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Finding One's Place in the Republic:

Educating for Citizenship in a Diversifying France

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Travis William Nesbitt

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Finding One's Place in the Republic:  
Educating for Citizenship in a Diversifying France

by

Travis William Nesbitt

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Val D. Rust, Chair

The school, France's traditional vehicle for integrating diverse populations into a national culture and fostering civic participation, has encountered difficulties in fulfilling its central mission as demographic shifts have given rise to competing conceptions of religious, cultural, ethnic, political and national identity. For French society the relevance and adequacy of a universal, liberal, assimilationist approach to integration has come into question. On

pedagogical and curricular levels, an impersonal “banking model” of instruction and inflexible respect of disciplinary boundaries have impeded civic empowerment. Rooted in the emancipatory and progressive educational theories of Paulo Freire and John Dewey and the multicultural theories of James Banks, this study examines spaces in contemporary France, inside the school and out, where youth of diverse backgrounds are engaging in transformative citizenship education. Within the school, the research put forth here specifically targets history as a discipline that could be uniquely positioned to facilitate transformative citizenship. The study’s findings should ultimately contribute to the establishment of educational structures and curricula that allow all students in heterogeneous societies to work together to express themselves politically and culturally, actively shaping the civic culture while expanding equality, access and participation.

The dissertation of Travis William Nesbitt is approved.

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## Dedication

Parker Palmer observed that “education at its best – this profound human interaction called teaching and learning – is not just about getting information or getting a job. Education is about healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment, liberation, transcendence, about renewing the vitality of life. It is about finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world” (hooks, 2003, p. 43). This dissertation is dedicated to the special group of friends, family, teachers, students and community members who have empowered and renewed me through education, helping me to find and claim my place in the world.

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## Acknowledgements

In my application essays for doctoral programs, I described the path of a certain word as it made its way through my life and work: “civilization.” As a child, my sisters and I would spend the long, hot summer days playing in what we dubbed “civilization spots.” These were small bare patches in the middle of the corn-filled fields surrounding our rural Indiana house where no corn grew because of a faulty planter, inhospitable soil or high water. These smooth, barren spots of land surrounded by towering corn plants were where we staked claims to our short-lived “civilizations.” Little did I know at the time that most of my adult life would be spent studying and examining essential components of civilization, specifically social groupings and government. Here, I would like to acknowledge those who enabled such study, beginning with my “civilizing” sisters, Amy and Mandy, and ending with the scholar who accepted me to a doctoral program partially based upon the aforementioned essay, Professor Val Rust.

I would like to thank my parents, Dorothy and Bill Rice and Gary and Mary Nesbitt. My mother’s respect and unconditional support have been of incomparable value. I thank the teachers who have challenged and inspired me throughout my academic career, specifically Liliana Missair. Thanks also to the friends and colleagues who have supported me along the way, including Brad Bryan, Rebekah Frederick, Ryan Jay, Christine Malsbary and Kate Schlosser. I thank Jon Bergman for his patience and help during the most difficult parts of the dissertation process. Finally, I would like to acknowledge those along my winding path from Indiana to Washington to Paris to Chicago to Los Angeles who have shared their lives and insights with me, helping shape and inspire the person I am today.

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Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) – National Conference 2011, Montréal  
Panel Presentation – “School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation”

Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) – National Conference 2010, Chicago  
Panel Presentation – “Transformative Spaces: Immigrant Students and Practices of Citizenship in Contemporary France”

California Association of Freirian Educators (CAFÉ) – 2008 Annual Conference, Los Angeles  
Panel Presentation – “A Banking Model of Citizenship Education and its Impact on Immigrant Students in France”

Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) - National Conference 2008, New York  
Panel Presentation – “The Election of President Sarkozy and its Impact on Education Reform in France”

## Chapter 1 - Framing the Study: *L'Ecole de la République* in the Twenty-First Century

*“The absence of a sense of social cohesion or a sense of belonging to the civic culture has been noticed in many societies. The personal commitment by individuals to shared identities that transcend ethnic, linguistic or other group affiliations and which contribute to social cohesion has weakened in many areas of the world”* (Torney-Purta et al., 1999, p. 14).

### ***Introduction***

In a nine-year civic education study, spanning 1994-2002, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) concluded that students across 28 countries have an understanding of fundamental democratic values and institutions but remain skeptical about traditional forms of political engagement. Such skepticism is rooted in a turbulent political culture in which centralizing forces such as the nation-state compete with fragmented media, commercial, social and demographic influences<sup>1</sup>. This competition is at the heart of the paradigm that frames our contemporary understanding of society and politics: globalization.

Globalization, a process that draws distant peoples closer together and renders them increasingly interdependent, is not a new phenomenon. Immigration, a significant component of globalization, has occurred since borders were first erected. Although the ramifications of immigration are widely discussed in contemporary society, the root of peoples' movement across borders often lies in relatively distant history. This is the case of France. To recover from heavy losses in World War I and a low fertility rate, France opened its doors to millions of immigrants

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<sup>1</sup> James Rosenau's seminal work, "Turbulence in World Politics" (1990) situates this dynamic in the larger context of globalization, highlighting the emergence of a multi-centric world that threatens the dominance of the nation-state.

in the 1920s and 1930s. During this time, most came to France from southern and eastern Europe. After World War II and especially after decolonization, France witnessed a mass influx of immigrants from former colonies, notably the Maghreb, or North Africa. Whereas countries such as Spain, Portugal and Italy sent the largest number of immigrants to France in the earlier part of the century, it was from countries like Algeria and Morocco that a significant number would hail in the 1960s and 1970s (INSEE, 1996, p. 3). This demographic shift created new barriers to integration and assimilation in that racial, ethnic and religious differences were compounded with national differences between immigrant and host communities.

The school has been viewed in France, at least since the beginning of the Third Republic, as the forum in which integration into a national culture could and should take place. Specifically, citizenship education has intended to help integrate a diverse population into a single national culture based on Republican values (Osler & Starkey, 2004, p. 4). Recent events in France, such as riots by youth in immigrant-populated suburbs and the continued popularity of extreme-right, anti-immigrant political parties, cause one to question if both the school and the larger society have failed to adequately integrate immigrant and native-born populations. Integration in this sense moves beyond cultural assimilation to include active participation in public life (Schnapper, 2007, p. 12). With this concept of integration in mind, I have endeavored in this study to examine schooling in France and to critically investigate how the Republican model of the school works to integrate immigrants and their native French peers. To achieve this, I first conducted a longitudinal study of French high school history textbooks in which I analyzed the evolution of representations of nationhood across the last half century. Both the

conception and portrayal of the nation through textbooks tangibly impact how diverse students identify with France and participate civically. Secondly, I relied upon a year's worth of ethnographic data collected in a sophomore-level history classroom to dissect the influence of history pedagogy and curricula on identity and citizenship. Finally, I then turned my focus outside of the school to explore non-governmental and community organizations as they worked to facilitate the education and participation of young people. The study is framed in the progressive educational tradition of John Dewey and taps into Paulo Freire's notions of education for liberation, critical consciousness and problem-posing education. I posit that critical theory is a uniquely appropriate theoretical framework for research on the topic. Critical theory and similar theories that Paulston (1992) labels as transformative, idealist and subjective provide a valuable lens through which to examine the role of French schools in the citizenship education and integration of all of its students. Methodologically, I have relied heavily on qualitative approaches while utilizing some quantitative methods, finding significant inspiration in a pilot study conducted in the Los Angeles Unified School District from January to March, 2009. Ultimately, I have endeavored in the study described here to combine my unique personal, professional and academic experiences with existing literature to advance scholarship and understanding in the area of citizenship education for students in pluralistic societies.

### ***The Historical Role of the School in France***

*“Qui n'a pas entendu, qui n'a pas lu que l'école serait aujourd'hui en crise parce qu'elle ne parviendrait plus à assurer l'intégration des enfants issus de l'immigration, comme dans le*

*passé? Cette affirmation masque des réalités historiques très contradictoires*” (Noiriel, 2002, p. 46).<sup>2</sup>

The school has played a unique role in French society and politics and to understand this role, it is essential to place the school’s evolution in the larger context of French history. One cannot separate civics education from the school and one cannot separate the school from the French Revolution. Each has proposed a project of democratic transformation for the society (Galichet, 1998, p. 7). The idea that education could and should lead to social transformation can actually be traced back to Rousseau or even Plato. Specifically, in the French case, the replacement of the Church’s catechism by the State’s civics education was perceived to best serve the revolutionary cause. Talleyrand’s plan in 1791 called for “simple and clear instructions about the responsibilities of all citizens and about the laws that are essential to know” (Galichet, 1998, p. 7) although no mention of citizens’ rights is made. Interestingly, Talleyrand’s call would give rise to two interpretations that continue to oppose one another to this day. Condorcet emphasized the freedom that must accompany and result from education. Insisting that the new republican constitution must not be the source of a new form of indoctrination, he warned “it is a type of political religion that one wants to create, it is a chain that one is preparing for the minds” (Galichet, 1998, p. 7). He instead promoted the cultivation of the “*esprit public*” and love of country. On the other hand, Lepeltier de Saint-Fargeau argued that the citizen be trained to be disciplined and to submit to the laws of the state (Galichet, 1998, p. 7). Ultimately, Galichet

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<sup>2</sup> “Who has not heard, who has not read, that today’s schools may be in crisis because they no longer guarantee the integration of immigrant children as they did in the past? This affirmation masks very different historical realities.” - This translation and all others between French and English are my own.



argues, civics education following the Revolution mirrored the indoctrinating Catholic catechism more than the collective spirit prescribed by Condorcet.

