowhere more sensitive than in educational matters, perhaps because of the downward mobility and threat to intergenerational class reproduction that French workers have experienced under the high unemployment that has prevailed in recent decades.[12] A long-lasting economic recession continues to exacerbate their resentment as they fight daily the challenge of making ends meet—at the same time that they are becoming more dependent on subsidies to maintain their standard of living. The deterioration of their living conditions and labor-market position, coupled with a greater sense of competition, weakens social bonds among the have-nots, and workers are pushed to draw stronger boundaries toward people who are simultaneously worse off and culturally different from themselves. At the political level, the hesitation of successive Socialist governments to address fears about immigrants and their open condemnation of racism heighten popular concerns about Muslims.[13]

As regards the second argument involving cultural incompatibility, workers who draw strong boundaries against Muslims perceive the latter as fundamentally culturally different from, and even incompatible with, the French. They lack civility; they spit in front of people, never apologize, are rude, and lack respect for others. They also have barbarous mores (for example, they kill goats on their balconies at Ramadan). They destroy the French quality of life and should go home. These fundamental differences are described by a railway technician thusly:

> We have to be honest: The problem is that they don't have the same education, the same values as we do. We have a general Christian education, most of the French do not believe in God but they all have a Christian education that regulates our relationship. But in the Muslim world, the Koran doesn't have the same values at all. They send children to get killed in the minefields of Iraq. But in France, if you

kill children, it is really a scandal. But in those countries, social things are not as important. The mother is happy to send her child to go get killed in the minefields. She will cry, it is true, she will have the same pain as a European mother, but it is not the same thing.... And there is also the respect of the value of life itself. Women in the Muslim world have no place. Whereas here in France, I have washed dishes ... at some point, my wife had a depression, and I stayed with my children. Their education is different.

Economic precariousness adds to the workers' fear of loss of national identity and to a sense of threat. This leads them to exaggerate differences between themselves and North Africans and to adopt a homogeneous view of the culture of the "Other."[14] Hence, trends suggest that since 1985, a growing number of French people have concluded that the religion and customs of North Africans are not compatible with theirs.[15]

North Africans can be construed as truly Other in cultural terms, because they are a priori defined as having a strong allegiance to Islam. One worker explains that Muslims are incompatible with the French because religion dictates all aspects of their lives. In fact, this question has been much debated throughout Islamic history.[16] Among North African immigrants themselves, there is considerable variation in the level of religious participation—although this diversity is systematically downplayed in media representations of the group.[17]

When workers describe North Africans as fundamentally different and as having barbarian habits that include spitting on people and killing sheep in bathtubs, they draw on taken-for-granted cultural repertoires that construe Islam as a religious Other. Islam has been the nemesis of Catholic France and of Christian Europe for more than a millennium—after all, the history of France, the Catholic Church's "oldest daughter," is marked by crusades and wars against Muslims in the name of the Pope. The majority of the population remains Catholic, and although the level of religious practice is very low,[18] Christianity continues to be an important cultural referent.[19] Christianity has given Muslims the lasting label of "barbarians" and has construed Europeans as the sole guardians of civilization.[20] The National Front works assiduously toward maintaining these distinctions, multiplying efforts to "'re-Islamize' North Africans in the political imaginary," which have succeeded, in part, because they coincide with a renewal of Islamic fundamentalism.[21] Hence, it is not surprising that workers readily draw on this prominent aspect of the national cultural repertoire to frame their understanding of differences between themselves and immigrants as unbridgeable, particularly in the realm of civility.[22]

Much of French workers' discourse about cultural incompatibility crystallizes around criminality and the immigrants' lack of respect for private property. The experience of colonization and the Algerian War have contributed to construing North Africans as violent and criminal. A French colony for 130 years, Algeria had played a particularly important role in the making of French prestige and *grandeur* because of its size, natural resources, and geographic



proximity to France. For their part, Morocco and Tunisia were given the status of "protectorates" and were able to maintain their monarchies and a certain level of political autonomy. Whereas the decolonization process was gradual in these countries, the violent Algerian War of 1954–62, which killed 600,000 people, left deep scars on both sides, as each party felt betrayed by its former associates.[23] This war also left scars within the French nation as the population came to be deeply divided around it. However, unlike the Vietnam War in the United States, the Algerian War has been downplayed in French collective memory. This has led some experts to argue that the racist violence against North Africans expresses the "return of the repressed" in a particularly virulent form, because this war symbolizes the end of France's status as an imperial power and marks the beginning of a crisis in French national identity.[24] Frequent associations between Islam and violence in recent years (for instance, the Iranian Revolution, the Gulf War, Algeria's Front Islamique du Salut [FIS], bombings on French soil by Islamic militants, international terrorism, and Islamic fundamentalism more generally) have kept fears and resentments alive. These associations could only harden the boundaries that are erected against North Africans and nourish the view that North Africans are violent and prone to crime.

With regard to the third argument, the inability to assimilate, France's political culture of republicanism does not recognize particularistic claims based on religion, race, or birth, and posits that anyone can join in the polity as long as he or she assimilates and comes to share the same political culture. Unlike other immigrant groups,[25] North Africans are perceived as being unable to, or as refusing to, assimilate, which invalidates their right to reside in France. This concern about North African assimilation was very prominent in my interviews. It is also reflected in surveys from recent decades.[26]

The mass media have played an important role in sustaining this image of North African immigrants as unassimilable. Indeed, a content analysis of two newspapers between 1974 and 1984 reveals that left-wing and right-wing journalists alike define the problem of immigration in terms of the unassimilability of North African immigrants, who are contrasted with other assimilable immigrants—notably Europeans.[27] Other institutions have added strength to this view. In particular, the National Front repeatedly puts forth a view of North Africans as unassimilable and laments the disappearance of the old Catholic, white, and culturally homogeneous France, where neighborhoods were safe and French, and where collective life was truly organic.[28] Anti-immigrant movements elsewhere in Europe also nourish a view of Muslim immigrants as fundamentally different and/or as morally lacking in work ethic. Finally, the European Union reinforces external continental boundaries, contributing to institutionalizing a definition of Islam as uniform and truly Other to Europe.[29]

Undoubtedly, the rejection of Muslims is linked to the defense of a "true French culture" that is threatened not only from the inside by foreigners but also from the outside by Americanization. French workers also deeply resent a perceived loss of national status, given that their nationality is one of their rare

marks of high status; political scientist Pascal Perrineau even argues that workers experience this loss as emasculation.[30] The invasion of their immediate environment by immigrants symbolizes for them the collapse of the working-class neighborhood, of working-class culture, and of France more generally.[31]

Moreover, colonial notions of France's *mission civilisatrice* and of French superiority remain present in the mind of many workers, especially when it comes to "barbaric" former African colonies.[32] Colonials construed the moral character of Muslims in contradistinction with that of whites, Europeans, Christians, and the French themselves, who incarnated civilization and especially the control of reason over nature (and over natural indolence, in particular).[33] This historical baggage continues to permeate French collective memory. The workers I talked to emphasized the "Otherness" of Muslims by downplaying differences in the degree of religious involvement among Muslims.

