CHAPTER 1

ETHNOGRAPHY IN *LES CITÉS*

Stigmatizing Labels: ZEP, HLM, and *Cité*

My arrival in October 1998 to Chemin de l'Ile occurred just after a decisive communal and political event: the successful strike to retain the neighborhood's status as a ZEP or *zone d'éducation prioritaire* ("priority education zone"). Created in 1981 by Minister of Education Alain Savary, the ZEP designation ensured that local schools would be granted additional resources such as higher teacher salaries and smaller class sizes. The strike had mobilized a variety of populations in the neighborhood, all of whom had different interests in whether the neighborhood continued to be classified as such.[1]

Teachers at the local middle and grade schools had mobilized in order to keep their salaries at a higher rate as well as to secure the lower student-to-teacher ratio that the ZEP classification guaranteed. *Educateurs*—French civil servants who combine social work with education—participated because of the higher municipal funding granted to areas designated as ZEPs, ensuring their continued employment at local associations working on a variety of issues such as school retention and anti-criminality among adolescents.[2] Students were encouraged by their teachers and educators to participate in a march, and local schools posted pro-ZEP slogans. School itself was cancelled for several days in order to persuade local legislators to

retain the ZEP status and, even though some parents grumbled that students would be behind for the year, many participated in the march as well.

A few days after the strike had ended, I arrived at *Cerise* (or "Cherry"), the association where I volunteered as an English tutor for middle-school students, only to find that all the educators were off making visits to parents' houses, and that the children were still in school. I decided to walk the neighborhood to look for remnants of the strike and to get a better sense of the place where I would conduct an initial 18 months of fieldwork, with subsequent visits over the next dozen years. My self-led tour revealed a jumble of buildings, the vast majority of which consisted of various forms of rent-subsidized housing. On the perimeter of the neighborhood were mostly run-down single-family homes or *pavillons*; farther in were several early-model HLM or *habitation à loyer modéré*, rent-subsidized apartment complexes standing four stories and built in the early 1970s. Finally, in the core of the neighborhood stood nine buildings built in the 1980s that towered over the rest of the area, over 10 stories high, that included seven *cités* (state subsidized high-rise apartment complexes) and two *foyers d'immigrés* or all-male immigrant workers' apartments, also state-supported.

On my walking tour, I retraced the route of the ZEP protest march, down the now mostly deserted main boulevard. In the local middle school (*collège*), slogans were painted in the windows, such as *Gardons la ZEP!* ("Keep the ZEP!"). Graffiti, usually rare in the neighborhood, also commemorated the success of the strike with spray-painted catchphrases on the train station wall: *On a gagné!* or "We won!"[3] As I walked around the gray and desolate assembly of largely concrete, state-subsidized buildings, I began to wonder seriously about the complicated mix of "winning" and "losing" that such "priority" status would entail for a community such as Chemin de l'Ile. As a newcomer to the neighborhood just before the aforementioned strike, I was surprised at the readiness and enthusiasm that many people displayed in attempting to retain the ZEP classification.

Today, densely populated neighborhoods with a high proportion of such housing that are located outside of major towns are called *les cités*. In American English, "suburban" has the connotation of a safe, dull, middle-class lifestyle. In France, however, *les banlieues* or "suburbs" tends to connote economically poor, socially marginalized, and racially stigmatized spaces, consisting often of government-subsidized housing projects called *les cités*. Moreover, whereas *bidonvilles* (shantytowns), *cités de transit* (temporary housing), and early HLMs have historically been located near manufacturing and mining industries—that is, near jobs—France's current post-industrial economy has left most *cités* isolated and far from both employers and mass transit.

Often erected in the same or a nearby location as early *bidonvilles*, *les cités* are stigmatized, suburban spaces that provide a rich and timely ethnographic site because they reside, culturally and representationally, at the intersection of a number of related and contested French social issues: state-sponsored housing, immigration, emergent ethnic identities, changing gender norms, and youth subcultures. The history of how *cités* arose in France demonstrates the legacy of exclusion and racism that immigrants and their children still face today.

The strike to maintain ZEP status in Chemin de l'Ile illustrates a complex picture of the ways that *cités* figure in larger representational, social, and political landscapes of France. Despite their support for the strike, adolescents I worked with often expressed anxiety about the negative reputation of the neighborhood. They feared that using their home address would lessen their chances of getting jobs or internships.[4] Several high school students mentioned that they planned to use a non-local relative's address on their resume in order to avoid spatial stereotyping. At the time, Chemin de l'Ile hardly deserved the negative reputation, as it was relatively calm; in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it had one of the lowest crime rates in Nanterre, the town in which Chemin de l'Ile is located. Yet, the neighborhood had experienced a very turbulent past, including heroin dealing and the incineration by local inhabitants of a police station built at the bottom of a residential complex.[5]

By using their relatives' home addresses and in other ways, the young people at the center of this study, predominantly of Algerian parentage, demonstrate their sophisticated understanding of how labels such as "ZEP" or "*les cités*" contribute to negative stereotypes about the spaces and styles of Chemin de l'Ile and other similar low-income, suburban neighborhoods. Unlike their immigrant parents and grandparents for whom *cités* provided relatively affordable and safe living conditions after often dreadful experiences in shantytowns, successive French generations of suburban inhabitants have faced the overwhelmingly negative effects of growing up there. Adding spatial prejudice to racial prejudice, the young people in this study encounter stigma that marks "who they are" as Arab youth, and also "where they are from" as *jeunes de la cité* ("*cité* youth").

The immigrant parents and grandparents of these young people have also clearly experienced discrimination in France. However, racism and discrimination may have played less of a role in their parents' and grandparents' experience of work in France because they (the men at least) were recruited specifically for manual labor after World War II, and so their immigrant status was closely related to their function as workers to rebuild France. In contrast, due to the economic crash in the 1970s and their improved access

to education, children of North African immigrants have been both less able and less willing to find the low-paying, manual labor jobs that their parents came to France to obtain. At the same time, high rates of scholastic failure, a poor economy, and racist hiring practices often impede these French citizens from attaining economic security.

Along with other official designations, such as *zone urbaine précaire* or ZUP (precarious urban zone), *habitation à loyer modéré* or HLM (moderated rent housing), and *les cités* (high-rise subsidized housing), *zones d'éducation prioritaire* (ZEPs) have been stigmatized in the French media since the early 1980s. Much as the terms ZEP, ZUP, and HLM constitute official categories with which to describe (and attempt to redress) the social and economic marginality experienced in such areas, they may also serve to stigmatize them. Economically, these spaces have become increasingly marginal in relation to manufacturing jobs, as France has largely shifted away from an industrial economy. Representationally, low-income suburban neighbor-hoods have been repeatedly associated with negative journalistic topics such as crime, immigration, drugs, and scholastic failure. In a finding in line with the problem of stigma inherent to such categories, an official French census study conducted from 1981 to 1992 by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies or INSEE (Bénabou et al. 2005) found no significant benefit of the ZEP designation to the students themselves. Teachers benefitted from higher salaries in these areas, whereas student performances and schools failed to improve, in part due to decreased enrollment in the face of parental fears regarding the designation.