It is not until the rise of the Third Republic that the school would regain its role of educator of democratic citizens. Returning to the principles of the Revolution, education was seen as a force for people's emancipation. A true republican government could only take root if proper civic and moral education programs succeeded in training those who could vote and all those who the Republic would govern. By establishing, on March 28, 1882, the law that ensured free, compulsory and secular public education, statesmen of the Third Republic endeavored to foster the sustainability of their democracy (Déloye, 1994, p. 15). Civic and moral instruction immediately replaced catechism and prayer. New manuals were published not only to educate schoolchildren, but also their parents and the rest of society on their common ideological foundation and on the existence of a national community in which class and religious distinctions were no longer made.

According to Mouginiotte (1994, p. 89), lessons presented in civics manuals between 1882 and 1914 fell along three axes. The first axis was informative. Students were instructed on the functions of the city and the region (*la commune et le département*), on the branches of government, the work of officials, etc. Mouginiotte (p. 89) calls these "lessons about things". It is important to note that there was no separation between civics education that the rest of the curriculum. In the Belin manual of 1881, chapters on respecting the law or the French motto could be found in proximity to chapters on Algeria or growing corn. "Civic morality" was also confounded with "morality" in general. Obligations toward the nation were spoken about in the

same way as individual or private morality, such as respecting one's parents or private property. The second axis outlined by Mouginiotte was emotional. Certain passages on the fatherland (*la patrie*) or on the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to the Germans were designed to evoke emotional responses, such as pity, pride, tenderness, enthusiasm, indignation, etc. (Mouginiotte, 1994, p. 90). The third and final axis could be considered the critical axis. In certain manuals, such as the Paul Bert manual, students were posed essay questions that required them to think critically about the Republic. For example, after a chapter on taxes, students were asked "are there certain taxes that seem fairer to you than others? Support your answer with comparisons." Another essay question asked students to "cite certain foodstuffs, pets or other objects that, in your opinion, should be taxed. Explain why you feel this way." Such questions illustrated the necessity for citizens to develop a critical mind in order for the Republic to flourish.

After the publication of these manuals, certain difficulties arose in the teaching of civics in public schools. Mouginiotte adeptly outlines these (1994, p. 38). Technically, it was difficult to explain complex ideas of citizenship to children who had never left their villages or to demonstrate the workings of government institutions to children who could barely distinguish between city, region, and nation or between legislative, executive and judicial powers. In other words, basic training in politics and political philosophy was necessary before civics education could take place. Secondly, ethical difficulties arose. One argued whether or not the values promoted in civics education were legitimate. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, Socialist politicians criticized state structures as vehicles of the bourgeois oppression of the working class. Finally, civics education posed unique pedagogical problems (Mouginiotte, 1994,

p. 90). What didactic or pedagogical techniques were appropriate in order to transmit values?

All of these difficulties were obviously not unique to the period following the rise of the Third Republic. In fact, all of them persist today.

Francois Galichet, in his analysis of citizenship education in contemporary France, points to six fundamental changes in education and society that render citizenship education challenging (1998, p. 12-16). Firstly, sociopolitical changes introduce new dynamics. For example, since children become adults at 18 instead of 21, they gain political rights before they finish their education and integrate themselves into the social and economic fabric of the nation. Also, the emergence of “the rights of the child” in the 1989 UN convention renders children full citizens and not simply future citizens. Secondly, institutionally, schools lack representative structures that mimic democratic governance on the students’ level. Thirdly, changes in pedagogy demonstrate that students do not only need lessons in democratic behavior but demonstrations of democracy in school structures and teaching. This becomes particularly evident in evaluating students. Fourthly, socioeconomic changes pit a dominant neoliberal economic model against notions of the common good. Fifthly, sociocultural shifts have brought a plurality of cultures, ethnicities and religions into contact in the schools. Also, universal concepts such as human rights surpass the state’s ability to regulate and define rights. Finally, geopolitical changes, such as increased contact between European Union countries, have allowed French citizens to compare their model of citizenship to those of their neighbors, such as Germany and England. For example, the French model of the state’s direct relationship with citizens has been contrasted with the British model of indirect relationships that are mediated by

belonging to certain ethnic or cultural communities. It is toward these final two challenges that our analysis should now turn.

### ***Social, Economic and Political Realities in Contemporary France***

*“To put it simply: democracy implies a process of participation where all are considered equal”* (Torres, 1998, p. 11).

As highlighted above, France is traversing a period of transition, socially, economically and politically. It is precisely during these times that citizenship education is often revisited. As Galichet (1998, p. 1) articulates, *“il apparait clairement que le thème de l’éducation civique resurgit chaque fois que la société est incertaine de ses fondements.”*<sup>3</sup> So, why exactly is France unsure of its foundations? I argue that contemporary challenges arise from two main sources: immigration and economic neoliberalism. For the purposes of this study, I will turn to an analysis of immigration and its ramifications on French society.

According to Brouard and Tiberj, the population of foreign origin residing in France in 1999 was 13.5 million, or 23% of the entire mainland French population (2005, p. 13). Of the 13.5 million, 4.3 million were immigrants, 5.5 million were the children of immigrants and 3.6 million were the grandchildren of immigrants. It is important to note that 40% of these immigrants and their descendants were from southern Europe and 13.4% from other EU countries. Only 2.4% were of Turkish origin, 5% from sub-Saharan Africa and 22% from the Maghreb, or North Africa.

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<sup>3</sup> “It clearly appears that the theme of civics education resurfaces each time that society is uncertain of its foundations.”

Today, the question of immigrant integration is hotly debated in France. “*Dans un contexte de terrorisme international, voire selon certains de choc de civilisations, de pressions autour du modèle républicain et des tensions intercommunautaires croissantes, l’Hexagone s’interroge sur sa capacité à refonder son pacte social*” (Brouard & Tiberj 2005, p. 14).<sup>4</sup>

France’s 1998 victory in soccer’s World Cup provided a brief and superficial portrait of a harmonious multicultural and multiethnic country, but deeper-flowing tensions have since resurfaced. The French integration model has thus been called into question.

Rogers Brubaker, for example, questions if France, Germany and the United States have returned to models of assimilation and if “the massive differentialist turn of the last third of the twentieth century may have reached its peak” (2001, p. 531). Shifting from pluralistic and multicultural conceptualizations of society, public policy and public discourse have re-posed assimilation as a goal. Brubaker insists this does not mean “a return to the normative expectations, analytical models, public policies, or informal practices associated with the ideal of Anglo-conformity or the increasingly nativist Americanization movement after World War I; or to those associated with the schoolteachers of the French Third Republic, notorious for shaming and humiliating those who spoke languages or dialects other than standard French” (2001, p. 533). Instead, he frames assimilation in the general and abstract sense as an effort to increase similarity or likeness. In the specific and organic sense, it works to absorb into a system or incorporate (Brubaker, 2001, p. 534). In the case of France, he points to a rapid decline of

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<sup>4</sup> “In a context of international terrorism, or according to some, a clash of civilizations, pressure surrounding the republican model and increasing tension among ethnic communities, France is reflecting on its ability to reestablishing its social pact.”

differentialist discourse on the “right to be different”, or “*le droit à la différence*” that was articulated by the Socialist government of François Mitterand in the 1980s. It was replaced by a resurgence of “neo-republican, neo-universalist, and...neo-assimilation discourse” (Brubaker, 2001, p. 537). Thus, integration efforts took on the tones of assimilation.

In my understanding, Brouard and Tiberj conclude that integration of immigrants is not the real question being raised. Neither is it one of which model is most appropriate. The real question baffling French people today is actually the place of Islam in France (2005, p. 137). According to their research, French people of Turkish, North African and sub-Saharan African origin are “*bien des français comme les autres*”, or French just like the rest. They have, in all measurable terms, been “successfully integrated”. Their political integration is comparable to that of *les français de souche*. Their religious differences are uncontestable but they are not systematic and do not appear to threaten republican principles like the separation of church and state. These immigrants and their descendants represent a heterogeneous mix of backgrounds and beliefs, but this is not unlike their native French counterparts.

If claims made by Brouard and Tiberj are true, what exactly should be studied? Given that French people of both immigrant and native origins have similar understandings and approaches to political integration, it would be most beneficial to study French society holistically and not to focus solely on individual communities. For our purposes, it is essential to turn to our original focus of the school and outside educational opportunities as they relate to civic participation. Why, at this point in history, is such a study necessary?

## ***A Need for Contemporary Research***

*“Public institutions must take their share of the blame for the failure of the so-called French model of integration. They can no longer survive on the basis of a republican sclerosis wrapped up in mythical past glories, for the lofty ideal of meritocracy has long since been rent asunder by the reality of racial discrimination” (Begag, 2007,p. 123).*

In 1993, Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, published a controversial article in Foreign Affairs titled “The Clash of Civilizations”. In a post-Cold War world, Huntington viewed the most potent source of conflict between peoples to be cultural and not ideological or economic. The civilization was seen to be the highest cultural grouping of people and was defined by “common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self identification of people” (Huntington, 1993, p. 24). Huntington placed the world’s people into approximately nine distinct civilizations whose destinies were on a collision course based on cultural differences. Two of these “civilizations” were the Muslim world and Western civilization. Although Huntington’s work was widely critiqued on a number of levels, its basic premise is often cited as a possible explanation for contemporary conflicts such as those between French immigrants of North African origin and other French citizens whose cultural and biological roots lie in the West.