As historian Gérard Noiriel argues, because France's national unity was established before important waves of immigration in the nineteenth century, immigrants were never thought of as agents of national construction as they were in the United States.[34] They had to fit into a preconstituted, organic national entity.[35] Although in the twentieth century, the assimilationist position was abandoned by the state in favor of "associationism,"[36] through republicanism, assimilation has continued to shape how the French interpret the position of workers from former colonies. Hence the need to discuss French republicanism in some detail, although only two workers referred to it explicitly in their discussions of racism.

In line with the central tenets of liberalism, republicanism posits citizens who have equal political rights and enter voluntarily and explicitly into a covenant by which they delegate their political sovereignty directly to the state, whose role is to define and promote the common good. The state stands above particular interests as a neutral agent, embodying universal reason and acting for the benefit of an undifferentiated mass of equal citizens. What distinguishes this form of republicanism from its American cousin is that, as exemplified by the *Federalist Papers* (notably paper no. 10), the American system recognizes and legitimizes natural and social inequality.[37] In the United States, although individuals are at the foundation of the political system, a pluralistic logic prevails, and groups make claims in part based on their cultural identity.[38] For the French, this is the path to be avoided at all costs, in part because it has led to the destruction of the American social fabric—as exemplified by the Los Angeles riots of 1991, pervasive poverty, ethnic conflicts, and identity politics.[39] Hence, in France, intermediary bodies are not recognized; citizens participate in the public sphere as individuals, not as group members; and individuals are considered to be equal citizens, independent of their cultural, natural, or social characteristics. This means that ethnic, racial, religious, regional, and corporate groups cannot use their distinctive identities as bases for making claims in the public sphere. They also face pressure to assimilate in the name of a universalistic polity[40] and do not get the benefit of American-style pluralism.[41] Hence, officially, France does not have a North African minority, but it shelters "aliens" who are defined with reference not to their cultural identity but to their economic status.[42] It does not have a category of "blacks," because a 1978 law prohibits the collection of ethnic and religious statistics.[43] Finally, it has weak anti-discrimination laws, as the logic of republicanism is taken to be a powerful warranty against discrimination.[44]



Historically, centralized institutions such as the army and the school system have played important roles in making republican principles a reality: they turned peasants, immigrants, and everyone else into French people by teaching them the rules of cultural membership, including the downplaying of particularistic identities. The goal was to produce a national community with largely overlapping cultural and political boundaries, such that political culture acted as the line separating the national in-group and the out-groups. For the last twenty years, French academics and politicians have been concerned with the crisis of this republican model, as schools have come to be perceived as failing to perform their traditional function as agents of assimilation. Important debates have arisen between those who maintain their faith in the system and those who, while remaining wedded to republicanism, preach multiculturalism. This crisis has been particularly vivid in the policy arena, and it has been articulated around various issues that have an impact on assimilation and have acted as the lightning rods for political conflict (much like affirmative action in the United States). Most notably, the issue of immigration control has gained visibility, feeding into fears concerning the growth of a destructive and unassimilable body within the nation.[45] Secondly, the 1993 reform of the Code of Nationality has generated considerable debate by replacing an automatic *jus soli* (that is, citizenship based on territorial birth) with a law making the acquisition of French citizenship conditional upon actively requesting it at age twenty-one—that is, upon expressing explicitly a will to assimilate and be part of the republican social contract.[46] Thirdly, the 1989 debate as to whether symbols of religious identity such as the Islamic scarf should be allowed in laïc public schools became the occasion for a collective reflection on the place of multiculturalism in French society.

One worker, Arthur Mineau, a phone salesman, explained that he opposes the National Front because he "believes in republican values" and thus refuses to make distinctions based on race. For similar reasons, many French academics and politicians continue to uphold republican values as the best guarantee against racism. Yet because it is based on assimilation, the French political culture of republicanism draws strong boundaries against immigrants—they can become part of "us" only by ceasing to be "them."

The lower status of immigrants is reinforced by the caste-like relationship that the French have historically maintained with citizens of former colonies, which was justified in part by the ideology of French cultural superiority. In the case of Muslims, this caste relationship is particularly strong because of the traditional salience of Islam as a French nemesis.

It is only with the permanent settlement of North African immigrants after 1974 that the strengths of anti-immigrant boundaries inherent to republicanism were brought vividly to the surface.[47] In the past, immigrants were accepted because, as temporary workers, most were not "here" for long, although many extended their stays.[48] Others were accepted because they were not "them" for long, being "digestible" Polish, Jewish, or Italian immigrants.[49] Today, Maghrebis are defined in opposition to Jews and to immigrants from former Asian colonies who followed the path of their European predecessors in assimilating and accepting republican values.[50] And indeed, none of these groups was salient in my interviews. This pattern suggests perhaps that we should not conclude that Latinos are to the United States what Muslims are to France:[51] French political culture requires assimilation in a way that American political culture does not. Moreover, as Muslims and formerly colonized people, North Africans violate French rules of social membership more radically than do Latinos in the United States.[52]

It has been argued that in France, racism does not pit the French against immigrants, but pits unemployed youth (French and foreign) against everyone else.[53] My interviews suggest that the most significant boundary line is not an intergenerational one, but a racial one. These interviews provide clear and abundant evidence of the importance of racism directed not only at second-generation children of immigrants from the Maghreb, but at all North African immigrants, because "Muslims are Muslims." For these workers, Otherness comes in a bundle—they are not preoccupied with making the fine distinctions among civic, ethnic, and religious dimensions of identity that are the object of social science writings. Moreover, they also ignore important distinctions between Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians, and resort to terms such as "North Africans," "Maghrebis," or "bougnouls" to give artificial coherence to a heterogeneous category.