In another pattern that illustrates the social force of stigma, Gross, McMurray, and Swedenburg (1994) describe representations of nocturnal *rodéos* during the early 1980s as a powerfully negative way that HLMs were depicted in the French press. These urban battles with the police involved young men stealing cars and racing them, only to later set them on fire so that any evidence would be destroyed. The so-called *rodéos* were highly publicized in the French press, giving HLMs a reputation for lawlessness and violence. In the 1990s, both right-wing and left-wing newspapers such as *Libération* and *Le Figaro* focused on *la banlieue chaude* ("the hot suburb"), a category that conflated negative stereotypes by repeatedly linking civil disturbances and violence with North African migration in general and dis-affected Algerian youth in particular, in conjunction with representations of crime, scholastic failure, and drug addiction (Tetreault 1992).[6]

Most recently, the civil uprisings in low-income suburban areas across France in 2005 and 2010, both of which began following civilian deaths after police intervention, have been characterized in political rhetoric and media coverage as the fault of *la racaille*, a racialized, violent image of *cité*

street toughs (Silverstein and Tetreault 2006). While the left-wing has tended to depict this population as social victims, the French political right-wing has blamed *cité* dwellers for a purported rise in crime and *l'insécurité* ("insecurity"), a term that emerged in post-9/11 French politics, often serving as a code word for "terrorism" and forming the basis for the newest version of anti-immigrant sentiment. Thus, for close to 40 years, low-income suburban areas and their inhabitants have been stigmatized by shifting labels that belie an insidious semiotic stability in French media representations and political rhetoric.

In Chemin de l'Ile, adolescents were aware that the successful strike to retain ZEP classification would function in part to keep many such stereotypes about them and their neighborhood intact. "Winning" ZEP status (or, in this case, maintaining it) meant that the stigma of need and poverty would be officially recognized, but only partially rectified, since unemployment for young people within the neighborhood would likely remain at roughly 20%, or almost twice the national average.[7] And a large number of the immigrant and working-class parents in the neighborhood would likely remain poor and possibly illiterate—both negative predictors of their children's success in school.

As I will explore further in Chapter 2, adolescents' awareness of the neighborhood's stigmatized status coincided with their understanding of it as an "Arab" space—that is, a space predominated by inhabitants of North African background. As such, Chemin de l'Ile offered a density of community, extended kinship, and social networks that often afforded teens a strong sense of belonging and "home." At the same time, adolescents were aware of popular negative representations of *cités* as "Arab" spaces, and recycled such stereotypes in everyday conversation—for example, by mentioning to me frequently that there were "lots of Arabs" in Chemin de l'Ile.

Although increasing numbers of North African immigrants have stayed in France and produced children who are considered French by nationality, the categories "French" and "Arab" are still too often counterposed as mutually exclusive.[8] As French journalist Sylvain Cypel noted in 2014, in France, a "diffuse populism is stirring … [with] a nostalgic mindset that everything 'was better before' … [and] a palpable conviction that everything bad comes from the outside: Brussels, globalization, immigration" (*The New York Times*, January 23). Cypel goes on to cite the 2013 desecration of Muslim French soldiers' tombstones in Carpentras as evidence for the ways that, in France, "racism and xenophobia" are often expressed as "anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, or anti-black." In this case, symbolic violence against deceased French soldiers casts them as "Muslims" only, rather than simultaneously as national French heroes who lost their lives for their country, and is thus

indicative of the pervasive tendency to treat "French" and "Muslim–Arab" as incompatible or non-overlapping categories.

Moreover, popular anti-immigrant discourses that specifically target North Africans essentialize "French" and "Arab" "cultures" as embodying traits that purportedly exist outside of historical context. Justin E. H. Smith, in a 2014 op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, takes issue with popular French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut and argues instead for a historicized understanding of diversity and multiculturalism in France:

> … his recent popular book "L'identité malheureuse" ("The Unhappy Identity"), proclaims, in effect, that immigration is destroying French cultural identity. He bemoans the "métissage" of France, a term one often sees in the slogans of the far right, which translates roughly as "mongrelization." […] Immigration in Europe, as in, say, the Southwestern United States or within the former Soviet Union, is determined by deep historical links and patterns of circulation between the immigrants' countries of origin—in France's case, particularly North Africa and sub-Saharan Françafrique—and the places of destination. (*The New York Times*, January 5)

Popular anti-immigrant discourses as that of Finkielkraut serve to erase the fact that French and North African cultures have been irrevocably mixed and relationally defined for centuries, due to French colonization of the Maghreb and its attendant historical, political, and cultural proximity to France. Along these lines, Etienne Balibar (1991) has argued that the commonly voiced essentialist position that "French" and "Arab" cultures are too different to be successfully compatible represents a "neo-racism" that substitutes "culture" for "race." Low-income suburban neighborhoods such as Chemin de l'Ile are at the frontlines of these struggles over spatial and symbolic territory, both within the French popular imagination and within *cités* themselves, as I show in my following description of the conflict that arose at the ZEP strike celebration.

After-Party—Spatialized Conflicts within the *Cité*

While representational and political struggles over who is to be included within the imagined "French" national community (Anderson 1991) are often waged in popular media with respect to neighborhoods such as Chemin de l'Ile, similar struggles arise within the *cités* themselves in people's everyday discourse (Essed 1991; VanDijk 1987). Some of these conflicts emerge, for example, as "culture wars" over the linguistic, musical, and dress

styles emerging in French *cités*, including Chemin de l'Ile. After the success-ful ZEP strike, I attended a celebratory potluck that teachers and educators working in the neighborhood had organized, held in a local community center. Neighborhood parents and children of a variety of national origins attended the party and enjoyed the food and music together. By the time dancing began, however, the convivial exterior had begun to erode in a conflict about which type of music to play: "French" or "Arab." The young, hip assemblage of educators and teachers of various backgrounds (often, but not exclusively, North African) who had organized the party decided to play "Arab" music, such as Algerian *raï* stars Khaled and Cheb Mami as well as Arabic-influenced French pop bands such as *Zebda*.[9]

Farouk, father of three grade-school children and who had been very active in the strike, confided in me that night that a "French" parent (of non-immigrant descent) had complained pointedly to him about the music, implying the country's "takeover" by Arabs: "This is France, after all!" (*C'est la France, quand même!*). Being originally from Algeria, Farouk took her comment personally and responded with a sexist (and typically "French") insult, claiming that she was *mal baisée* ("badly fucked," i.e., "needing to get laid"). The two refused to speak to each other afterward. This seemingly banal conflict over what constitutes appropriate music for a neighborhood party demonstrates the tensions inherent in Chemin de l'Ile's ambivalent positioning between "French" and "Arab" identities, which are by and large posed as mutually exclusive categories in popular representations of the French national community.[10]

Theorizing Style and Stigma through *Transculturality*

This book addresses the multiple relationships between local performances of social identities and widely circulating discourses. "Discourse" refers to spoken or written communication as well as more formal discussion or debate of a topic. This book brings together the two, in that it addresses how teens' everyday interactions intersect with broadly circulating formu-lations regarding social identities in France. As Sherzer (1987) notes, discourse resides at the nexus of culture and language, and thus exists as a way to access shared knowledge among cultural members. Also central to my approach is the idea that "culture is localized in concrete, publicly acces-sible signs, the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourse" (Urban 1991: 1). In that sense, forms of discourse, such as myths, rituals, or, in this study, genres of teasing and verbal play, are publicly

accessible, but this does not mean that they are shared in a monologic way; rather, through performance, instances of discourse emerge as dynamic expressions of cultural experience (ibid: 2).