Whether linked to civilization or other factors, it is undeniable that significant numbers of African, Asian and other non-European immigrants continue to struggle to find their place in French society and that this problem is a pressing concern of the French state today. Indicative of social unrest among adolescents of foreign origin is the recent rioting in the Paris suburb of Villiers-le-Bel. In November of 2007, a police car and a motorcycle being driven by two teenagers collided leading to the death of the youngsters, Moushin and Larami. The victims’

families claimed the police left the children for dead, whereas the police professed to have aided the youngsters who, according to their account, were traveling at high speeds on an unlicensed, off-road bike. The incident sparked a series of riots in which 130 policemen were injured and 70 cars and buildings were burned (“Dozens”, 2007). It was reminiscent of riots that began in Clichy-sous-Bois in 2005 after two teenagers lost their lives while fleeing from police and hiding in an electrical substation. The police, in both episodes, stood as symbols of a repressive and unresponsive French state in the minds of many minorities in unemployment-plagued suburbs.

Such turbulence and violence have fueled the popularity of extreme-right political parties, such as the *Front National*, and have given rise to tightened security measures under successive right-wing governments. Jean-Marie Le Pen, the *Front National*'s leader and candidate who explicitly promoted a xenophobic and anti-immigrant agenda, was one of two finalists in the 2002 presidential elections. After losing to President Jacques Chirac in the final round, Chirac was forced to address the issues of insecurity that gave rise to the *Front National*'s popularity. He eventually named Nicolas Sarkozy Minister of the Interior who vowed to strengthen the authority and presence of the police, especially in the turbulent suburbs. Sarkozy's actions in that post propelled him to the national spotlight. Due in part to appreciation of these actions, he was elected President in 2007.

In late October of 2009, President Sarkozy, making a link to recent civil unrest, directed one of his cabinet members to organize a large-scale, nationwide “debate” on national identity. Announced and directed by Eric Besson, the Minister of Immigration, Integration and National Identity, the debate aimed to address “the values of national identity” and what “it is to be



French” and took place in public forums across the country (“*Besson relance le débat*,” 2009). Although quickly criticized by the political left as an unnecessary and transparent electoral ploy to appeal to right-wing voters weeks before regional elections (“*Identité nationale*,” 2009), the mere existence of such a debate and subsequent media coverage reflects burning preoccupation with questions of national identity in contemporary France.

Although increasing security and publicly debating national identity have been two measures embraced by recent French governments to combat civil unrest in immigrant-populated suburbs, a reform of citizenship education in schools has been another part of the plan. In 1999, the French government introduced a new civics education program in schools with the goal of reinforcing democracy and promoting tolerance. The program was based on Republican values, particularly human rights, and emphasized the unacceptability of racism and discrimination (Osler & Starkey, 2004, p. 1). Unfortunately, design of the curriculum was carried out by political and education elites with little consultation of people on the ground, especially minorities. As Osler and Starkey eloquently state, “by definition, citizenship is an inclusive concept and the exclusion of minority perspectives would be a contradiction which might vitiate its effective implementation as a school subject” (2004, p. 8). The success of the new French program was indeed threatened by the absence of a minority perspective, but also by the failure to address evidence of blatant racism in French society. As Bataille points out, there is evidence of differential treatment by employers, the police and even schools according to perceived origins (Osler & Starkey, 2004, p. 13). One final problem associated with the new civics curriculum was its inability to allow for multiple identities such as those related to ethnicity, race

and culture. In an effort to keep these private and to avoid “*communautarisme*”, the 1999 program defines citizenship in terms that are seen as too exclusive by many French immigrants and their descendants, as observed by Gaspard and Krosokavar (Osler and Starkey, 2004, p. 22). To understand why this program failed, to reframe current academic studies and to propose directions for further research that would have demonstrable significance in educational, sociological and political science circles, it is essential to examine contemporary realities inside the school and out that shape students’ national identity and civic participation.

## **Chapter 2 – Grounding the Study: Theoretical Framework and Research Methods**

Contemporary realities point to a need for research on how education can facilitate civic understanding and participation in increasingly pluralistic societies. In order to productively conduct such research, it is essential to develop a supportive theoretical framework and to call upon fruitful and relevant research methods. No research is conducted in a vacuum, so it is necessary to first situate this study in the context of my life and work. I, as the primary investigator and analyst in this study, have undeniably shaped its findings through my inherent subjectivity and lived experiences.

### ***Personal Interest***

*“We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant” (Sadler, as quoted in Kandel, 1955, p. 9).*

We are all products of the time and circumstances in which we live. It is not coincidental that in the aftermath of the election of the first African-American president and son of a Kenyan immigrant to the presidency of the United States that my research centers on the education and participation of diverse communities of students in the political process. Even in France, the ramifications of President Obama’s election have been felt. French businessman and son of Algerian immigrants, Yazid Sabeg, was quoted in a recent National Public Radio (NPR) report as saying, “what is happening in the States is a lesson for us. We have to start a process to

transform French society and to admit that we have to correct the inequality.”<sup>5</sup> Sabeg is using Obama’s ascension to high office to promote affirmative action policies in France, which have in the past often been seen by his compatriots as threatening to French notions of equality.

Ironically, it was an attempt by my alma mater, Sciences Po Paris, to initiate affirmative action-style admissions procedures during my studies there from 2000-2002 that piqued my interest in one facet of the research I report on here. Recognizing that the school’s “blind” policy of basing admission on scores on a uniform entrance examination consistently yielded a student body that was primarily white and affluent, the school’s director, Richard Descoings, proposed admitting students from “Educational Priority Zones” (ZEPs) through a more holistic approach.

Prospective students from these underserved, poorer and more ethnically-diverse neighborhoods would be evaluated on interviews and personal statements alongside their scores on the entrance examination. The French establishment immediately framed this as a threat to longstanding conceptions of egalitarianism and fought the policy to no avail.<sup>6</sup> Although I am not specifically addressing higher education or affirmative action policies in my research, the recognition of diversity and the active promotion of participation of minority students, especially immigrants, lies at the heart of my dissertation.

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<sup>5</sup> NPR recently broadcast a 3-part series on “Race and Politics in Europe Today”. This episode, “French Minorities Push for Equality Post-Obama” aired with Sylvia Poggioli reporting on 1/14/09. It can be downloaded at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=99298290>

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed analysis of affirmative action in France, including the Sciences Po case, see Elise Langan’s article “Assimilation and Affirmative Action in French Education Systems” in *European Education*; v40 n3 p49-64 Fall 2008.

My focus on compulsory education, specifically at the secondary level, stems from my training and professional experience working as a high school teacher. Trained in the pedagogical methods and content of social science and history, I learned that my professional peers, through the National Council for the Social Studies, had defined the discipline's primary purpose as helping "young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (Anderson & Social Science Education Consortium, 2000, p. 29). It was difficult to understand exactly what this meant or how it could be achieved before entering the classroom. After teaching two very different student populations in both social studies and French classrooms, one predominantly white, poor and rural and the other urban, poor and comprised mainly of students of color, I began to comprehend that a uniform approach was inadequate and that citizenship education must be reconstructed from the lives of its participants in order for it to have meaning and value.

Finally, as a doctoral student of comparative education in a city with a rich tradition of immigration, in a diverse and rigorous university, and in a department that adeptly fuses social justice, critical theory, history, philosophy, feminist theory, race and ethnic studies, and comparative education, I have been able to bring together my lived experiences and intellectual curiosities, situate them historically and theoretically and apply them methodologically to research questions of contemporary importance. According to Sadler (Kandel, 1955, p. 9), the student of comparative education must "try to find out what is the intangible, impalpable spiritual force which, in the case of any successful system of education, is in reality upholding

the school system.” It is from my unique perspective that this force can be better understood, especially as it applies to students of diverse backgrounds, integration and citizenship education in France. It should ideally elucidate contemporary approaches that are empowering, humanizing, truly educational, and ultimately emancipatory.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

A significant contribution to the body of research on diverse populations of students in France and their experiences in school, as mentioned above, would be to explicitly establish an appropriate theoretical framework, specifically finding inspiration in the ideas of Banks, Freire, and Dewey and in Paulston’s theoretical map of the field. As Wells and Picou assert, “theory and methodology are fundamental to the cognitive structures of any field of study” (Henrickson et al., 2003, p. 5). One’s theoretical orientation both shapes and explains how one perceives and understands the dynamics and laws underlying interaction in the system being studied.

### ***James Banks, Multiculturalism and Transformative Citizenship Education***

*“Multicultural education was developed, in part, to respond to the concerns of groups on the margins of society who wanted to maintain important aspects of their cultures and languages as well as the right to fully participate in their nation-states and societies. However, multicultural perspectives and insights have not been effectively integrated into citizenship education in most nation-states” (Banks, 2004, p. xxi).*

James Banks, in decades of scholarship, has significantly advanced research and policy regarding multicultural education. His 2008 article, “Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age”, synthesizes his recent conclusions and proposes curricular reforms necessary for increasingly pluralistic societies. It is particularly relevant to my research on schooling and citizenship in contemporary France.

The justification for Banks' proposed curricular model is a critique of "assimilationist, liberal, and universal" conceptions of citizenship and related educational practice (2008, p. 129). Embraced in France, such an assimilationist approach requires immigrants to surrender their native languages and cultures, views group identities and rights as detrimental to individual rights, and promotes "universal" values that define what it means to be French. In actuality, these "universal values" are determined by groups in power and serve to promote their own interests (Banks, 2008, p. 132). In place of liberal assimilation, Banks advocates a differentiated approach to citizenship. Citing Young (1989), he argues that "a differentiated conception of citizenship, rather than a universal one, is needed to help marginalized groups attain civic equality and recognition in multicultural democratic nations." Providing a space for difference and group identification allows immigrant students to work together to express themselves politically and culturally while expanding equality and access.

Banks' novel contribution is the formulation of what he labels "transformative citizenship education". Whereas mainstream citizenship education promotes the status quo and reinforces dominant power relationships, often with the aim of developing citizens that internalize certain national values, venerate national heroes and accept glorified versions of national histories, a transformative curriculum is based on questioning and critique (Banks, 2008, p. 135). It allows for multiple identities and affiliations. According to Banks (p. 135), transformative citizenship education "enables students to acquire the information, skills and values needed to challenge inequality within their communities, their nations, and the world; to develop cosmopolitan values and perspectives; and to take actions to create just and democratic multicultural communities and

societies.” The ultimate focus is equality and this seems to be particularly appropriate for the case of France.