The importance of immigrants in the boundaries that the French interviewees draw is particularly remarkable when compared with the place workers give to alternative bases of community segmentation in their discourse on the Other, and particularly to the place they give to blacks as racial Others.

## Republicanism and Blacks

I have suggested above that republicanism strengthens the boundary between a French "us" and a foreign "them." However, it also has had a powerful effect in downplaying the salience of skin color in the French public sphere: it presumes a voluntaristic or contractual approach to political participation which posits that anyone can join in the polity as long as he or she comes to share a political culture based on the universal (and superior) values of reason and progress. This principle has applied historically to members of colonies, including blacks. It has made it possible for a culturally and politically assimilated black Senegalese, Blaise



Daigne, to be elected to the French Assemblée Nationale as early as 1914. As one of the main theorists of French colonialism put it, colonized people were considered "a *tabula rasa* onto whom the French could write French values. Thus transformed Africans would then be accorded the full political rights and responsibilities of French citizens."[54] However, these inclusive rules of political membership prevailed simultaneously with the *Code Noir*, which in France, as elsewhere, limited intimate relationships between blacks and whites.[55]

Republicanism shapes how workers talk, or do not talk, about black co-citizens and immigrants. Blacks were never mentioned by my interviewees, with three exceptions. Two workers made comments concerning the laziness of blacks.[56] A third, Roger Renault, a phone technician, explicitly distinguished between alien blacks originating from sub-Saharan Africa and French blacks originating from French territories such as Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean (the Dom-Toms or Départements d'Outre-Mer and Territoires d'Outre-Mer). He criticized a neighbor for yelling at noisy black children from Guadeloupe, objecting that "these children are at home like we are" and should be treated accordingly. In so doing, he appropriates one of the central tenets of the French republican ideology, color-blindness, and accordingly downplays a dimension of differentiation, skin color, that could stratify French society from the inside.[57] Paradoxically, he also supports the view that French society maintains a caste relationship with citizens of its former colonies.[58] He intimates that the privileged bond that links French citizens, irrespective of skin color, entails a lower status for the non-French. Accordingly, a recent national survey reveals that as compared with first- and second-generation North Africans, fewer black citizens from the Dom-Toms say that they have been victims of racism. Thirty-nine percent of the French from the Dom-Toms say that they have encountered racism, in contrast to 65 percent of the French of foreign origin (which includes mostly *beurs*), and 46 percent of immigrants from the Maghreb.[59]

This is not to say that phenotypes are not used as a basis for discrimination in France. The police routinely check the legal status of blacks on the street, inferring their possible illegality from their skin color. North Africans are also victims of such operations, since most of them are distinguishable phenotypically from the majority group.[60] However, the official illegitimacy of skin color as a basis of differentiation is repeatedly reaffirmed publicly by intellectuals and politicians, and in this respect France is strikingly different from the United States. As we saw, this even has led to a law forbidding the collection of racial statistics. Those who refer to skin color, racial differences, or biological explanations, such as Jean-Marie Le Pen, are severely criticized for it by the media, intellectuals, and politicians. And the French do not perceive their society as racist. A survey conducted for the *Nouvel Observateur* in 1995 showed that very few French people view racism as one of the main threats faced by French society; respondents were more concerned with unemployment, poverty, AIDS, drugs, crime, and pollution than they were with racism. In contrast,

foreigners and immigrants view racism as the first or second most important threat facing French society.[61]

The illegitimacy of race as a basis for differentiation influences the boundaries drawn by workers. Some, such as Julien Latige, a union representative, can be Le Pen supporters, castigating North Africans for taking advantage of welfare benefits, yet still describe themselves as non-racist because they like North Africans who are assimilated. This suggests that racial boundaries are not drawn primarily on the basis of skin color—what could be described as a relative decoupling of racism and blackness. This is very different from the kind of racism found in the United States.[62]

The decoupling of racism and blackness is found within the French population at large: surveys are uniform in revealing that negative feelings toward blacks (as well as other racial minorities and European immigrants) are weaker than those toward North African immigrants. In a 1988 study of feelings toward out-groups, North Africans were found to be the most disliked of all groups; in decreasing order of preference, the other groups were Northern Europeans, Southern Europeans, Jews, people from the Caribbean, Southeast Asians, black Africans, Indo-Pakistanis, and Turks.[63] This survey suggests that the French establish similarity primarily on the basis of Europeanness, shared citizenship, and, to a lesser extent, whiteness. Along these lines, a 1989 survey reveals that, when asked which category of immigrants pose the greatest difficulty for integration, 50 percent mentioned North Africans, 19 percent mentioned black Africans, and 15 percent mentioned Asians.[64] A 1984 survey on the degree of integration of various groups in French society reveals similar trends. The groups received the following scores on an index of opinion concerning degree of integration: Algerians (-49), Gypsies (-43), Turks, (-24), Moroccans (-15), black Africans (-12), Tunisians (-5), Armenians (+9), Asians (+22), Yugoslavs (+23), Eastern European Jews (+33), Antilleans (French blacks from the Caribbeans) (+37), *pieds-noirs* (former French colonials from Algeria), (+45), Portuguese (+52), Poles (+67), Spaniards (+ 72), and Italians (+72) (with a mean of +18).[65] This ranking reveals the absence of a sharp racial line.[66] The opposition between the Judeo-Christian identity and Islam best accounts for the ranking of groups. The latter also suggests that distinctions among North Africans are based on the extent to which relationships between the metropole and North African colonies were characterized by violence or collaboration.