Language practices, including recycling dominant stereotypes ("there are lots of Arabs here"), strategic self-naming using *verlan*, and repurposing the Arabic politeness formula *ḥashak* for wordplay, are all evidence of the multiple ways that young people create continuity and cultural change in their everyday interactions. I use a theoretical framework of *transculturality* to analyze such everyday verbal performances of social identities as creative responses to widely circulating discourses that often stigmatize and sometimes valorize *les arabes* and *les cités*. By theorizing such linguistic and cultural innovations as *transcultural* practices, this book demonstrates how symbolic forms come to take on ideological social meanings, as well as how these meanings are transformed in interaction. In *les cités*, French adolescents of North African descent combine cultural and linguistic referents in their communicative styles in ways that serve to both deconstruct and re-imagine the ideological underpinnings of their multiple social identities. Teenagers' language and cultural production in Chemin de l'Ile thereby challenge naturalized assumptions about the link between identity and language, contributing to a new scholarship that rejects the previously common pattern of equating ethnic groups and particular language styles.

I extend Cuban anthropologist and ethnomusicologist Fernando Ortiz's notion of "transculturation" to describe how cultures converge (1947). Ortiz argued that cultures, such as Spanish and African in the Cuban context, surmount differences and even conflicts to forge something new and transcendent. My use of *transculturality* differs from Ortiz's in that rather than a transcendent combination of practices or beliefs from two groups, I focus on the ways that French teens of Algerian descent forge transcultural identities through the *simultaneous* creation and counter-opposition of Frenchness and Arabness. The example of the *ḥashak* game that begins this book illustrates this different approach. *Ḥashak* exists in contradistinction to Toulouse-Lautrec, and the meaning of the game is found in between the two terms rather than in a synthesis of the two. Speakers are thus expressing, creating, and simultaneously holding onto (in the sense of symbolic placeholders) at least two culturally informed positions.

Although W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) emphasized multiple internal psychological states of African Americans rather than linguistic performances, my use of transculturality is not wholly unlike his concept of double consciousness in its emphasis on two or more simultaneously held perspectives. Double consciousness refers to African Americans' experience of simultaneously occupying cultural insider and cultural outsider status in the

United States, an experience that was presumably much more acute when Du Bois theorized this concept at the start of the twentieth century. In contrast, intercultural communication literature often posits that communicators reside in one "camp" or culture, and that communication occurs "across" these camps rather than through speakers' simultaneous positioning within two or more cultures.[11]

Through its potential to articulate dynamic intersections among complex social relationships and discourses, my use of *transculturality* also differs from notions of transnationalism and diaspora. Transnationalism often describes the transplantation of people or symbolic forms into a new national context—someone or something "is transnational" due to movement from "there" to "here"—that is, from "sending" nation to "receiving" nation (Kearney 1995: 548).[12] As Kearney notes, "Transnationalism overlaps globalization but typically has a more limited purview. Whereas global processes are largely decentered from specific national territories and take place in a global space, transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states" (1995: 548). Diaspora often emphasizes a "homeland" that links the present to a mythic past or place, in symbolic movement from "here" to "there" (Koven 2013: 325). And yet, as Sandhya Shukla (2001: 551) notes, "Diaspora, by definition, is dispersion, which effectively compresses time and space such that it enables the experiences of many places at what would appear to be one moment. And today such multiplicity and simultaneity have become particularly pronounced."

This book attempts to address such multiplicity and simultaneity through the concept of transculturality. Rather than emphasizing a projected movement in one direction from "old country" to "new" (as in much literature on transnationalism), or from "new country" to "old" (as in much literature on diaspora), transcultural processes and discourses involve the simultaneous positioning *between* social categories and semiotic referents.[13] In this sense, my work draws much from semiotics, the study of relationships among social signs (Ochs 2012; Peirce 1931–1958; Urban 1991), as well as theories that challenge the possibility of singular or unified linguistic meaning (Bakhtin 1981; Hoffmann-Dilloway 2008; Ochs 2012; Woolard 1998).

In the communicative practices of French teens of North African descent, the relevant semiotic categories are often dictated or at least shaped by operative power relations within France. For example, the discursive distinction—"French or Arab"—lies at the heart of the ongoing controversy about the roles of second and third generations of North African descent with respect to the French Republic, a controversy that is played out in political rhetoric, everyday experiences of racism, and everyday expressions of social identity. In particular, the polarity between "French" and "Arab" is

at the center of elaborate debates and policies surrounding *intégration*, a set of French discourses and legislation designed to facilitate the cultural and economic assimilation of immigrants that includes the 2004 ban of the Muslim headscarf in French schools and official state contexts (Bowen 2007). Moreover, the negative representations of *les arabes* in popular French discourse frequently coincide with stigmatized interpretations of *les cités*, a fact that emerges through adolescents' complex and contradictory processes of identification and dis-identifications with these spaces as well as with the social category *les arabes*.

That said, it would be a mistake to consider the teens in this study as "neither" French "nor" North African; rather, they are more accurately described as "both/and" (Barrett 1999). Yet, I must emphasize that the teens I worked with were born in France, and few expressed a desire to move "back" to North Africa—for the most part, they like France and they certainly *are* French, both born and raised. In this sense, they are not truly "transnational," nor are they migrants, but rather children and grandchildren of immigrants.[14] Neither are they true cosmopolitans or "global citizens," for they are physically, culturally, and economically bound to the local spaces of their low-income housing projects, *les cités*. All the same, my teenaged consultants often expressed to me their feelings of exclusion from French society, as not being considered acceptably or "truly French." It is their experiences and expressions of in-between-ness, both in terms of social relationships and discursive categories (e.g., "French" and "immigrant"), that I attempt to encapsulate and describe with *transculturality*.

My notion of transculturality also differs from the popular and largely apolitical American concept of "multiculturalism" due to my attention to the roles of stigma and power relations that are operative and central to teens' transcultural experiences and forms of expression. As I conceive of it here, transculturality is a model for cultural and linguistic identities forged through intersections among social relationships and discursive forms that are not neutral, but rather (over)loaded with historical and political meanings.[15] The teens in this study are simultaneously negotiating multiple, complex, and sometimes conflicting social relationships with their immigrant parents and French-born peers, as well as engaging with and transforming multiple, often stigmatizing, and even conflicting local, national, and transnational discourses regarding Muslim Arabs living in *les cités* and their contested "place" in relation to France.