Although Banks provides a beneficial conceptualization of transformative citizenship education and underlying theoretical support, he fails to concretize his plans. Besides not providing specific curricular suggestions, he omits an analysis of potential obstacles to such curricular change. The literature could be expanded by providing reactions to Banks’ proposal from a variety of angles. It is not even certain, for example, that those for whom he is advocating, the increasingly cosmopolitan and transnational immigrants with multiple identities, would so vehemently critique an assimilationist approach to citizenship education.

### ***Paulo Freire, “Conscientization” and Problem-Posing Education***

*“The ‘dialogical man’ is critical and knows that although it is within the power of men to create and transform, in a concrete situation of alienation, men may be impaired in the use of that power. Far from destroying his faith in man, however, the possibility strikes him as a challenge to which he must respond” (Freire, 2007, p. 91).*

Paulo Freire’s influence on movements to achieve emancipation and liberation through education is undeniable, but it is important here to determine how his scholarship could most appropriately contribute to a theoretical framework through which to study the schooling of multi-ethnic youth in France. I will focus here on Freire’s liberatory notion of “conscientization” and his advocacy for problem-posing pedagogy. At the heart of Freire’s project, and all truly educational endeavors in his view, is a raising of critical consciousness. “Conscientization” enables individuals to become a subject, to actively develop themselves and bring about social transformation. Ultimately, the product is humanization. I assert that true citizenship education cannot take place until individual students become subjects in the educational pursuit.



Pedagogically, Freire criticizes the dominant banking model in which students are seen as empty receptacles to be filled by all-knowing teachers and proposes a problem-posing model. Here, Freire argues that knowledge only comes from interaction and best arises when students and teachers work together as co-investigators. For Freire, the point of departure must always be the “here and now” of students’ lives. Such an assertion lies at the heart of standpoint theory, another pillar on which to form an appropriate theoretical framework for research on citizenship education in contemporary France that will be examined in more depth in the following section. From an initial review of the civics, social science and humanities curriculum in contemporary France, the “here and now” of students’ lives is remarkably absent.

Paulo Freire’s writings on education are inherently political, as is my research, and serve as a manifesto to guide the liberation of “the oppressed”. Education is thus, in Freire’s mind, a vehicle for revolutionary change. Revolution can only occur through the development of a critical consciousness. One becomes human in cultivating this critical consciousness, participating not only in his/her own growth, but in the evolution of society. Human beings become, as a result, subjects and not objects of social forces. They must be active participants in overthrowing the pedagogy that has oppressed them in order to regain their humanity. Their humanity is, according to Freire, “thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice” (2007, p. 43-44). Yearning for freedom, however, is not enough. Humans must overcome their fear of freedom and work actively to pursue and reclaim it. At the heart of this reclamation is the development of critical consciousness that embraces freedom, nourishes one’s

humanity and combats social and political forces that work to dehumanize. It is evident how Freire's work can go hand-in-hand with Banks' notion of "transformative citizenship education" that was elucidated above. Together, they will provide a solid foundation for reconstructing expressions of citizenship in a pluralistic society.

Finally, it is important to note that Freire's pedagogy centers on praxis, or "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (2007, p. 51). He emphasizes that reflection and action occur simultaneously and that both must be carried out collaboratively between the oppressed and their oppressors. At the heart of the praxis are the notions of the dialogic and the anti-dialogic. The dialogic is an instrument of liberation whereas the anti-dialogic oppresses and dominates. The former emphasizes the subject as an actor that transforms and the latter frames the subject as an object that is transformed. Beyond becoming subjects that act upon the world, humans must work in unity to organize themselves and overthrow forces of domination without reproducing them themselves. The result should eventually be a cultural synthesis, rather than the cultural invasion of the oppressor, that not only learns about the people of the world but mutually, equally and equitably acts upon and reformulates the world. It is thus clear that any project for transformation must include not only students, but teachers, administrators and the larger community.

### ***John Dewey, Progressive Education and Education as Reconstruction***

*John Dewey said "I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race" (Flinders and Thornton, 2004, 17)*

Like the educational philosophers highlighted above, John Dewey critiques the society in which he lives and espouses the idea that a more just society can be achieved through education.

According to Kellner (class notes 4), social transformation is linked in Dewey to his “championing of new against old education, or what he came to contrast as ‘progressive’ against ‘traditional’ education.” In his writings, the ultimate goal of the school and of progressive education in general is the facilitation and promotion of democracy. A democracy can only flourish if informed citizens actively participate in it and constantly work to refine and reinvent it. It is toward active participation and the refinement and reinvention of democracy that we must draw our attention in the French context.

Also central to reinventing democratic education, Dewey places importance on lived experience in education. Learning through living and then communicating these lessons foster not only education, but the development of community. Consequently, learning must not be confined to the walls of the school but must occur out in the world. Even teachers, agents of the school, should endeavor to take children out of their buildings and into nature and their communities to foster learning through experience and interaction. This is why research sites chosen for my research do not confine themselves to the school. But simply living and experiencing outside of school are, however, not enough for children to learn. Educators must facilitate the learning of lessons that students would not come to on their own. They are best able to educate by simulating and setting up the conditions of their personal learning experiences. Educators in this sense can be the teachers at Lycée Mitterrand, in the case of my study, or adults facilitating community organizations and activities in which students are participating.

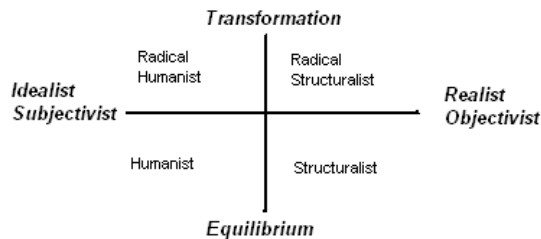
The school does remain central in my investigation and it is the school that, according to Dewey, plays an essential role in sustaining and developing democracy. It serves to coordinate and mediate the different influences and spheres of students' lives, including the family, community, state, politics, religion, and media. According to Kellner (class notes 11), the school has three related functions: 1) to simplify and focus these influences; 2) to purify and select what is important, and; 3) to balance the various elements in the social environment. Education thus serves an important social and political function, securing direction and development in the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong (Dewey, 1997, p. 81). Since students belong to multiple groups that interact and compete, education serves a mediating function. It also aids in helping students understand and define their roles in the democracy. An outstanding question that should be answered by my research is how the French school currently completes this mediating function, especially how it acknowledges and negotiates the different group memberships of its students.

### ***The Upper-Left Quadrant of Paulston's Theoretical Map of the Field***

*Paulo Freire said "the critical investigator wants the truth of reality and not to adapt reality to one's own truth; the more one is politically engaged, the more one needs 'objective truth'" (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 57).*

Critical theory clearly underlies not only certain positions taken in the debate on citizenship education reform, but also influences critiques of such reform. Although not explicitly stated, critical theory implicitly shapes Osler and Starkey's approach, for example. Before examining such a critical orientation, it is important to situate it historically in the evolution of the field. In a 1992 article, Rolland Paulston conceptually mapped the theoretical

orientations of scholars conducting research in comparative education. Paulston isolates two variables, transformation and objectivism, and places them on the vertical and horizontal axes of his map. Those theories calling for transformation fall on the upper portion of the vertical axis while those seeking equilibrium fall on the lower. To the left of the horizontal axis, we find a personal-subjectivist approach. To the right, where structuralism is situated, we encounter realist-objectivist approaches.



**Figure 1 - Paulston's Intellectual Map of the Field**

For this study, those occupying the upper-left quadrant, the radical humanist portion, of Paulston’s map are most compelling. Before exploring these, it would be beneficial to understand and eventually negate the historically dominant theoretical orientation of the field of comparative education, that is to say the structuralist tradition, specifically structural functionalism. Central to many of the seminal works of comparative education, structuralist orientations “are based on a worldview that assumes regularities and lawfulness both of the

natural world and the social world, and assumes that people are capable of grasping its underlying structures” (Henrickson et al., 2003, p. 14). Structural functionalism, located on the lower, right-hand side of Paulson’s map, draws from the work of Durkheim to explain how societies find equilibrium and stability. The members and institutions of society are seen as working harmoniously toward equilibrium and self-replication. All social and cultural phenomena are analyzed in terms of the roles they play in the system. “Individuals are significant not in and of themselves but in terms of their status, their position in patterns of social relations, and their roles the behavior(s) associated with their status” (Layton, 1997, p. 37). It is easy to see how this approach, however disputed in contemporary circles, may be used to analyze and understand the schooling and civics education of immigrants in France. Earlier waves of immigrants, mostly hailing from Southern and Eastern Europe can be viewed as having been successfully integrated into French society. Their descendants now actively participate in public life and reproduce the social and political structures that they inherited. It could be argued that this is also possible for immigrants of African and Asian origin that arrived in more recent waves. It would be sufficient to pinpoint, analyze and change the component of the system that is threatening equilibrium. Once changed, Africa, Asian and other immigrants would also assimilate culturally and actively participate in the political and social structures of the French republic. Their native French peers would have no integration or assimilation to perform as they define the dominant culture.