A number of factors combine with the culture of republicanism to result in the downplaying of the boundary against blacks. First, most North Africans are first- or second-generation immigrants. Blacks are more heterogeneous: while some are recent immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa, those from the Dom-Toms have been French for several generations. This works against defining "us" in opposition to "blacks," and partly trumps the low status of blacks as formerly colonized people. Second, blacks living in France are more heterogeneous religiously than North Africans. Senegalese, for instance, are predominantly Muslims, whereas Congolese are Catholic.[67] Although North Africans include a small Jewish population, they are often presumed to be homogeneously Muslims. Third, North Africans are more salient to French workers because they constitute a larger group than blacks, making up almost 5 percent of the French population as compared with less than 2 percent for blacks.[68] Fourth, the process of decolonization was much more peaceful in French sub-Saharan Africa than in North Africa, and this produced fewer negative stereotypes of blacks than of North Africans. Fifth, historically, a sizable proportion of black African immigrants came to France to be educated.[69] This population was more assimilated than were North Africans, who included more low-skilled workers; low-skilled black Africans had less access to France than North Africans due to geographical distance.[70] The more recent waves of sub-Saharan African immigrants are often better educated than earlier waves, and they have better control of the French language than North African immigrants.[71] The policy of family reunification that was put in place after 1974 brought in large African families. These changes generated a backlash: they made Muslim African migration more visible and focused public attention on polygamy and traditional female genital mutilation.[72] However, overall, the characteristics of blacks living in France had worked against a clear polarization between "Frenchness" and "blackness." Other racial groups, such as Asians, have assimilated quickly. They contribute to the downplaying of race in French definitions of cultural membership.



This pattern of weaker boundaries toward blacks and stronger boundaries against immigrants (as compared with the United States)[73] may be in the process of changing, as sub-Saharan African immigration grows and as highly publicized protest movements against repatriation have received much media coverage. We may also be witnessing an accelerated process of the "blackening" of immigration, as more non-Caucasian immigrants come to France. African American popular culture, which is widely appropriated by French youth, increases the salience of blacks as victims of racism—with French rappers borrowing directly from their American counterparts. Moreover, black Africans are joining North Africans at the bottom of the social ladder. Consequently, in the future, French definitions of social membership may come to be associated more explicitly with skin color. It remains to be seen whether the republican myth and the presence of black French citizens from the Dom-Toms will remain powerful enough to trump the association between blackness and outsider status.

## Conclusion

French social scientists often argue that the French political culture of republicanism produces a low level of racism because it delegitimizes the salience of ascribed characteristics in public life, hence facilitating the integration of racial minorities. In contrast, my analysis suggests that republicanism has a contradictory impact: it delegitimizes one form of racism—anti-black racism

in particular—yet strengthens another by drawing a clear distinction between those who share this universalistic culture (French citizens) and those who do not (immigrants). This boundary is reinforced by traditional anti-Muslim feelings found in Christian France, by a lasting historical construction of French culture as superior, and by a caste-like relationship that often characterized the relationship of the French with members of their former colonies.

This situation contrasts with that found in the United States, where concern for the assimilation of immigrants is, overall, much less acute.[74] While immigrants follow different patterns in adapting to life in the United States,[75] in principle they can participate in civil and political society without having to abandon their culture of origin and identity. This model sustains weaker boundaries toward immigrants than the republican model in France. Such differences are particularly striking given that among European countries, France has the largest proportion of inhabitants with a parent or grandparent of foreign origin.[76]

It is worth noting that French workers, professionals, and managers have access to similar cultural repertoires that facilitate this boundary pattern toward blacks and immigrants. Cultural references emerging from republicanism, the historical conflict between Christians and Muslims, the colonial past of France, the violent Algerian War, as well as the notion of France's cultural superiority and the National Front's racist messages are cases in point. However, in the interviews I conducted with French professionals and managers for my book *Money, Morals, and Manners*,[77] neither race nor immigration was salient, perhaps because like their American counterparts, they seldom come into contact with immigrants or blacks. Or perhaps it is that in France as elsewhere, the better educated use subtle rather than blatant forms of prejudice.[78] However, a number of structural factors may prompt workers, but not professionals and managers, to draw boundaries against North Africans. In particular, globalization, the economic recession, and the breakdown of traditional French working-class culture may make workers more concerned with their group positioning and more likely to resent that immigrants receive what they regard as more than their fair share of welfare benefits, at a time when left-of-center organizations are weakened and less able to disseminate solidaristic messages than they were in the past. Hence, specific structural factors increase the likelihood that available cultural repertoires will lead workers to limit the community of "people like us" to the narrow confines of their national community.

One of the main challenges that French society faces at this point is to succeed in simultaneously maintaining a strong sense of collective identity while reducing the boundaries erected against the Other. It is my hope that this essay, in taking one small step toward a better understanding of the cultural and structural conditions working against this transition, will contribute to the realization of what appears to be an ever more urgent social project.



## Notes

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1. Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme, "La lutte contre le racisme et la xénophobie" (Paris: La Documentation française, 2000).
2. Pascal Perrineau, *Le Symptôme Le Pen: Radiographie des électeurs du Front National* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), p. 186. Perrineau estimates this percentage at 25 percent of the French voters. Martin Schain, a key American expert on the National Front, estimates it at 28 percent, based on figures on party loyalty from year to year (personal communication).
3. Michèle Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).
4. The concept of "imagined community" is borrowed from Benedict Anderson's influential book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. and extended, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 6–7, which argues that most communities are imagined, because community members never know most of their fellow members. Anderson characterizes imagined communities as involving deep horizontal comradeship and as limited—meaning that they have external boundaries and are not coterminous with humankind.
5. These workers have been working full-time and steadily for at least five years. They are native born and do not supervise more than ten workers. I explicitly do not use income as a criterion of selection of respondents in order to include in the sample workers of differing economic status. I consider the fact of having no higher education as most determinant of workers' life-chances, and privilege this criterion in creating the sample.
6. This random selection and the relatively large number of respondents was aimed not at building a representative sample but at tapping a wide range of perspectives within a community of workers. Although produced in specifically structured interactional contexts, interviews can get at relatively stable aspects of identity by focusing on the respondents' taken-for-granted attitudes. Hundreds of letters were sent to potential respondents living in working-class suburbs in the New York area. In a follow-up phone interview, these men were asked a number of socio-demographic questions. We chose interviewees who met our criteria of selection pertaining to birthplace, occupation, age, nationality, and level of education. For more details, see Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men*, appendix A.
7. Respectively, 15 out of 30 blue-collar workers and 3 out of 15 low-status white-collar workers (or 20 percent of this latter group) made statements that created a hierarchy between the French and North Africans. In contrast, in the United States, respectively 63 percent and 60 percent of the Euro-American blue-collar and white workers interviewed made such statements (i.e., 18 out of 30 and 8 out of 15 individuals, respectively). For details, see *The Dignity of Working Men*, chap. 2. Drawing on David Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (New York: Blackwell, 1993), p. 98, I define racism as a rhetoric aimed at promoting exclusion based on racial membership and produced by a dominant group against a dominated group.
8. For an in-depth discussion of the role of work and the workplace in shaping how workers express racism, see Philippe Bataille, *Le Racisme au travail* (Paris: La Découverte, 1997).