I am not the first to write about these issues with respect to immigrants and their descendants in France. Paul Silverstein's (2004) work on *transpolitics* has been a major influence because he argues that immigration politics and policies in France have been constitutive of how the nation has been

imagined, both externally, in its relationship to Europe, and internally, in the construction of the urban spaces of *les cités*. Whereas Silverstein's (2004) model looks at French identity struggles through the grass-roots politics of Amazigh (Berber/Kabyle) activists within colonial and post-colonial France, Pierre Bourdieu's reflexive sociology addresses the conundrum of post-colonial France by juxtaposing narratives of people who occupy polarized subject positions, for instance, white union factory workers and unskilled immigrant laborers (Bourdieu et al. 1999: 3). Still others, such as Alec Hargreaves, have attended to similar issues of transcultural identities in post-colonial France largely through literature and other forms of popular cultural expression (see Hargreaves and McKinney 1997). In addition, many French scholars explore relationships among identity formation, citizenship, and migration histories with respect to North African communities in France.[16] Yet, the study of language in ethnographic context is often missing in such scholarship dealing with immigrant communities in *les cités*.[17]

Although relatively few scholars have addressed everyday language use among French youth of North African descent, Koven documents the inherent contradictions of occupying both "modern" French and "backward" Portuguese social personas in narratives by Luso-descendant French speakers (2001, 2013). At the core of this work are concerns that are akin to my own—that is, to analyze how citizens of immigrant descent within post-colonial France re-imagine belonging and membership in a Republican political system that recognizes only individual membership as the basis of civic participation (to the exclusion of community politics), despite the fact that racism and exclusion are pervasive elements of French society (Beriss 2004; Chapman and Frader 2004).

In addition to the wide array of scholarship addressing notions of belonging and exclusion in post-colonial France, this book builds upon the tradition of scholarship on verbal art and performance (Bauman 2004, 1977; Sherzer 2002, 1990), by analyzing how heightened moments from everyday communicative practices, such as ritualized teasing and speech play, allow us to understand how teenagers articulate and re-negotiate social identities through collaborative performances. While the study of youth has a long history in the social sciences, only recently has research addressed the linguistic expression of identity among adolescents (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003; Bailey 2000; Bucholtz 1999; Chun 2009; Coates 1999; Eckert 1989; Heller 1999; Lo 1999; McElhinny 2007; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Pujolar, 2001; Reyes 2006).

In this regard, a discourse-centered approach (Sherzer 1987) offers a particularly fruitful perspective from which to study social identity among adolescents. A focus on the collective uses of discourse facilitates the study

of social identity as emergent in social interactional practices, rather than as static, predetermined social categories (Bucholtz 2002; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992). At the same time, speakers engage with social categories and discourses that pre-exist the moment of interaction and that are available for teens' use as publicly accessible semiotic forms. This book explores the tensions, collusions, and transformations that occur at the emergent intersections between large-scale discursive forces in the media and politics and the local discourses of adolescents.

Historical Contexts: Colonial to Post-colonial

French histories of state-subsidized housing and immigration policy are highly intertwined, a fact evidenced in Chemin de l'Ile as well as Nanterre, the town where the neighborhood is located. The low-income housing projects that are typical of Chemin de l'Ile are most often located near where immigrant laborers were originally housed when they were recruited to help rebuild France after World War II and to re-launch industrial production in the 1950s and 1960s. Central to France's industrial boom during this period, Nanterre has had a long history with immigration generally, and with Algerian immigration in particular. Male Algerian workers, among them several grandfathers of the adolescents in this study, were recruited by factories in Nanterre and lived in *bidonvilles* ("shantytowns"), located about a mile away from Chemin de l'Ile.

In Nanterre, as elsewhere in France post–World War II, *bidonvilles* arose near factories and coal mines outside of major French cities where (initially usually male) immigrant workers lived without water, plumbing, and heat. Inhabitants were legally prohibited from building homes or improving these veritable shacks.[18] Facing public outcry over the living conditions of immigrant workers and, by the late 1960s, some of their families, the French government built temporary housing called *cités de transit* while it pursued building permanent state-subsidized housing. By the 1970s, immigrant workers and their families were forcibly relocated into *les grands ensembles* ("high rises"), or subsidized low-income housing called *habitation à loyer modéré* or HLM (Sayad and Dupuy 2008).

After a moratorium on economic immigration was passed in France in 1974, the familial resettlement law allowed migrants currently living in France to relocate their families to France. For some, *les HLM* were a clear improvement in terms of basic living conditions because, prior to relocation, most immigrant workers and families were restricted to either *bidonvilles* or

the worst of private housing in run–down inner-city tenements, for example, in *La Goutte d'Or* in Paris or *Le Panier* in Marseille.

Due to a lack of other housing options because of low incomes and ongoing housing discrimination in the private sector, immigrants and their descendants are often "stuck" in HLMs. Within the Paris region (Ile-de-France), by 1975, roughly 30% of Algerians were living in HLMs, and this figure continued to rise through the 1980s (Schain 1985: 170–171). Although exclusionary housing practices limit the total number of immigrant and "foreign" occupants in *les cités* (cf. MacMaster 1997), these areas nonetheless continue to be among the only available housing choices for the low-income families that generally comprise these social groups in France. As a result, *les cités* are marked as spaces that immigrants and their descendants inhabit, creating a representational conflation between negative depictions of these stigmatized spaces and negative depictions of immigrants, Arabs, and blacks as stigmatized groups.

Algerians have migrated to France more than any other group, due to the long history of Algerian colonialism and owing to the various labor recruitment programs before and after de-colonization in 1962. France colonized Algeria for 132 years, creating both a kind of cultural intimacy and protracted conflict between the two countries and their citizens, which lasts to this day. Algerians' centrality to French immigration policies and debates can thus be traced to the French colonial legacy in North Africa. Throughout the colonial period, which lasted for Algeria from 1830 through the start of the war with France in 1954, "migration" for Algerians consisted of the relocation of colonized subjects to work in the metropole, a process that inversely mimicked the relocation of French settlers into colonial territories.

Algerians' presence and the related controversy in France predates de-colonization and thus "immigration" in the traditional sense. In 1946, the migrant population in France totaled 1.7 million, a figure that would double to 3.4 million by 1975 (Blatt 1997: 41). Although the post–World War II government's policies favored "culturally compatible" immigrants from Europe, competition over these groups meant that immigrants from former colonies and developing nations such as Algeria necessarily filled the labor gap (Blatt 1997: 41). MacMaster notes, for example, the "push and pull" factors that brought in Algerians, more than Tunisians and Moroccans, long before World War II—the "push" of the economic destruction from colonialism, and the "pull" of France's labor shortage brought on by World War I casualties and falling birth rates beginning in 1900 (1997: 3). While North Africans only constituted 3.5% of the overall total foreign population in 1930, France was, at that time, the country with the highest per capita foreign population in the world (MacMaster 1997: 4). Furthermore,

Algerians then, as now, were represented as the most problematic group to French society, according to publications of the time, which referred to the "Arab problem" (MacMaster 1997: 4).

MacMaster attributes the social "panic" over Arab migration in the first third of the twentieth century (and, to a degree, in the present) to the troubling effect of seeing the mass migration of colonized subjects moving into the space and cultural realm of the colonizers (1997: 5). According to MacMaster, due to the large rotation of migrant workers from Algeria in the early 1900s, one in five men of working age (some 500,000 people) had some experience living and laboring in the metropole (1997: 5). Anxieties about the mobility of colonized subjects were expressed most vehemently by colonial settlers, who complained not only of rising labor prices in the colonies but also of migrants becoming accustomed to the more liberal political atmosphere of continental France, including labor unions, communism, and the growing Algerian nationalist movement. Of course, this is, generally speaking, what did indeed occur, galvanizing the Algerian struggle for independence (see Silverstein 2004).