The problem underlying this theoretical orientation is that it has already been relied upon in the 1999 modification of civics instruction and failed to produce results. As Osler and Starkey

note, “until national curricula and discourses on citizenship are responsive to minority as well as majority perspectives they are likely to remain to some extent exclusive” (2004: 24). I would continue this line of argumentation to assert that an absence of minority perspective is anti-democratic and even contradictory to the goals of civics education in a democracy. It cheats both those in the minority and those in the majority. It is therefore important to turn to theoretical orientations that advocate change but that also define themselves as more personal or subjectivist. It is not coincidental that structuralism appears to fall short as a theoretical approach to these questions. Henrickson et al. actually note that most comparative educators doing contemporary research have eschewed the structuralist paradigm and shifted toward humanism and radical humanism. It is therefore pertinent to shift our attention to critical theory, critical pedagogy, critical race theory, post-structuralism, post-colonial theory, feminism and standpoint theory and their possible application to questions of schooling and the civics education for immigrants in France. These larger orientations justify using Banks, Freire and Dewey as our starting point.

Critical theory arose from the Frankfurt School as a social theory that critiqued society as a whole and called for change. This was in contrast to traditional theory which only endeavored to understand or explain society. Originally tied to Marxism, critical theory began to trace a unique path under the influence of Habermas in the 1960s. “In Habermas's epistemology, critical knowledge was conceptualized as knowledge that enabled human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection and took psychoanalysis as the paradigm of critical knowledge” (“Critical Theory”, 2005). Habermas’ work expanded critical

theory to include such approaches as world systems theory, neo-Marxian theory, feminist theory, postcolonial theory, critical race theory, and standpoint theory.

In contemplating Habermas' work, it is necessary to understand his metatheoretical foundations, specifically their ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings. Ontologically, he develops a categorical distinction between work and interaction (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 40) and also distinguishes between strategic action, which is oriented toward control and communicative action, which is oriented toward consensus (p. 41). Epistemologically, Habermas grounds knowledge in a subject-subject dialogue of communicative action (p. 53). His methodological approach is rooted in pluralistic practices and contexts that serve to "elucidate the agency-structure dialectic" (p. 61). Based on these metatheoretical foundations, Morrow and Torres highlight convergences between the thinking of Habermas and Freire. Their thesis "is that the fundamental convergence of the social theories of Freire and Habermas turns on subordinating the master-slave dialectic of struggle within a more encompassing theory of praxis as mutual recognition in communicative dialogue" (p. 25). Realizing Freire's contribution to the larger tradition of critical theory the applicability of both to the research questions at hand, it is toward another theory in Paulston's upper-left quadrant that we should now turn.

As mentioned earlier, Habermas' expanded critical theory to include other approaches, such as that of standpoint theory. Standpoint theory attempts to maximize objectivity by abandoning the empirical idea that scientific knowledge has no particular subject. As Harding describes, subjects of knowledge for standpoint theory are "embodied and visible", making them



fundamentally similar to objects of knowledge (1992, p. 132-33). Consequently, “communities and not primarily individuals produce knowledge” (p. 133). Finally, the subjects of knowledge in standpoint theory are “multiple, heterogeneous and contradictory” (Harding, 1992, p. 134). All of these aspects are important in that they dispel the belief of structural functionalists that society operates as a harmonious group of structures and groups whose individual members are irrelevant. Standpoint theory begins investigation from the lives of marginalized peoples and makes the case for creating stronger objectivity by socially situating knowledge. It is therefore a potentially powerful theoretical orientation in research on civics education and minorities. The failure of the 1999 reform to address minority perspectives and to integrate them into civics curriculum could be remedied by an acceptance of standpoint epistemologies. The result could not only be more objective but potentially emancipatory.

### ***Statement of Problem and Research Questions***

*“Avec le développement des échanges et des confrontations internationales, notre modèle de citoyenneté n’apparaît plus aussi incontestable qu’auparavant”<sup>7</sup> (Galichet, 1998, p. 15).*

The theoretical framework exposed above guides my research on the schooling process in pluralistic societies and elucidates how education may foster integration and a participatory reconstruction of national systems such as that of France. At the center of this research, as noted in previous sections, is a challenge to the historically assimilationist republican model. A host of factors suggest that the time is ripe for such an investigation and that historically-anchored approaches to citizenship and citizenship education in France may be challenged. Increased

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<sup>7</sup> “With the development of international exchanges and confrontations, our model of citizenship no longer seems as incontestable as in the past.”

exposure to other models, such as Australian and American multicultural models, pressure from supranational and international organizations, such as the European Union, neoliberal tendencies toward decentralization, and a resurgence of local influences in an era of globalizing homogenization are but a few of the factors that make research into new approaches to citizenship education timely and relevant in contemporary France.

*“L’intégration républicaine continue à incarner dans la vie politique et le débat public un horizon de valeurs indépassable...il est pourtant ici des facteurs structurels qui, en affectant profondément les logiques de l’intervention publique, semblent mettre au défi l’axiologie républicaine et œuvrer à une prise en compte accrue de la diversité culturelle. Ainsi, dans le sillage de la décentralisation politique, l’émergence d’espaces locaux de participation politique...a eu comme corollaire une ouverture accrue à la société civile et donc à la pluralité des points de vue et des intérêts qui la composent, y compris ceux- ‘ethniques’-des migrants et de leurs descendants. La construction européenne a introduit dans l’univers national des objets politiques atypiques, a priori ‘contraires’ à ses traditions : telle est l’histoire notamment de l’‘invention’ française de la lutte contre les discriminations raciales qui marque, pour certains auteurs, un véritable tournant des politiques d’intégration ” (Doytcheva, 2005, p. 63-64).*

*“Integration in the republican tradition continues to incarnate, in political life and public debate, a frontier that cannot be crossed...there are nevertheless structural factors here that, by profoundly affecting the logic of public intervention, seem to challenge republican axiology and work toward increased recognition of cultural diversity. In this way, in the wake of political decentralization, the emergence of local spaces of political participation...has had, as a corollary, the deepened opening of civil society and the multiplication of viewpoints and interests that make it up, including ‘ethnic ones’ of migrants and their descendants. The construction of the European Union has introduced into the national sphere atypical political objects that were previously ‘contrary’ to its traditions: this is notably the story of the French ‘invention’ of the fight against racial discrimination that marks, for certain authors, a veritable turning point in the politics of integration ” (Doytcheva, 2005, p. 63-64).*

So if this is a “veritable turning point in the politics of integration”, how does this play out in the school and other spaces that are occupied by a diverse swath of students? The larger question at hand is if immigrant and native-born students, working alongside one another, can forge and implement a new understanding of citizenship in this context.

In order to address this larger question and to respect the given theoretical orientation, I conceived of three more pointed questions to guide my research before entering the field in the fall of 2009:

**1. How do citizenship education programs impact the political attitudes, behaviors, and identities of diverse students in France? How do other culturally-laden courses, such as history, language and social studies contribute to the formation of such attitudes, behaviors and identities?**

**2. How has the content of such courses evolved since immigration significantly changed the demographic make-up of France?**

**3. In what ways could current curricula be transformed to facilitate French students' transition from what Banks refers to as "legal citizenship" to "transformative citizenship" (2008, p. 137)? Do certain community organizations or other informal spaces the students occupy provide appropriate models?**

To begin to answer these questions, it was essential that I locate and build relationships with appropriate research sites.

### ***Research Sites and Participant Recruitment***

*"Policies drawing links between and among adolescents' schools, families, peer groups, and youth or community organizations may make participation more real to students and offer them multiple ways to view democratic civic engagement" (Torney-Purta & Barber, 2005).*

The central site of my investigation was a large, diverse high school in Paris, a school I have given the pseudonym of "Lycée Mitterrand." Paris is divided into 20 districts, or *arrondissements*. Numbered in the shape of a snake uncoiling from the center of Paris, the lower-numbered districts (1-4) make up the center of Paris, districts 5-11 comprise the middle and districts 12-20 form the outer ring. These twenty districts make up the city of Paris and house just over 2 million inhabitants. The city is surrounded by densely populated suburbs giving the Parisian metropolitan area a population of over 10 million. In choosing a research

site, my goal was to target a neighborhood and a school with a mixed population. The innermost, lower-numbered districts of Paris tend to be white and affluent. Many suburbs, or *banlieues*, also have homogenous populations, from white and affluent cities like Saint Germain-en-Laye to poor, minority-populated cities like Clichy-sous-bois. In between these two, the most heterogeneous communities remain in the outer-ring of Parisian *arrondissements*. Lycée Mitterrand is located in this outer ring; its population is very ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically mixed.

While working as a teacher earlier in my career before entering a doctoral program, my students and I had the privilege of participating in an exchange program sponsored by one of Paris' museums that partnered us with Lycée Mitterrand. Over the years, I remained in touch with cooperating teachers at the school who were eager to assist me in my research when I began looking for sites in 2009. Coincidentally, shortly after the exchange between our two schools took place, a feature film that addressed classroom life in a diverse and turbulent middle school was released. "*Entre les Murs*", titled "The Class" in English and winner of the Cannes Film Festival's *Palme d'Or* took place in a 20<sup>th</sup> district middle school, one of the higher-numbered, outer-ring *arrondissements* that continues to house a heterogeneous population. Beyond the irony and coincidence, this anecdote demonstrates the ethnic diversity and the presence of various generations of immigrant students in such neighborhoods of Paris.

I arrived in Paris at the end of summer vacation and soon scheduled a meeting with a young English teacher with whom I had established contact during the museum-sponsored school exchange. I explained the goals of my research to her and she agreed to speak to two or

three of her colleagues in the social sciences that she guessed might be interested in collaborating on such a project. She also made the initial contact with Lycée Mitterand's principal.

Eventually, after discussing my research over lunch in a restaurant near the school, Madame Parnaud (pseudonym) generously agreed to allow me observe a specific History/Geography class of sophomores (*seconde*) over the course of the year, interview her, interview her students, hand out my questionnaire and conduct any other research upon which we agreed. Madame Parnaud was early in her tenure at Lycée Mitterand although she had been teaching for over 25 years. She recently transferred to Paris *intra-muros* after teaching in the *banlieue*.