9. On the importance of a sense of group positioning in explaining racism, see Herbert Blumer, "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position," *Pacific Sociological Review* 1 (1958): 3–7.
10. Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men*, p. 61.
11. These include housing, health care, family allowances, unemployment insurance, and subsistence income. While for much of the twentieth century France was behind most European nations in terms of the social benefits it gave its population, "By 1980, [it] stood only behind Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden in the size of its social security expenditure as a percentage of GDP. Indeed, France led all nations in Europe in the proportion of public expenditures allocated to social security programs." Herrick Chapman, "French Democracy and the Welfare State," in *The Social Construction of Democracy, 1870–1990,* ed. George Reid Andrews and Herrick Chapman (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 297.
12. On this point, see also Stéphane Beaud and Michel Pialoux, "Notes de recherche sur les relations entre français et immigrés à l'usine et dans le quartier," *Genèses* 30 (1998): 101–21. On the challenges to class reproduction that workers meet, see in particular the data presented by Alain Lipietz, *La Société en sablier: Le partage du travail contre la déchirure sociale* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1996), p. 112.
13. Sophie Body-Gendrot, "The Treatment of Ethnic Challenges in Western Democracies: Confronted to Globalization," paper presented to the Department of Sociology, Princeton University, October 1998, p. 11.
14. William Safran, "State, Nation, National Identity, and Citizenship: France as a Test Case," *International Political Science Review* 12, no. 3 (1991): 223.
15. More specifically, according to SOFRES polls, whereas only 23 percent of the French surveyed in 1985 thought that religion was an obstacle [to Muslims' co-existence with the French], this figure increased to 57 percent in 1989 (Miriam Feldblum, "Paradoxes of Ethnic Politics: The Case of Franco-Maghrebis in France," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16, no. 1 [1993]: 66). Also, whereas 58 percent thought Muslim customs were an obstacle to co-existence in 1989, only 49 percent had thought so in 1985. Along the same line, data on the acceptance of people coming from countries south of the Mediterranean show that the percentage of French people who do not accept them rose between 1991 and 1993 (to 37 percent), and that this percentage is higher than those found in other countries of the European Union. See Anna Melich, "Comparative European Trend Survey: Data on Attitudes toward Immigrants," paper prepared for the ECPR Joint Sessions Workshop "Racist Parties in Europe: A New Political Family" (Institut d'Études Politiques de Bordeaux, 1995).
16. The fundamentalism that is culturally influential today subordinates the political to the religious and posits that the sharia, the sacred law, should regulate all aspects of social, political, and religious life and must be given precedence over civil law. Social scientists such as Dominique Schnapper find here the explanation for the difficulties North Africans experience in assimilating. See Dominique Schnapper, *La France de l'intégration: Sociologie de la nation en 1990* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), pp. 142–43.
17. For instance, Michèle Tribalat found that only 11 percent of her Algerian respondents had attended religious services at least five times in the last twelve months, compared with 34 percent of the Mandé African respondents. When it came to practicing a religion, 48 percent of the Algerians reported practicing no religion, compared with 36 percent of Moroccan respondents, 31 percent of Turks, and 18 percent of the Mandé. See Michèle Tribalat, *Faire France: Une enquête sur les immigrés et leurs enfants* (Paris: La Découverte, 1995).
18. Even though only 11 percent of church members claim to attend Mass, and only slightly over half of French marriages are performed by clergy, 80 percent of the French population considers itself Catholic. See Bruce A. Chadwick, Madeleine Gauthier, Louis Hourmant, and Barbara Wörndl, "Trends in Religion and Secularization," in *Convergence or Divergence? Comparing Recent Social Trends in Industrial Societies,* ed. Simon Langlois, with Theodore Caplow, Henri Mendras, and Wolfgang Glatzer (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1994), pp. 173–214.
19. Indicative of this are the important public debates on the historical Catholic figures of Clovis and Jeanne d'Arc that filled the media in 1996 and were used by the National Front and other conservative forces to reaffirm France's Catholic roots.
20. See Jocelyne Césari, *Faut-il avoir peur de l'Islam?* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1997), an excellent overview of the images of Islam prevailing in Europe over several centuries. Of course, there were also competing hegemonic claims pitting various European nations/denominations against one another, including Catholic France against Protestant England.
21. Jim House, "Muslim Communities in France," in *Muslim Communities in the New Europe*, ed. Gerd Nonneman, Tim Niblock, and Bogdan Szajkowski (Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 1996), p. 224.
22. Although highly contested, the national identity of France as a Catholic nation is defended by a sizable segment of the French Right. The Catholic national identity of France is contested in part because the Church has historically been a reactionary force: Catholics were allied with the monarchy and opposed the Republic until after World War II. See John Gaffney, "French Political Culture and Republicanism," in *Political Culture in France and Germany*, ed. John Gaffney and Eva Kolinsky (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 28.
23. Factors shaping these differences in the decolonization process include: the greater significance of Algeria in the French economy, the presence in Algeria of a larger number of French colonizers/farmers resisting the process (making up 12 percent of the Algerian population), the longer duration of French rule in this country, and the fact that Algerian decolonization happened at the end of the decolonization period. See Tony Smith, "The French Colonial Consensus and People's War, 1946–1958," in *The End of the European Empire: Decolonization after World War II*, ed. Tony Smith (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1975), p. 113.
24. Anne Donadey, "'*Une certaine idée de la France*': The Algerian Syndrome and Struggles over 'French' Identity," in *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France*, ed. Steven Ungar and Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 218.
25. Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, trans. Geoffrey de Laforcade (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
26. For instance, while in 1985, 42 percent of the French thought North African immigrants would not be able to integrate into French society because they were too different, in 1989, 51 percent expressed the same sentiment. See Riva Kastoryano, *La France, l'Allemagne et leurs immigrés: Négocier l'identité* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1996), p. 74.
27. In *L'Immigration prise aux mots* (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1991), Simone Bonnafous provides results from a content analysis of the treatment of immigrants in ten newspapers and newsmagazines during this period. She finds that while articles published at the beginning of this period tended to focus on the problems encountered by immigrants as workers, articles published in the latter part focused on their integration into French civil society and on the challenges they represented to the French social contract.
28. For an analysis of the racist components of the National Front's political platform, see Martin Schain, "The National Front and the Politicization of Immigration in France: Implications for the Extreme Right in Western Europe," paper presented at the Conference on Citizenship, Immigration, and Xenophobia in Europe: Comparative Perspectives, Berlin, Wissenschaftszentrum, 1997.