The Algerian–French war (1954–1962) holds another key role in the dynamic of anti-immigrant sentiment directed toward Algerians in France. Provocatively known as *la Guerre Sans Nom* ("the War without a Name") because of its taboo status, the Algerian war holds a place in French history not unlike that of Vietnam in American history. After long 8 years of battle, the French lost much more than the war; France lost status as an imperial power and 3 million French soldiers. As Hargreaves and McKinney note, almost an entire generation of French citizens experienced the violence and destruction of war (1997: 18). Furthermore, re-constructing "French" nationhood after the colonial period in Algeria was a project that was intimately related to defining which Algerians were "citizens" according to the changing boundaries of "France." For example, the phrase *les avant '62* ("those before 1962") refers to those Algerians who were born prior to decolonization at the end of the Algerian–French war. This group of individuals was automatically granted French citizenship and the right to vote on the principle that current territories of Algeria were under French rule. The classification of Algerian natives as French citizens further highlights the permeability of national boundaries with respect to the two countries.

Throughout the most recent media and political "crisis" which casts immigration as a challenge to French sovereignty, Algerians have figured centrally in anti-immigrant French political rhetoric and negative media representations. Because of the French government's recruitment and general support of short-term immigration to stem the labor shortage, immigration as a politicized "problem" did not discursively emerge until the late 1960s

(Blatt 1997: 41). However, immigration became politicized after 1968, when governments under Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing restricted migration (and forced unemployed foreigners to leave) in response to an economic downturn and "social conflict arising from the settlement of North African immigrants" (ibid.: 42). Political response by immigrants included widespread, "militant protest campaigns against restrictive government policies, squalid housing arrangements, discriminatory workplace conditions, and widespread racial violence against Arab immigrants in particular" (ibid.: 42). Then, as now, however, the most striking element to the construction of Algerians in discourse and politics is their strategic use by French politicians as scapegoats to further personal and national political aims.

North Africans and Algerians in particular have been particularly prone to anti-immigrant sentiment with respect to the economic downturn in France, beginning with the oil crisis in the early 1970s. While French census rules prohibit asking for respondents' ethnicity, parents' country of origin, and religion, Michèle Tribalat (2009), researcher at INED (National Institute of Demographic Research), estimates that there are 3.5 million people of North African heritage currently living in France with at least one grandparent from Algeria, Morocco, or Tunisia, corresponding to 5.8% of the total French population. High rates of migration from the Maghreb continue today; according to the national French census in 2008 (INED), the largest percentage of immigrants came from Algeria (11.2%) and the second largest group from Morocco (11.1%). Despite these large numbers and the longevity of high migration trends, Algerians have never enjoyed the facility with which earlier European immigrants, such as those coming from Italy and Poland, were considered "French" in one generation. Rather, adult children of Algerians have continued to mistakenly be referred to as *étrangers* ("foreigners") in popular French media.

Further, stereotypes that conflate these and other categories have emerged in conjunction with political and public discussion over immigration's role in the construction of citizenship and national identity in France and across Europe. While migration itself is depicted as the "cause" of French conflict over national identity, fostering contentious public "debates" about *l'immigration* has provided political opportunities and rhetorical fodder for many a public figure and would-be policymaker in France. Anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric became common after the oil crisis in the 1970s and the subsequent moratorium on economic immigration in 1974. However, on both political and symbolic levels, French politicians of every ilk took to blaming immigrants in public discourses for a variety of social ills, including crime, drug sales, and violence, starting in the 1980s.[19] Prior to this time, socialist and communist politicians had supported policies geared toward

the inclusion of immigrants in French civic society, such as the proposed legislation allowing immigrants to vote in municipal elections if they had lived in France over 5 years. By the mid-1980s, however, reacting to political pressure exerted by the anti-immigrant party *Le Front National* ("The National Front"), even pro-immigrant socialist President François Mitterrand had changed his stance on the immigrant vote, as well as on a variety of other policies relating to migration.

In the political rhetoric of founder Jean-Marie Le Pen and now his daughter Marine Le Pen (current head of *Le Front National*), hegemonic discourses about *l'immigration* have taken the most extreme form, and, in themselves, are touted as a platform to justify the political aspirations of the party leaders. Jean-Marie Le Pen garnered both infamy and a devout following by making anti-immigrant political proposals such as returning all "foreigners" (including immigrants and their descendants) to "their" countries of origin and by questioning the historical validity of the Holocaust. Although Le Pen was active in politics in the 1970s, his emergence as a prominent political figure occurred only after 1980, when *Le Front National* was recognized as an official national organization and allowed to participate in elections.

Unfortunately, the aftermath of 9/11 has unleashed a new wave of anti-immigrant rhetoric and increased *Le Front National*'s popularity. In 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen was one of two successful candidates for the presidential run-off elections, winning a larger percentage of the French vote than former Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, and beating many more moderate candidates. This time around, Le Pen's platform consisted primarily of discourse of fear regarding growing "insecurity" (*l'insécurité*) in France, the new code word for the supposedly rising rates of criminality and domestic terrorism and thus a way to implicate, once again, Arab immigrants and their children as national scapegoats. In the end, although the other finalist Jacques Chirac won by a landslide victory, some French voters chose the pro-nationalist, anti-immigrant platform of Le Pen to express their dissatisfaction with current politics in France. Such dissatisfaction was furthermore expressed in pro-Chirac slogans that highlighted the economic and moral corruption of each candidate, respectively: "Votez escroc, pas facho!" ("Vote for the Crook, not the Fascist").

Jacques Chirac's own involvement in anti-immigrant policies and political rhetoric dates back to his tenure as the mayor of Paris. For example, in the early 1990s, Chirac crafted a very aggressive urban gentrification project in Paris to forcibly relocate poor and homeless families outside of the city in subsidized housing, rather than provide this service for them in the center of it. Neighborhoods such as La Goutte d'Or, which have been traditionally inhabited by immigrants from North and

sub-Saharan Africa, were renovated and reconstructed for the consumption of middle-class and upper-middle-class French buyers. Also during his tenure as mayor, in a highly controversial speech in June 1994, Chirac decried the predicament experienced by the "average" Frenchman ("*le français moyen*") living in subsidized housing, supposedly frustrated by the disturbing "noise and smell" (*le bruit et l'odeur*) of his immigrant neighbors, purportedly living with several wives and many children in a cramped apartment (Guyotat 1994).