Mid-way through the study, I began to worry about representativity, wondering if my close and regular participation in one classroom would shed significant light on the larger research questions that framed my original proposal. Madame Parnaud also expressed skepticism at the value of the single ethnographic sketch of one group of students and one teacher. Consequently, I took advantage of the adjunct professor position I had at a teacher training institute in Rennes to contact teachers in different high schools near that provincial city. I chose to visit two high schools that were remarkably different from Lycée Mitterand. One was urban, but in a smaller provincial city, and one was rural; both had much more homogenous populations than Mitterand. There, I observed twelve teachers across high school grade levels and across social science and history courses. I ultimately realized that the goal of my study was not to paint a representative picture of the entire country, but to use the intimate portrait I had begun to construct of Madame Parnauds "Seconde-5" class in order to generate insights and further questions in line with my original goals. So, deciding to leave the Rennes-area data for

future documentation and analysis, I began to concentrate on groups and institutions outside of the school in the Parisian neighborhood of Lycée Mitterrand. This, I hoped, would render my portrait of the Mitterrand student population more nuanced and complex and shed light on extracurricular educational opportunities.

Populations are shifting in France and the schools and educational system are adapting to these shifts but at a glacial pace. This is understandable in a highly-centralized country such as France, but it makes it necessary to explore spaces outside of the school, both formal and informal, that are closer to the ground, more dynamic and relevant to the daily lives of teenagers. As my original assumptions led me to believe that “transformative citizenship education” was taking place in spaces outside of the school, I worked to interact with students socially and to explore the extracurricular and community activities in which they participated. Religious, cultural, ethnic and other associations often serve as forums in which participants actively question inequalities, situate their unique experiences in the larger society, and forge an agenda of transformation. It is on the aspects of these activities that may be applicable to school structures and curricula that I hoped to concentrate. Torney-Purta and Barber note in the quotation above that schools must more actively tap into community organizations for citizenship education to become real and relevant to students.

Given the organization’s historical significance, current media visibility and inter-generational outreach, I first contacted *SOS Racisme*. Since its founding in the early 1980s, *SOS Racisme* has worked to combat racism and all forms of discrimination in order to promote equality. Recognizing the importance of education in this struggle, the organization employs

two curricular specialists and enlists the help of numerous volunteers to conduct workshops in schools. One of the curricular specialists graciously granted me an interview, gave me a tour of the organization's Parisian headquarters, introduced me to the staff and invited me to two of these workshops, one in a Parisian middle school and one in an outlying suburban high school. He also assisted me as I sought to collaborate with FIDL, a student union called the Independent and Democratic (High School) Student Federation.

While conducting fieldwork, I tried to remain in tune with the social and political goings-on of both the local and national communities. A timely coincidence allowed for my fieldwork to take place during Sarkozy and Besson's series of debates on national identity. One of these was organized specifically for youth and took place at the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and National Identity. Not far from my alma mater, Sciences Po, I attended the debate at the Ministry and there I met one of the student leaders of FIDL. We scheduled an interview and a tour of their offices which were, like *SOS Racisme* and Lycée Mitterrand, located in a mixed neighborhood of an outer-ring *arrondissement*. During this meeting, I learned of the Federation's biannual conference taking place that year in Lyon. The young member of the organization's administrative team invited me to attend. The two days I spent with teenagers at the FIDL conference and the curricular workshops I observed with *SOS Racisme* provided the basis for my third data chapter on the role of community organizations in teaching and facilitating civic participation amongst youth of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Outside of fieldwork, academic, cultural and governmental institutions in Paris served as reference repositories in which I was able to consult both working professionals and academic

literature. These included the national Ministry of Education, the libraries and professors of Sciences Po Paris and EHESS (*École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*) and the National Library. I have continued to remain an active alumnus at Sciences Po Paris, the *grande école* that trains the vast majority of France's civil servants. Given the school's influence and scope of activity, I was able to utilize its resources, both textual and human, to guide my query. The library of the National Foundation of Political Sciences is on the campus. It, along with the library and faculty of the EHESS served as invaluable resources in accessing recent French and international scholarship on my research topic.

Finally, as the capital of France, Paris is home to both the National Library and the Ministry of Education. *La Bibliothèque Nationale de France* opened the François Mitterrand Site in 1996 and its vast collections are open to the public. The French government contributes a significant amount of research funds to the library and dedicated allotments are reserved for the assistance of foreign researchers. Upon arrival in France, I was able to schedule a one-on-one appointment with a research librarian there who guided me to relevant sources. Before departing the US, I had already been in contact with one civil servant working at the Ministry of Education and was able to use that connection once in France to explore and discuss the official curricula in civics education, social sciences and humanities and to trace their recent evolution. All of these resources contributed to a study that endeavors to situate the civic participation of diverse youth in the larger context of French society and its history.

As my year of fieldwork began to wind down in France, an opportunity arose to collaborate on a book chapter for an edited volume dedicated to evolving representations of



nationhood in history textbooks. Understanding the importance of such representations and their impact on both students' sense of belonging and participation in the nation, I decided to add a study of textbooks to my original research proposal especially since it lined up with the overarching research questions that guided my dissertation. I was fortunate to serve as an adjunct professor in 2009-10 at the *IUFM de Bretagne*, the Brittany Teacher Training Institute that is affiliated with the University of Western Brittany (*Université de Bretagne Occidentale*). There, I was able to take advantage of the Institute's library and archives to access textbooks from the three periods I chose to study: the 1960s, 1980s and 2000s.

### **Methods and Methodology**

*"The best way to understand is to do"* (Kant, as quoted in Morrow and Torres, 2002, p. 18).

The research questions central to this study, situated in the theoretical framework outlined above, required a variety of methods and methodologies in order to be adequately addressed. It is first critical to distinguish between method and methodology. According to Rust (2004, p. 2), research methods deal with collecting, interpreting and analyzing data. Methodology focuses on research design and defining problems in the initial phase and communicating the results of the research in the final phase. With this distinction in mind, let us turn to methods of data gathering that I employed in my research.

Rust (2004, p. 2) posits that evidence gathering falls into four categories: 1) listening to or interrogating informants through questionnaires or interviews; 2) participant observation; 3) examining historical traces and records, in historical studies or literature reviews, and; 4) existing

data studies. For this study, I relied heavily on the first three categories and tapped into the fourth when necessary for comparison or background information. Historical records play a central role in the first data chapter on textbooks. Questionnaires, interviews and participant observation provide the data for the second and third data chapters on the history classroom and outside community organizations. Given that evidence gathering and analysis were both quantitative and qualitative it would appropriate to label this a mixed-methods study, although it will be made clear that qualitative methods were most utilized in order to give the analysis and reportage more depth. Nonetheless, to successfully maximize the impact and relevance of the study's results, it was essential that the two approaches, quantitative and qualitative, be integrated. According to Wooley (2009, p. 7), such studies "can be considered 'integrated' to the extent that these components are explicitly related to each other within a single study and in such a way as to be mutually illuminating, thereby producing findings that are greater than the sum of parts." Therefore, at all stages of research design, from the formulation of my original dissertation proposal through the analysis of data, integration of the two approaches has been an explicit goal.

### ***2009 Pilot Study in Los Angeles Unified School District***

In the winter and spring of 2009, Christine Malsbary, a fellow graduate student, and I conducted a pilot study in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) whose conclusions have shaped our individual research agendas. Our mixed methods study explored how some recently-arrived immigrant students experience inclusion in their classrooms, schools and the larger context of Southern California. The study collected data through a 45-minute survey, two

open-ended written questions, and two interviews. We distributed the survey and questionnaire to two English-Language-Learner (ELL) classrooms and one social studies class in two middle schools in LAUSD (N= 71), exclusively querying 1<sup>st</sup>-generation immigrant students, or those born outside of the United States. For this pilot study, we therefore established a convenience sample of 6th, 7th and 8th graders with a mean age of 12.63 (Malsbary & Nesbitt, 2009, p. 8).

In the exploratory survey, we asked questions about student perceptions of inclusion around the following indicators: through racial, cultural, religious, linguistic identities; teaching and learning practices in their classrooms; institutional practices based in relational experiences with school personnel as compared to family members; and experiences based on wider social inclusion practices like racial inclusion and assimilation practices. Our questionnaire asked two broad questions: “What does it mean to you to be an immigrant?” And, “Do you think people in Los Angeles respect new immigrants?” We also conducted two semi-structured interviews with a female Korean student and a female Guatemalan student (p. 8-9).

Data analysis will be discussed in subsequent sections, but it is important to note here the key findings that emerged from our pilot study (p. 10-11):

1. **A pro-school ethos:** an enjoyment of school, a desire to learn English, and a sense of school as a vehicle for social mobility (i.e., work).
2. **Uneasiness with institutional relationships:** primarily manifested through their feelings of being able to bring problems to school staff.

3. **Complex experience of social relationships:** particularly with other racial groups at school and in their urban area.
4. **Sense of loss and/or separation:** a sense of loss of country or family members, and an awareness of how the process of migration exacerbates that loss.
5. **Heightened awareness of the political climate surrounding immigration:** particularly as it is manifested through issues of legalization and the relationship of immigrants to power/ authority figures.

These findings are intentionally broad and focus on perceptions of inclusion because such observations provide a solid foundation upon which both Christine and I can conduct further research even though my direction is toward citizenship education and hers veers toward notions of belonging. Their applicability to the French context may be questionable but they provided me direction in my research before entering the field. For example, if I would have observed French students expressing a similar pro-school ethos, I would have shifted my attention more toward school structures and curricula. Instead, I was forced to spend more time seeking answers to my questions in community life outside of the school. Conclusions from the pilot study revolving around institutional relationships, social relationships, political climate and others also guided the research I conducted in France. Based on the pilot study, I developed the following methodological strategy for conducting my research in France.