29. On this point, see Mirjana Morokvasic and Hedwig Rudolph, "Introduction," in *Migrants: Les Nouvelles Mobilités en Europe*, ed. Mirjana Morokvasic and Hedwig Rudolph (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), pp. 9–30.
30. Perrineau, *Le Symptôme Le Pen*, pp. 101–12. Le Pen voters are also more likely to derive their sense of personal identity from affiliation with the French nation: 31 percent (versus 18 percent of the general electorate) believe that French nationality is the attribute that best defines them personally (p. 159).
31. Over the last decades, anthropological and sociological analyses of the transformation of working-class culture in France have multiplied, and they often focus on the general themes of nostalgia and the transformation of working-class culture in the context of de-industrialization. See Stéphane Beaud and Michel Pialoux, *Retour sur la condition ouvrière: Enquête aux usines Peugeot de Sochaux-Montbéliard* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); François Dubet, *La Galère: Jeunes en survie* (Paris: Fayard, 1987); Michel Pinçon, *Désarrois ouvriers: Familles de métallurgistes dans les mutations industrielles et sociales* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987); Olivier Schwartz, *Le Monde privé des ouvriers: Hommes et femmes du Nord* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990); Jean-Pierre Terrail, *Destins ouvriers, la fin d'une classe?* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990); Alain Touraine, Michel Wieviorka, and Francois Dubet, *The Workers' Movement*, trans. Ian Patterson (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1978); and Michel Verret, *La Culture ouvrière* (Saint-Sébastien: ACL Editions, Société Crocus, 1988). Authors are particularly concerned with the transformation of the relationship between the public and the private and with the decline of solidarity within the family and within larger networks of sociability.
32. Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
33. William B. Cohen, "French Racism and Its African Impact," in *Double Impact*, ed. G. Wesley Johnson (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 306.
34. Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, chap. 1.
35. Sophie Duchesnes, *Citoyenneté à la française* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1997), provides a fascinating description of this organic model of citizenship, as it is understood by ordinary French citizens. Drawing on in-depth interviews conducted in 1989, the author documents a view of citizenship based on inheritance, history, the French geographical space, and the family. Central are an emotional attachment to what is distinctively French and a sense of responsibility for maintaining a French quality of life.
36. "Association" meant that colonial policies could be flexible, varying from place to place in order to be most effective in different locales. It envisioned economic development resulting from partnership between natives and colonials, and suggested that the framework of native institutions was to be altered only slightly, if at all. It also discarded the notion of a *mission civilisatrice* based on principles of *fraternité, égalité, liberté*. See Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).
37. "As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed.... The diversity in the faculties of men from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. *The protection of these faculties is the first object of Government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results*" (emphasis added). Excerpt from James Madison, "Federalist Paper No. 10." in *The American Constitution: For and Against. The Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers*, ed. J. R. Pole (New York: Hill and Wang, [1787] 1987), p. 151.
38. On the impact of pluralism on American society as compared with French society, see Michèle Lamont and Laurent Thévenot, *Rethinking Comparative Cultural Sociology: Polities and Repertoires of Evaluation in France and the United States* (London: Cambridge University Press and Paris: Presses de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2000).



39. Éric Fassin, "'Good to Think': The American Reference in French Discourses on Immigration and Ethnicity," in *Multicultural Questions*, ed. Christian Joppke and Steven Lukes (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 224–41. On this issue, see also Adrian Favell, "Citizenship and Immigration: Pathologies of a Progressive Philosophy," *New Community* 23, no. 2 (1997): 183. Republicanism presumes that the assimilation of minority groups is a requirement for the reproduction of the polity and for the defense of majority interest.
40. Safran, "State, Nation, National Identity, and Citizenship."
41. For a comparison of the place given to pluralism in the idealized French and American models, see Schnapper, *La France de l'intégration*, p. 93.
42. Sophie Body-Gendrot, "Migration and the Racialization of the Postmodern City in France," in *Racism, the City and the State*, ed. Malcolm Cross and Michael Keith (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 83.
43. This law was based on the understanding that such information would eventually lead to quotas and social Balkanization, and would represent a danger to individual liberty. In fact, the prohibition to count the population based on race goes back to 1848, when slavery was abolished in the French Caribbean (personal communication with Emmanuelle Saada). The collaboration of the Vichy government with the Nazis feeds into concerns about protecting citizens' privacy from the state. One of the unintended consequences of this law, however, is that it is difficult to establish access discrimination in the absence of ethnic statistics. See Erik Bleich, "Ideas and Race Policies in Britain and France," paper presented at the Eleventh International Conference of Europeanists, Baltimore, 26–28 February 1998.
44. A law against discrimination in employment, housing, provision of services, and incitement to racial hatred was passed in 1972 but is rarely enforced. The country was relatively slow to pass it (in contrast to other Western nations) because French decision makers believed that all citizens were equally protected by French law, the latter de facto embodying republican principles (Gary Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies: The French and British Experience 1945–75* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979], p. 156). Simultaneously, in order to give it more bite, this law was classified as a criminal law, with the result that relatively few cases are brought to justice because criminal standards of proof are difficult to establish. Indeed, while in 1991 British civil procedures led to 1,471 cases of employment-related discrimination, in France only four cases were brought to justice (cited by Bleich, "Ideas and Race Policies," p. 4). Bataille offers similar statistics in *La Racisme au travail*, p. 7. In general, the law is used less to fight access discrimination in housing or employment, as is the case in the United States, than to fight hate speech (Jeremy Hein, "Rights, Resources, and Membership: Civil Rights Models in France and the United States," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530 [1993], pp. 104–5). Note, however, that the Jospin government launched a new policy to fight against discrimination, making it easier for victims of racism to file formal complaints.
45. Because Muslims' purported inability to assimilate threatens the right of the French to protect their own way of life and difference, the National Front argues that Muslims should not be allowed to stay in France. As the economic crisis worsened, along with the Communists, the Socialists also quietly began advocating stricter measures promoted by the Right. Some of these themes are shared with France's right-wing parties, the Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) and the Union pour la démocratie française (UDF). For instance, in the 1986 elections, these two parties called for "stronger measures to encourage immigrants to return to their home countries and a reduction of payments of social benefits to resident immigrants" (Martin Schain,

"The National Front in France and the Construction of Political Legitimacy," *West European Politics* 10, no. 2 [1987]: 242).