Underlying Chirac's statement are racialized and cultural assumptions about the hypothetical "uncivilized" immigrant neighbor, namely that "he" is of sub-Saharan-African or Arab origin, and thus necessarily polygamous, noisy, and smelly. Further, Chirac's underlying claim is that only "average" French citizens (i.e., working-class, European-descent, male, monogamous) can rightfully claim ownership of French *cités*. This scenario of competition existing between "average French" citizens and non-white foreigners has been reproduced in right-leaning newspapers such as *Le Figaro* and *France-Soir* and popular magazines such as *l'Evénement*, depicting brown and black *cité* inhabitants as the victimizers of nearby "French" inhabitants, rather than the other way around. Statistically, though, there has been far more gratuitous violence committed by European-descent French citizens and police against Arabs than the reverse.[20]

Ethnographic Contexts: Marsh to *Cité*

The teenagers in this study are descendants of mostly Algerian immigrants, and are marginalized inhabitants of French *cités* who occupy physical spaces and institutions owned or financed by the state: low-income housing, associations, and schools. As such, these teens are under constant threat of removal by immigration "reform," eviction, incarceration, and political exclusion. French political and journalistic discourses that stigmatize *les cités* serve to construct youth of immigrant descent as trespassers in their own neighborhoods, as illegitimate users of public space. This book delves into the heart of these issues with a look at how French Arab teens use everyday forms of communication to create transcultural expressions of identity with respect to (sub-)urban space, ethnicity, gender, and generation.

Chemin de l'Ile was not always a neighborhood of migration, nor was it originally an impoverished place; until fairly recently, it was uninhabitable due to its location on the banks of the Seine. Literally "Road of the Island," the neighborhood is named for its nineteenth-century life as a road leading

to the marshy edge of the Seine river, where partygoers would take small boats out to L'Ile Fleurie; the so-called "flowered island" provided them with a place to dance and drink at open-air clubs called *les guinguettes*. In addition to achieving local fame as an outpost for nineteenth-century Parisian partygoers, Chemin de l'Ile became an early destination on one of the first locomotive passenger train lines in the world, which brought visitors from Paris to the fashionable and formerly royal town of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, starting in 1837. Located further west than Chemin de l'Ile from Paris, Saint-Germain-en-Laye was a popular tourist destination due to its château of the same name.

The last vestige from this legacy can be seen in the fading grandeur of the nineteenth-century brick homes built by early entrepreneurs in the Chemin de l'Ile tourist trade—now mostly occupied by regional governmental offices—that line one side of the main road entering the neighborhood. On the other side of the road is a run-down strip mall that, despite its dated appearance, displays the entrepreneurial spirit of the neighborhood's inhabitants. Aside from a post office and discount national grocery store ("ED"), its businesses include two ḥalal (ritually pure) butcher shops, a ḥalal restaurant "Chicken Spot," a North-African-inspired wedding and dress shop, a dry-goods store featuring products from the Middle East, and an Internet café complete with phone booths for calling *le bled* or "home country." Avenue Général Leclerc, originally a raised wooden platform that led from the tracks of that first passenger train to the banks of the Seine, now travels from the RER (*Réseau Express Régional*) commuter train and across the six-lane national freeway that together completely isolate the neighborhood from the center of the town, called Vieille ("old") Nanterre. On three other sides, Chemin de l'Ile is completely enclosed by an industrial park, the Seine, and a military base.

Farther down the road, the insularity of Chemin de l'Ile is compounded by the combination of one main thoroughfare and centrally located high-rise *cités* that provide their inhabitants bird's-eye views of the comings and goings of the neighborhood's roughly 11,000 inhabitants. Chemin de l'Ile grew exponentially after the shantytowns in Nanterre were dismantled and families were re-housed in early *cité de transit*, first located where the early HLMs now stand, and later in the permanent buildings that still stand in the neighborhood today. The relatively late development of the neighborhood, due in large part to its original marshy location, created a community in which the majority of residents are poor and live over several generations in subsidized housing; a significant portion of families currently living there are descended from the original migrants who lived in *bidonvilles* down the road. The intense communal spirit that many

residents of Chemin de l'Ile enjoy has been tempered by poverty, as well as attendant insularity and stigma.

Similar to immigration patterns throughout the world, migration to Chemin de l'Ile created diasporic communities at a highly localized level. Families in Chemin de l'Ile often have ties to one another because many migrated from the same two medium-sized Algerian towns: Maghnia, with a population 95,000 and located on the Moroccan border, and El Oued, an oasis town of 135,000 located near the Tunisian border. Since relatives and neighbors often provide newcomers with the sponsorship necessary for obtaining migration papers and other networks of support, communities of neighbors and kin from the "home" country (*le bled*) extend to the local context.

Similar to other *cités*, Chemin de l'Ile is an ethnically mixed space, but it is quite difficult to obtain accurate information about the ethnic composition of the neighborhood. Officially, in the 1999 local mayor's annual report, North African immigrants comprised roughly 20% of neighborhood inhabitants. This figure includes immigrants, but excludes French citizens who are of North African (and mostly Algerian) heritage, so the percentage of Arab Muslims in the neighborhood is certainly much higher than the official figure.

Although Arab residents are by no means the exclusive inhabitants of Chemin de l'Ile, dominant representations of *cités* both within and outside them cast these spaces as being predominantly North African, and, to a lesser degree, sub-Saharan African. There are several reasons for this common conflation. Despite admonitions from many parents for young women to avoid "the street" (*la rue*), Arab residents in Chemin de l'Ile tended to use outdoor, public spaces, including playgrounds, front stoops, parks, and parking lots, more often than their non-Arab neighbors. Similarly, women and men of North African descent tended to frequent the bi-weekly neighborhood open-air market, which features mostly North African vendors. Also, Chemin de l'Ile, as with other *cités*, has a dense network of state-subsidized neighborhood associations, many of which are managed and utilized by North African Arab residents. Highlighting the struggle over ownership of public space in *cités*, one of my adolescent female consultants who is herself of Algerian descent claims that North Africans are simply "more visible" in Chemin de l'Ile because they have "appropriated the territory" within the neighborhood. Such statements indicate the representational slippage that occurs when dominant stereotypes are re-appropriated by the group in question to achieve new political ends—in this case, to legitimate and valorize the use of public space in *les cités* by Arabs themselves.

My Own Transcultural Journey

I came to the issues of belonging and exclusion in France from the perspective of my own initial search for a "French" identity as a college student and then a graduate student. Despite my French-sounding name, I am a third generation American of French–Canadian descent on my father's side only, and I speak English-influenced French that I learned at school rather than at home. To the teens in Chemin de l'Ile and to all French people, I was clearly *not* French, although I initially tried to be. Convinced that I was "French" before embarking upon a yearlong college study-abroad program in Paris, I was quickly disabused of this idea due to my imperfect French as well as my supposedly "typical" American views on politics and history. Occurring mostly over heated dinner conversations (in French) with my host family, my reorientation toward myself as emphatically *not* French was coupled with the sense that "the French" were not whom I expected either.

I had the great fortune to spend a year with a couple, Madame and Monsieur Degrand, who, along with several of their grown children, had dedicated their lives to understanding and rectifying the many social problems of modern France. Monsieur Degrand, although he had originally been an engineer who had obtained his first job working in the (then) North African colonies, had shifted his emphasis to the intertwined contemporary French problems of unemployment, scholastic failure, and immigration. Madame Degrand, although not working for paid employment, dedicated her working life to rehousing immigrant workers who were either squatting or homeless in Paris. Nightly, at their dinner table, I was introduced to people who educated me about contemporary France and the webs of social, economic, political, and intellectual influence brokered through post-colonial relations.