## *Quantitative Methods*

Although the mixed methods study I outline here is primarily ethnographic, relying largely on qualitative methods, I begin a presentation of research methods with those that are quantitative given that the pilot study was largely quantitative. A questionnaire was used to gather baseline data and direct future research.<sup>88</sup> It mirrored, in part, the instrument designed for the pilot study, but was significantly tailored to yield responses relating to identity, civic competencies, opinions, attitudes and behaviors. In an effort to include cooperating teachers in the study as co-investigators, I crafted the questionnaire with the assistance of Madame Parnaud. Since she was intimately familiar with the target population, her assistance enabled me to produce a more reliable and fruitful instrument and one that was also more culturally appropriate.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996, p. 277) provide helpful guidelines for the construction of such a questionnaire. They contend that the instrument should first and foremost translate the researcher's objectives into specific questions, providing the necessary data for hypothesis testing and guidance for future research. Recognizing that most of my questions were subjective and not simply factual, I was obligated to pay close attention to wording, emphasis and sequence so that my personal influence on responses was minimal. Like in the pilot study, most questions were close-ended and employed ratings scales, asking the respondents to make judgments in terms of the provided ordered categories. Some questions that required students to rank priorities or influences were also used. Finally, as Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias note,

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<sup>88</sup> See Appendix B for the survey in French and Appendix C for the translation in English.

it was imperative that my co-investigating teacher and I avoid leading and threatening questions in constructing the survey.

Madame Parnaud's guidance early on transformed the survey in a significant way, causing me to deviate from the questionnaire I included in my dissertation proposal and from one line of research I intended to conduct. Institutional Review Board policies dictate that researchers respect the norms of the host country when conducting studies abroad. In the United States, it is not uncommon to solicit detailed demographic information from the citizenry, including young students. With the hopes of correlating response data with demographic information on age, sex, gender, religion, socioeconomic status and country of origin, I originally planned to begin the questionnaire soliciting such information. I was familiar with France's longstanding tradition of not maintaining ethnic statistics, especially since the horrific deportation and execution of Jews during World War II, but I hoped that the small scale of my study and guarantee of confidentiality would allow room for an exception. Madame Parnaud adamantly opposed this and I eliminated such questions from my study. Since it was no longer possible for me to sort data based on race, religion or country of origin, I was forced to look at the diverse group of students as a whole. Ultimately, this proved to be revealing and most fitting for the French context.

Specifically, the survey instrument included five lines of questioning: 1) identity; 2) school; 3) community; 4) adult life, and; 5) politics and society. Questions about identity revolved around the social groupings that students deemed most important in how they were perceived by others, how they identified themselves and how they chose friends. Relating to

school, I endeavored to find out what space existed for exploring differences amongst students, what the role of school was and what sense of community existed at school. I then investigated how community and religious organizations might guide the students' participation in the larger society. In the adult-life line of questioning, I attempted to discover what priorities students might have in terms of career, family, community involvement and politics. Finally, for politics and society I asked students about their relevant opinions, values and behavior. The three open-ended questions that concluded the survey bridged the above categories. They asked students to expound upon race relations in the school, neighborhood and nation, to discuss the role of the school and to reflect upon their ability to fight injustice in society, whether that be through traditional political channels or community organizations.

### ***Qualitative Methods***

Participant observation took place from the beginning of my data collection at Lycée Mitterrand and guided subsequent interviews and focus groups there. I began my observations as close to the beginning of the school year as possible so that my presence became a natural part of the setting in the eyes of the students. Through participant observation, according to Wax, “the investigator attempts to attain some kind of membership in or close attachment to the group that he or she wishes to study” (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996, p. 282). In doing so, she continues, “the participant observer attempts to adopt the perspectives of the people in the situation being observed” (p. 282). Such a method is crucial in standpoint theory and ultimately yielded data relating to civic engagement, attitudes and behaviors of the target population.

Schensul et al. (1999, p. 91) argue that participant observation is the appropriate method to begin ethnographic research for five reasons: 1) it enables the researcher to identify and build relationships that will facilitate research; 2) it provides a portrait of how things are organized and prioritized, how people relate to one another, and how boundaries are defined; 3) it demonstrates patterns of etiquette, organization, leadership, hierarchy and other cultural patterns; 4) it “endorses the presence of the researcher in the community,” and; 5) it provides data that can shape later research. It was my goal to both build relationships and gather data through the observation process. Once accomplished, I was able to move on to the interviews and focus groups. It is important to note, before explaining these final two methods, that each method was first employed in the school setting and then later replicated in the formal and informal community spaces used for the investigation.

I called upon both open-ended and semi-structured interviews to elicit relevant data, depending on what proved most appropriate. Open-ended interviewing resembled the two interviews that I personally conducted in the LAUSD pilot study. Besides building relationships between the researcher and subject, the interviews in the pilot study allowed me to explore undefined domains and identify new domains that did not appear in our original conceptual model (Schensul et al.: 1999, 21). I simply started out asking students generally about their experience in school and used guiding questions to elicit responses related to their perceptions of inclusion. For this study, such guiding questions related more to civic engagement and belonging. Student interviews were consequently semi-structured and were created based on the questionnaire, providing deeper and broader responses to the questions asked there.



Finally, although originally used as a tool in marketing, I conducted one final focus group near the end of my data collection phase. This took the form of a classroom intervention and it served as a method of “respondent validation” (Hammersley and Atkinson: 2005, 228). The group comprised a small but representative sample of the types of students I encountered in the study, approximately one half of Madame Parnaud’s *Seconde-5* students. The patterns and themes that emerged from the questionnaires and interviews shaped our discussion. Participants on many levels either validated or disputed my initial findings and interpretations. The focus group was recorded like all other classroom observations and the data coming from was similarly used in my final analysis and write-up.

### ***Data Analysis***

The research project’s primary quantitative instrument, a 30-45-minute survey was based on the one used in the LAUSD pilot study. It was originally created and adapted to serve as a baseline instrument to elicit the maximum amount of relevant data, allowing me to structure follow-up interviews, focus groups and research in the larger community. The data gathered from the survey was first analyzed by using descriptive statistics that reflected the population’s attitudes, opinions and experiences. Responses were also examined for frequency and central tendencies. In some cases, I used probability distributions to shed light on central tendency and variability parameters. Ultimately, I had planned to use the tools of inferential statistics, including bivariate and multivariate regressions, to examine the relationship between variables and their predictive power but this became less critical as I was forced to omit demographic data. Given the relatively small sample size (N=34), it probably would have been difficult to establish

causal relationships, but such analysis will undoubtedly inform follow-up research. For example, if I were able to gather individualized demographic data for each student, I would want to know if there were a relationship between a student's ethnicity and her feeling of belonging in school or her participation in extracurricular activities. Or could a student's perception of school culture predict his/her plans for the future? Regression analysis could begin to answer these questions.

I had initially envisioned data collection and analysis as two separate phases. It was logical, however, especially concerning qualitative data, that this process be ongoing and that the two fuel each other. Hammersley and Atkinson (2005: 204-238) describe a process of funneling that allows researchers to focus their analysis over time. In the case of my research, the analysis moved along a path of describing social events and processes, later developing and testing explanations and theories and finally allowing for the construction of policy and curricular recommendations. In order to do this, I first generated concepts and then constructed typologies. Bogdan and Bilken (2003) posit that such categories could include setting, definition of situation, perspectives held by subjects, relationships and social structures, processes and narrative codes. Others that are more directly applicable to my research were created as explained below in the data reporting chapters. In the pilot study, this is also what took place.

To elucidate how this transpired for my dissertation work, it will be informative to describe exactly how it was carried out in relationship to our framing question for our pilot study: how do immigrant students experience inclusion? "Our first pass at the data revealed that a particular theme around an "immigrant identity" emerged. We decided to limit our investigation at this

juncture, and focused our question of inclusion on two measures: psycho-social inclusion at the classroom, school and city level, and curricular inclusion. During our second pass we ran all survey items that included the label “immigrant” through SPSS. We combed through our quantitative and qualitative data and found that six major categories emerged. We then coded our statistical results and qualitative data with 6 codes (immigrant identity, pro-school ethos, institutional relationships, separation/loss, power/authority, and social relationships). After feedback from our colleagues, we determined that the code “immigrant identity” was an overarching category that emerged from and determined our other factors. The category of “immigrant identity” (which formed the backbone of our findings) was both a category we had pre-determined on the survey, and also emerged from the qualitative data in responses that led to our understanding of an immigrant identity. In other words, our characterization of an immigrant identity led to a combination of a top down and bottom up approach to our analysis. Our five other codes emerged from the data itself, and were negotiated and reformulated as we analyzed the data. We defined these factors as: 1. a pro-school ethos; 2. uneasiness with institutional relationships; 3) complex experiences of social relationships; 4) sense of loss and/or separation; 5) heightened awareness of the political climate surrounding immigration” (Malsbary and Nesbitt: 2009, 10). Although relevant notions emerged in our initial formulation of the pilot study, it was not until we conducted data analysis, generated concepts and created typologies that such conclusions resulted. It will become apparent in the following analysis chapters that the process unfolded similarly for my dissertation work.

### ***Role of Researcher***

The research explained here does not exist in a vacuum, but includes a researcher and subjects that are dynamically interacting in society. Therefore, it is necessary for me as a researcher to reflect deeply on my positionality. As I briefly described in the introduction to this dissertation, I enjoyed the privilege of being educated in one of France's most prestigious *grandes écoles*. As a white man, trained in political science in this setting, I could easily make the same mistakes of those curriculum developers whose reform was critiqued by Osler and Starkey. That is to say, I could inadequately understand and incorporate the positions of the immigrant students that I wish to study. I do, however, provide a unique perspective in that I was also trained in US institutions of higher education whose research in multicultural education has long questioned assimilationist approaches to immigration and integration. Finally, I speak fluent French but a French that borders on the more academic and formal. I, unfortunately, do not speak the languages of any of the countries of origin from which great numbers of immigrants have hailed in post-WWII waves. I endeavored to understand and navigate to the best of my ability the linguistic codes of those with whom I conducted my research.