46. French republicanism posits that access to nationality and citizenship entails a will to participate in the social contract. This voluntaristic element justifies encouraging second-generation immigrants to express their desire to become part of the country before they officially enter the polity. While some view this law as attacking the republican principle of *jus soli*, others support it as essential to improving the integration of second-generation immigrants in the polity. This understanding of republican citizenship was reaffirmed in the commissions that led to the reform of the Nationality Code in 1996. It was also reinforced by neo-republican intellectuals who have considerable access to the media and has been supported by both the left and the right defenders of republican ideals. For an excellent discussion of this debate, see Miriam Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship: The Politics of Nationality Reform and Immigration in Contemporary France* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999).
47. On the transition from an unsettled to settled North African immigration after 1974, see Patrick Weil, *La France et ses étrangers: L'Aventure d'une politique d'immigration* (Paris: Calman Levy, 1991).
48. According to Noiriel in *The French Melting Pot,* the history of immigration to France is marked by only three periods of acute xenophobia in modern times, directed at Belgian workers in the 1880s, at Jews during the Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906), and at North Africans today.
49. In *Longwy: Immigrés et prolétaires (1880–1989)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), Gérard Noiriel describes how during the first half of the twentieth century, Italian and Polish workers were integrated into the French working class largely through their involvement in the French Communist Party. France has a long history of anti-Semitism that was particularly salient during the Dreyfus Affair and under the Vichy government. Jews are now viewed as well integrated, and few of them consider themselves to be victims of anti-Semitism (Donadey, "Une certaine idée," p. 220). This relative absence of anti-Semitism leads Michel Wieviorka to conclude that French workers do not have a fully elaborated racist ideology, and that in fact they are mere populists expressing sporadic bursts of resentment due to downward mobility. See Michel Wieviorka, *La France raciste* (Paris: Points, 1992), p. 181.
50. Surveys show that in France, "74 percent of Asian immigrants want to become citizens, but only 41 percent of black Africans, 30 percent of Iberians, and 16 percent of North Africans do" (Jeremy Hein, *States and International Migrants: The Incorporation of Indochinese Refugees in the United States and France* [Boulder: Westview, 1993], p. 8). Asian immigrants are small in numbers and highly educated.
51. On this topic, see Aristide R. Zolberg and Long Litt Woon, "Why Islam Is Like Spanish: Cultural Incorporation in Europe and the United States," *Politics and Society* 17, no. 1 (1999): 5–38.
52. Outside France, a few social scientists have come to understand French republicanism as a form of nationalist patriotism promoting a rooted, bounded, and idealized view of the historical political culture of the nation (see, in particular, Adrian Favell, "A Politics That Is Shared, Bounded and Rooted? Rediscovering Civic Political Culture in Western Europe," *Theory and Society* 27 (1998): 209–36; Favell, *Citizenship and Immigration*, p. 185; Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship*; and George Fredrickson, "America's Diversity in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (1998): 859–75. They concur that in its very substance, the culture of republicanism marks strong boundaries between those who share it and those who do not (see also Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism and Citizenship in Modern France* [New York: Routledge, 1992], p. 33). Unlike these authors, I aim at explaining the weakness of boundaries against blacks in conjunction with the strength of anti-immigrant boundaries. This connection between the boundaries drawn toward blacks and immigrants often escapes some French social scientists involved in these debates, who, along with politicians, sometimes espouse the very republican views that appear to be readily appropriated by the workers I interviewed. Such is the case of the otherwise truly admirable book by Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot.* In particular, see his treatment of racism on p. 260, indicating that racism is downplayed de facto in French society because of republican legal principles.



53. Loïc Wacquant writes: "If there is a dominant antagonism that runs through the Red belt *cité* and stamps the collective consciousness of its habitat, it is not, contrary to widespread media representations, one that opposes immigrants (especially 'Arabs') and autochthonous French families but the cleavage dividing youth *(les jeunes)*, natives and foreign lumped together, from all other social categories" ("Urban Outcasts: Stigma and Division in the Black American Ghetto and the French Urban Periphery," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 17, no. 3 [1993], p. 376). While not sharing Wacquant's conclusions on the importance of racism in French society, I agree with his contention that "the seemingly 'racial' animosity and simmering tension observed in the *banlieue* over the past decade are expressive of the social crisis brought about by persistent un(der)employment and by the spatial conjugation of educational exclusion, housing blight and poverty in areas where native and immigrant and native working-class families compete over diminishing collective resources" (p. 387). His study draws on extensive participant observation conducted in Chicago public housing projects and on an analysis of secondary sources on French *banlieues*.
54. Michael C. Lambert, "From Citizenship to Negritude: 'Making a Difference' in Elite Ideologies of Colonized Francophone West Africa," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 35, no. 2 (1993): 239–62, esp. 241.
55. Cohen, "French Racism."
56. For instance, a carpenter states: "Portuguese people are hard workers and they're honest. But black people are lazy, and they can be very nasty, aggressive. They do it from behind."
57. Other authors reach similar conclusions concerning the downplaying of race in France's patterns of exclusion without necessarily substantiating them with specific data, for instance, in an anecdotal mode, Emmanuel Todd, *Le Destin des immigrés: Assimilation et ségrégation dans les démocraties occidentales* (Paris: Seuil, 1994). Also, John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1979), p. 100, suggests that skin color has not traditionally been a strong social marker in France, in part because it is not a reliable indicator of colonial status. Moreover, Hein (in *States and International Migrants*, p. 64) writes that "language, religion and former colonial status are more important than race." In a different vein, Silverman (*Deconstructing the Nation*) notes that since the 1970s, France has turned toward a more racialized view of immigration. He equates "racialization" with biological or cultural "essentialization." While acknowledging the importance of naturalization processes, I believe that it is more useful to examine the full range of arguments used in national rhetorics of racism. Biological arguments are disappearing, and cultural arguments take so many forms that too much is missed by focusing only on the culture/biology opposition. See Michèle Lamont, "The Rhetorics of Racism and Anti-racism in France and the United States," in Lamont and Thévenot, *Rethinking Comparative Cultural Sociology.*
58. Alain Gillette and Abdelmalek Sayad write: "The relationships that immigrants have with French society are not class relations or relations between segments of a same class (between an immigrant proletariat and a working class): they are caste relationships that tend to look like those that existed between the colonized and