Whereas I lived inside the apartment with Monsieur and Madame Degrand, above us, in the "maids' chambers" (*chambres de bonnes*), was a young woman who had been repudiated by her Algerian-born parents due to her outspoken beliefs and open dating practices. Across the hall from her was a young man displaced by the civil war in Lebanon (yes, this was long ago!). Neither was charged rent. Not only did they regularly attend dinner, so did international scholars working on immigration such as Alec Hargreaves, who has written extensively about *beur* literature. In short, the France that I found was far more heterogeneous and multiple than the culturally monolithic country I had expected to find.

Motivated to understand the ethnic, cultural, and political complexity of France, during a follow-up year-long stay after graduating from college,

I decided to conduct research on a journalistic category that was popular at that time (the early 1990s): *les banlieues chaudes*, or "the hot suburbs," a derogatory term coined during that period to indicate *les cités*. In coverage (both left-wing and right-wing) that naturalized a connection among immigration, crime, scholastic failure, and drug addiction, French newspapers frequently targeted North Africans, and particularly Algerians, in conjunction with such representations. By choosing this topic for a thesis that I conducted as part of a French master's (*maîtrise*) program at the University of Paris 7 (Jussieu), I embarked on a journey to understand and critically assess the conflation of certain social problems with certain "problematic" groups in dominant French public discourse.

Later, in graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin, I decided to attempt to understand these processes from the perspective of the young people most centrally concerned by them. Thus, my interests in belonging and social exclusion in France began both with my own understanding that I was not French and that "the French" encompassed many people whom I had previously not considered. Surprisingly, being considered a cultural and linguistic outsider by my teenaged consultants during fieldwork was ideal. That is, it helped me enormously that I was not French, did not work for the state, nor was employed as a French journalist or sociologist, who have at times engaged in aggressive interviewing and research tactics in Chemin de l'Ile and in *les cités* elsewhere.

My introduction to Chemin de l'Ile was as serendipitous as my placement as a junior year student abroad. Although I knew that I wanted to work with teenagers of North African descent living in *les cités*, I initially had difficulty finding an introduction to such a community. While deliberating about how to make this happen during initial fieldwork, I enrolled in a college-level class at *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* (School for Advanced Study in Social Science). The course dealt with a political and social understanding of French Republicanism, and was taught by a famous political scientist. Repeatedly using the United States as a counter-example, the professor excoriated multiculturalism, including bilingual education and affirmative action. Feeling that many of my core beliefs in a pluralistic society were being trampled, I tried, in my unrefined French, to argue with the professor in favor of an American model of inclusion. Only one other person in the room agreed with me: part-time graduate student Akil Yacine, an adult son of Algerian immigrants who had previously worked in a factory and who had marched in *le mouvement beur*. He had returned to school and was currently the director of a state-supported neighborhood association, *Cerise*. He and I not only had a meeting of the minds with respect to our professor; Akil invited me to tutor at his association and to begin discussing

my project with local families. If parents and kids were interested in participating, he would let me begin my project in his association.

After a few months of tutoring at *Cerise*, I was lucky to be accepted by middle-school students both as tutor and researcher and was granted their and their parents' consent to audio record tutoring sessions. The kinds of data I collected over the next 16 months of fieldwork represent my focus on adolescents' agency to create contexts for the expression of social identity through everyday talk. While I occasionally visited the local middle school where the adolescents in this study were enrolled, I decided to focus my energies on adolescent-centered social networks and activities as often as possible. For example, although much of my time in Chemin de l'Ile was spent in the semi-institutional setting of neighborhood associations (including *Cerise*, and eventually others as well), most of the data that I analyze here represent casual interactions among peers and between peers and adult mentors. These impromptu exchanges often took the form of highly creative group performances, wedged in between more structured tutoring activities or ongoing throughout a tutoring session.

In addition to the data that I collected in more institutional contexts such as the neighborhood association *Cerise*, I audio-recorded in a local park with a core group of adolescents as frequently as possible. It was the habit of small groups of some of these 13–16-year-old girls (and a few boys) to gather in a local park after school to chat, weather permitting. These groups shifted and changed depending on the day and included roughly a dozen teens. I became a group member of sorts, since these were adolescents with whom I had worked at *Cerise* and who were accustomed to my audio recorder and persistent questions. These teens were also solicitous of my company because my presence sometimes provided them the adult chaperoning needed for forays into *cités* in other neighborhoods. The many roles that I assumed in relation to these adolescents afforded me both rich insight into their daily lives and a difficult line to walk between the responsible adult and participant–observer. For example, on some occasions, I had to refuse to act as chaperone outside of the confines of local associations because to facilitate girls' outings to the mall or other *cités* after school might abuse the trust that their parents placed in me. As adults often quite marginalized from their children's experiences of school, some parents mistook me for a "official" (institutional) adult chaperone because of my role as a tutor at the neighborhood association *Cerise*.

The multiple and sometimes conflicting roles that I occupied as ethnographer, tutor, mentor, chaperone, and friend were further enriched and complicated when, after roughly a year of fieldwork, I was invited to live with a family in the neighborhood. When I shifted from commuting to

Chemin de l'Ile to living there, both my standing in the community and my own view of it changed. I lived with the Hamdani family, who numbered seven people, including mother, father, two daughters, and three sons, aged 2–18 years. From this experience, I enjoyed much closer relationships not only with the people I lived with but also with other neighbors who, I believe, took my move as a sign of my acceptance of them and my commitment to them. Also, my own (shifting) social identity became more relevant to my research and more complex once I was attached to a particular family, in that I ceased to be "just" the American ethnographer, and was recognized as someone with enduring ties to a local family and to local social networks more generally.

Consequently, my collection and analysis of data were enhanced by a more complex understanding of my consultants, their families, and the local community. In addition to a better understanding of social identity categories on the ground, this increased ethnographic complexity afforded me better and more informal contexts for data collection, as when I was able to record teens' interactions outside of *Cerise* and in local playgrounds or on outings. The research was greatly enhanced through my experience of daily rhythms and quotidian spaces of Chemin de l'Ile in particular and *les cités* more generally. Living with the Hamdani family meant that I was privy to everyday interactions that helped me address how categories and discourses of identity that widely circulate in France are apprehended and transformed in local interactions—as, for example, with the notion of *mec de la cité* ("guy from the *cité*") that is addressed in the next chapter.

Notes

1   Although the term still persists in common French parlance to this day, the ZEP designation has not existed since the 2006–2007 school year, when it was replaced by other initiatives, such as the ÉCLAIR program (*écoles, collèges, et lycées pour l'ambition, l'innovation et la réussite* or "grade, middle, and high schools for ambition, innovation, and success"). Originally, ZEP schools were designated by the minister of education according to a set of criteria, such as percentage of foreign-born parents, dropout rates, and median income for the neighborhood.
2   I discuss the central role played by state-supported associations in establishing services and daily life within immigrant communities in Chapter 2.
3   The rumor in Chemin de l'Ile about the lack of graffiti was that the "older brothers" or *grands frères* had told younger community members not to *tagger* ("tag"). I will return to the archetype of the "big brother" later in Chapter 4, but, loosely defined, it means the older, unmarried young men who are most

active in "business" (illegal sale and trade of stolen goods and drugs). While these young men don't yet have access to the respect accorded fathers and family heads, they still have a significant measure of status and respect in the neighborhood by virtue of their age and financial success. In contrast, "little brothers" or *petits frères* refer to the younger set of up-and-coming male adolescents who usually train for big brother status by working informally for *grands frères* by selling goods, running errands, etc. The system of "big" and "little brothers" is not specific to Chemin de l'Ile, and has been documented in other *cités* by Pascal Duret (1996).