the colonizers" (my translation). See Alain Gillette and Abdelmalek Sayad, *L'Immigration algérienne en France* (Paris: Éditions Ententes, 1984), p. 210.

59. Claude Weil, "Racisme: comment ils jugent la France," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 17–23 October, 1996, p. 14.
60. In Gérard Lemaine and Jeanne Ben Brika, "Le rejet de l'autre: pureté, descendance, valeurs," in *Ethnicisation des rapports sociaux: Racismes, nationalismes, ethnicismes, et culturalismes,* ed. Martine Fournier and Geneviève Vermès (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1994), p. 212, the authors find that 85 percent of a nationally representative sample believe that North Africans are physically different from the French. However, a number of North Africans share southern Mediterranean features with the French. Although Arabs are considered Caucasians, whiteness is epitomized in European features.
61. Claude Weil, "Racisme: comment ils jugent la France," p. 11.
62. See Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men*, chap. 2.
63. Gérard Lemaine and Jeanne Ben Brika, "Rejection. From Attitudes to Intentions to Exclude: Social Distance, Phenotypes, Race, and Culture," *Social Science Information* 36, no. 1 (1997): 81–113. Already in 1966, a national survey revealed that ten negative attributes were viewed as applying primarily to Algerians by 71 percent of the respondents to a national survey, while only 22 percent believed that these attributes applied primarily to black Africans and 7 percent believed that they applied primarily to the Portuguese (cited by Kastoryano, *La France, l'Allemagne et leurs immigrés*, p. 74). Similar trends appeared in a 1973–74 survey (see Alain Girard, Yves Charbit, and Marie-Laurence Lamy, "Attitudes des français à l'égard de l'immigration étrangère: nouvelle enquête d'opinion," *Population* 29, no. 6 (1974): 1028; also George Mauco, *Les Étrangers en France et le problème du racisme* (Paris: La Pensée Universelle, 1977).
64. Cited by Donald L. Horowitz, "Immigration and Group Relations in France and the United States," in *Immigrants in Two Democracies: French and American Experience* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), p. 19.
65. Nonna Mayer, "De Passy à Barbès: deux visages du vote Le Pen à Paris," *Revue française de science politique* 37, no. 6 (1987): 893. Note that former colonies are among the groups receiving high and low ratings.
66. Many natives from the Dom-Toms are not assimilated into French society and live in a marginal position. Furthermore, the Portuguese, Spaniards, Algerians, and Moroccans all include groups of well- and less-integrated immigrants (Véronique de Rudder, Isabelle Taboatta Leonetti, and François Vourc'h, *Stratégies d'insertion, représentations, et attitudes* [Paris: Institut de recherches sur les sociétés contemporaines, Unité de recherches "Migrations et Société." Centre national de recherche scientifique, 1990], pp. 119–22).
67. Tribalat (*Faire France*, p. 21) finds that 40 percent of the black Africans she surveyed were from Muslim countries, and 14 percent were from exclusively Christian or animist areas. Nearly half of the black African immigrants were from religiously heterogeneous regions.
68. Feldblum, "Paradoxes of Ethnic Politics," pp. 53–54. In 1990, European immigrants made up 40 percent of the 3,607,590 foreigners living in France, while Africans made up 46 percent of foreigners and 6.4 percent of the French population. Thirty-four percent of these Africans originated in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, with only 5 percent coming from the sub-Saharan francophone countries (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques [INSEE], *Recensement de la population de 1990. Les Populations des DOM-TOM, nées et originaires, résidant en France* [Paris: Documentation française, 1993], Table R-6, p. 16). This last figure is increasing very rapidly: in 1975, sub-Saharan Africans made up only 2 percent of foreigners residing in France.
69. Robert Delerm estimated that the black African population in France in 1964 was composed of 10,000 to 12,000 students; 4,000 to 5,000 former students who stayed;



5,000 interns ("*stagiaires au titre de la coopération*"); and 40,000 to 50,000 workers, of whom 28,000 inhabited the Parisian metropolitan area. See "La population noire en France," *Population* 19, no. 3 (1964): 522–23.

70. In Hélène Bergues, "L'immigration de travailleurs noirs en France et particulièrement dans la région parisienne," *Population* 28, no. 1 (1973): 59–79, the author discusses a 1965 survey that revealed favorable views held by the French about black Africans. She wrote: "[T]hey are considered pleasant, polite, hardworking, quite childish, but of good disposition.... Good relations are generally established between black Africans and French workers or other Europeans. Only the relations with the North African groups appear difficult" (p. 74).
71. Tribalat, *Faire France*, p. 42.
72. Jacques Barou, "Les immigrations africaines," in *Un siècle d'immigration en France: 1945 à nos jours. Du chantier à la citoyenneté?* ed. David Assouline and Mehdi Lallaoui (Paris: Diffusion Syros, 1996), pp. 31–46.
73. Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men*, chap. 2.
74. Ibid.
75. Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
76. It is the case for 25 percent of France's residents, compared with 13 percent of the residents of the U.K.—the European country with the second highest number of individuals falling into this category. See Jérome Jaffre, "La France, est-elle le mouton noir de l'Europe?" *Le Monde*, 2 July 1998, p. 15.
77. Michèle Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
78. Roel W. Meertens and Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Is Subtle Prejudice Really Prejudice?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61 (1997): 67. The other groups that prefer subtle prejudice are younger respondents and left-wingers.