4 Willis (1977: 5–6) reported a similar practice among the working-class "lads" of industrial Hammertown who would use the neighboring city's postal code when describing where they lived to girls from other areas. However, the adolescents with whom Willis worked were so disenchanted with school and the working world that they reserved this practice for personal purposes, unlike adolescents in Chemin de l'Ile.

5 Personal communication, Michel Guirao, neighborhood coordinator, Mayor's Office, Chemin de l'Ile.

6 These negative associations existed both in the right-wing newspaper *Le Figaro* and left-wing *Libération*, except that the causality was framed in slightly different terms. *Le Figaro* implied that North African immigration and Algerians in particular were responsible for bringing crime and drug sales into "French" communities, and hence creating *les banlieues chaudes*. On the other hand, *Libération* implied that immigrants and their descendants were only indirectly responsible for creating *les banlieues chaudes*, since the French society was responsible for discriminating against immigrants and their children, neglecting their poverty, and thus pushing them toward feelings of alienation ("*ennui*," "*la haine*") that, in turn, caused them to be violent and reject civil French society. The more reticent and intellectual newspaper *Le Monde*, however, refused to participate in this journalistic category, and would only discuss specific suburbs and neighborhoods, rather than *la banlieue chaude* (the "hot suburb") or even *la banlieue* ("the suburb"). Bonnafous (1991) notes a similar pattern of amalgamation of negative stereotypes and immigration in French media.

7 Tribalat (1995) notes that adult children of Algerian immigrants are more frequently unemployed after finishing school, even though their levels of education are comparable to those of other adult children of immigrants. For example, Tribalat's 1995 unofficial census of 13,000 respondents found that 53% of adult males and 47% of adult females whose parents are of Algerian origin experience at least 1 year of unemployment between the ages of 20 and 29 years, as compared to 23% of adult males and 33% of adult females of Portuguese parentage (1995: 177). Tribalat notes that this discrepancy probably indicates discrimination on the part of prospective employers toward Algerians, a pattern that holds generally in her data in relation to French citizens of African origin (North and sub-Saharan). More recently, two 2012 studies by INSEE (French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies) and DARES (Direction for the

Organization of Research, Studies, and Statistics) have found that unemployment rates are higher in adult, active French children of immigrants than for immigrants themselves, the former representing 18% of unemployed workers over 18 years, and the latter 17%. These same studies show that adult children having one or both parents from Algeria represent the highest percentage of unemployment from a non-European Union background, and roughly half of the unemployed in this group (see Fiches thématiques: Populations immigrées, 2012 and Emploi et chômage des immigrés en 2011, 2012).

8   As well, "French" and "Muslim" are often constructed as mutually exclusive categories of identity; Fernando, for example, demonstrates "the ambiguity between racial and religious visibility and invisibility in dominant conceptions of Frenchness by analyzing the difficulty of being Muslim French when those two terms—Muslim, French—are considered incommensurable" (2014: 6).

9   *Raï* is a form of popular Algerian music that dates back to the early part of the twentieth century. Its tendency to openly discuss matters of sex and romantic love have threatened the careers and physical safety of many Algerian *raï* singers, many of whom have immigrated to France in order to perform there (Schade-Poulsen 1999).

10   The French culture wars with respect to popular art forms has not been limited to *cités*, but has evolved as a national conflict. Throughout the 1980s, censorship on French radios was institutionalized; French radio announcers' motto was *pas de rap, ni d'arabe* ("no rap, and no Arabic music"). The French music scene has since exploded with a new fusion of influences, including American-styled rap, popular North African *raï*, and traditional music styles from North and sub-Saharan Africa. African–French rap artist MC Solaar is largely regarded as the vanguard of this movement, whose intellectual, poetic lyrics paved way for the widespread popularity of French rap that followed.

11   See Singh, Lele, and Martohardjono (1988) for their critique of intercultural or "interethnic" communication scholarship.

12   At the same time, a growing body of literature, including that which deals with language, is attempting to theorize transnationalism from a multi-centered perspective (Blommaert 2010; Dick 2010; Duranti 1997; Koven 2004, 2013; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Park 2009; Reynolds 2013a & 2013b; Rouse 1991; Wagner 2008; Zentella 1990).

13   This is akin to Blommaert's (2010) notion of polycentrism, that is, that speakers orient to multiple sociolinguistic "centers" of language authority or ideology, as well as to Koven's (2013) analysis of how Luso-descendant French adults orient to two contrasting language ideological models for transnationalism when telling narratives. At the same time, the analysis that I present in this book is distinct from both of these approaches, in that I describe how speakers simultaneously orient to multiple social categories, discourses, and language forms, rather than to language ideologies/centers (Blommaert 2010), or to models for language and personhood (Koven 2013). In other words, whereas Blommaert and Koven describe similar processes at the level of language

ideology, I address speakers' invocation and transformation of ideological categories for identity that reside in discourse, such as "Arab" and "French."

14   And, although some teens did return to Algeria in the summers, many did not with regularity, often due to economic reasons. For these reasons, this book does not address transnational movement for vacations and the identity work involved (but see Wagner 2008).

15   Along these lines, Marjorie Faulstich Orellana's very important work on the language experiences and forms of expression among immigrant-descent child translators builds upon the notion of transculturation (2009). Her work differs from my own, in that Orellana's deals with translating children's in-the-moment experiences of in-betweenness rather than ideological representations of in-betweenness through performances of identity, as my work emphasizes. Also, Orellana's work does not emphasize that these processes are born out of stigma, as my work does.

16   While not a comprehensive list, the following are notable contributors to this scholarship: Begag and Rossini 1999; Bloul 1996; Bouamama 1993; Boucherit 2008; Costa-Lascoux 1989; Dabène 1990; Douville 2012; Feldblum 1993; Grillo 2006; Jazouli 1992; Muxel 1988; Noiriel 2007; Poinsot 1991; Rosello and Bjornson 1993; Taleb Ibrahimi 1985; Wihtol de Wenden 1988; Wihtol de Wenden and Daoud 1993.

17   However, the following are examples of a growing French sociolinguistic literature regarding young people living in *les cités* and those from immigrant backgrounds: Abu-Haidar 1995; Basier and Bachmann 1984; Billiez 1985; Boucherit 2008; Boyer 1994; Dabène 1991; Dabène and Billiez 1987; Dannequin 1999; Goudaillier 2012; Moïse 2003.

18   The conditions of *les bidonvilles* are documented in Azouz Begag's novel *Le Gone du Chaâba* ("The kid from Chaâba"), and in the film *Vivre au Paradis* ("To Live in Paradise") by Yemina Benguigui.

19   Of course, the use of immigrants as a foil for national identity is not particular to France, but part of a wider process of externalization whereby nationalist politics are generally asserted.

20   As Hargreaves notes, drawing from evidence reported by the National Commission on Human Rights, "Almost 80 percent of violent acts officially classed as racist and more than 90 percent of racist murders in France are committed against Maghrebis" (1997: 19).