One of my initial and most important goals was to gain the trust and confidence of those with whom I was working. I worked to achieve this by incorporating students, teachers and communities into the research process as co-investigators. Ultimately, I tried to remain focused on the original goal of understanding and promoting approaches to citizenship education that are inclusive, challenge inequality, facilitate access, recognize difference and allow students to operate to their full potential in society.

### *Limitations of Dissertation*

The extensive scope of the research I lay out here will make it difficult to yield conclusions that are concrete, replicable and applicable to all contexts, but this research has been conceived as a first, albeit significant step in a career of potential research. Its reliance on ethnographic data and use of only one school site may call into question its relevance to other contexts. It should not, however, undermine the validity or importance of the study. The results of the investigation should provide a telling story from which an interested public could take lessons but most importantly it should shed light on “spaces of potential.” If, throughout the dissertation I put forth here, I am able to pinpoint, analyze and understand how diverse students are engaging in truly transformative citizenship education, then these should be able to at least serve as starting points for future research. At most, they could provide models for new curricula and pedagogy.

I am also undoubtedly limited by my unique standpoint. Not having been schooled in the French tradition at the secondary level, having learned the French language as a foreigner, being a white male and spending limited time at the research site all contributed to potential shortcomings and obstacles in the research process. As mentioned above, it is my duty as a researcher to recognize these limitations, consult those who have come before me and faced similar obstacles, remain humble, work diligently and endeavor to provide results that are honest and rigorous.

### **Chapter 3 - Re-Imagining Brotherhood: Republican Values and Representations of Nationhood in High School History Textbooks**

As noted in the introductory sections above, Osler and Starkey (2004) contend that schooling has been intended in France to help integrate a diverse population into a single national culture based on republican values. Republican values have traditionally been framed within the liberal paradigm, with its emphasis on the rights of the individual. Individual rights of freedom and equality are recurring and emblematic themes in the history of education in France and in the larger history of the republic, but a third concept is inscribed in the national motto: brotherhood.

This first analytical chapter proposes to use this third pillar, brotherhood, as a lens through which to examine representations of nationhood in high school history textbooks. Utilizing qualitative analyses of content, theory and epistemology, I attempt to elucidate here the evolution of the national history's master narrative as it is presented in French textbooks, focusing specifically on the representations of values and actors across three periods: the birth of the republic, colonization and decolonization, and contemporary reactions to immigration and globalization. Focusing on how different people and groups are portrayed as fitting in to or being excluded from the French "brotherhood" will shed valuable light on the how nationhood has evolved in France over the period studied.

#### ***Contextualizing the Study of History Textbooks***

From a distant perspective, it may be tempting to classify the French nation as one that is static and homogenous, but membership in this group has shifted constantly even since the

consolidation of the medieval Kingdom of France and the eventual establishment of the Republic of France in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The land within the borders of the contemporary French metropole has been a site of immigration and conquest since first occupied by the Cro-Magnons over 40,000 years ago. The Gauls, Romans, Germanic Franks and others, interacting with various indigenous and exterior subgroups, greatly modified borders, demographics and culture in this region over centuries. Numerous expeditions set out from this land, from the Norman invasion of England in the 11<sup>th</sup> century to colonial conquests in the Americas, Africa and Asia, sending back ideas and peoples in the process. The land was itself invaded by Romans, Vikings and Germans, while also being a site of peaceful immigration and emigration. The influence of people and ideas originating outside the territory has continued throughout the history of France. The recent history of this phenomenon, reflecting a shift from southern and eastern European immigration to north and west African immigration, is described in detail in the opening framing chapters of this dissertation.

Demographic shifts have occurred in France during a time in which accelerating globalization brought exposure to other models of integration that presented challenges to the historically assimilationist republican approach. The republican model, rooted in the revolutionary struggle, gave rise to a nation-state that brought citizens together not because of cultural or genetic linkages but through shared adherence to common principles governing a political community (Raynaud & Rials, 1996). These principles were to be universally accepted by the citizenry and in the liberal sense, related rights were given supreme value. Respecting these principles, citizens assimilated into the nation by shedding any values, identities or group

attachments that might threaten or potentially supersede the nation-state. Although this model dominated for most of the history of the republic, it has recently been called into question. As Galichet notes (1998), “with the development of international exchanges and confrontations, our model of citizenship does not seem as uncontested as it did before.” Increased exposure to multicultural models, pressure from supranational and international organizations, neoliberal tendencies toward decentralization, and tension between the global and the local are but a few of the factors that have given rise to new approaches to integration, citizenship and education.

Because of its unique relevance, let us revisit Doytcheva.

*“Integration in the republican tradition continues to incarnate, in political life and public debate, a frontier that cannot be crossed...there are nevertheless structural factors here that, by profoundly affecting the logic of public intervention, seem to challenge republican axiology and work toward increased recognition of cultural diversity. In this way, in the wake of political decentralization, the emergence of local spaces of political participation...has had, as a corollary, the deepened opening of civil society and the multiplication of viewpoints and interests that make it up, including ‘ethnic ones’ of migrants and their descendants. The construction of the European Union has introduced into the national sphere atypical political objects that were previously ‘contrary’ to its traditions: this is notably the story of the French ‘invention’ of the fight against racial discrimination that marks, for certain authors, a veritable turning point in the politics of integration ” (Doytcheva, 2005).*

The republican model has not allowed for the recognition of difference and it is telling that Doytcheva surrounds the word “ethnic” with quotation marks, especially as post-WWII immigration increased the presence of non-white ethnic groups. France is indeed grappling with the place of difference in the nation today and it is not coincidental, in my view, that the notion of brotherhood has recently resurfaced in the public discourse in this context.

“Brotherhood” proudly took its place as one of the three fundamental principles of the French republic, but it was not officially recognized or incorporated until the constitution of



1848, nearly 70 years after the revolution. The spirit of brotherhood was certainly present during the revolution and even directly evoked during that period as is evidenced by the notable greeting shared by the sans-culottes, “*salut et fraternité.*” Gerald Antoine (1981), points out, however, that the idea of brotherhood has always suffered, in the eyes of many, from its “excessive ambition” and the “vague scope” that it encompasses. It has been seen as being limited to sentimentality, kindness and emotion (Guillebaud, 2009). Some argue that it lacks the concrete substance embodied in the principles of equality or freedom.

The notion of brotherhood was long present in the Christian tradition in France but it was incorporated into the revolutionary struggle despite the anti-religious fervor of the time. The historian Robert Damien (2009) argues that “brotherhood” came about as a collective emotion with political significance during the revolution. He also points to the sans-culottes, considering them to be representatives of “the people” who forged the notion of brotherhood as a reaction to threats that endangered the revolutionary project. Damien defines brotherhood as “this feeling of belonging to something that goes beyond us but something of which we are constituent members.” It augments individual power with the transcendental force of the collective. The power of “us”, he continues, is cultivated through participation, but he distinguishes between the notion of brotherhood and comparable concepts of community or solidarity. “*Fraternité*”, or “brotherhood,” is inextricably linked to the expression “*patrie*,” or “fatherland.” Damien lays it out in simple terms, saying “we are brothers because we have the same father, that *we* created *ourselves*.” It is apparent that he emphasizes the constructed nature of brotherhood in the fatherland, in order to differentiate it from an involuntarily relationship that a subject has with a

king or that a human being has it with its creator. Finally, because of its constructed nature, one that is often timely and spontaneous, Damien reminds us that it carries with it “the risks of this spontaneity.” Brotherhood can shift and membership is often contested.

The contested nature of brotherhood makes it essential to continually investigate its past, present and future manifestations. Pierre Manent (2009) traces modern politics back to liberalism, explaining that its focus on individual rights freed men from the old order and past oppression. He argues that where liberalism fell short was in its prescription for the future, leaving that plan up to the people after their liberation. Historically, he points out that humans responded to this void by coming together in two main ways: through the nation and through social class. In today’s world, Manent sees these two rallying forces as having been weakened, leaving an opening for new “brotherhoods.” In his most recent book, *“Le Moment Fraternité,”* Régis Debray echoes the same sentiment and calls for the national political project to return to brotherhood at a time when individualism reigns supreme (Debray, 2009). Even politicians have come back to the third principle of the national motto in forging their projects for the future. Ségolène Royal, the losing candidate in the final round of the 2007 presidential elections, has placed brotherhood at the heart of upcoming political struggles, organizing an ambitious colloquium on the topic in April of 2009. “The concept, the ideal, the word, the moral standard of brotherhood has perhaps never been as relevant as it is today,” she said in introducing the conference. Given its current relevance, it will be informative to use brotherhood as a lens in examining the portrayal of key events, actors, and values in French history textbooks.

### *Using Critical Theory to Examine Textbooks*

Critics of previously-conducted research into textbooks have pointed to weak theoretical and philosophical underpinnings or at least an absence of explicit discussion concerning them (Nicholls, 2004). The deliberate choice of brotherhood as a focal point of this chapter reflects my underlying critical theoretical framework, outlined in detail above. As pointed out in this chapter, brotherhood has either been pushed aside in the national discourse in favor of equality and freedom, or it has been used by those in authority to promote an assimilationist approach to integration into the national community, quashing difference in the name of unity. Let us remember that critical theory in education, arising from the Frankfurt school, breaks away from a liberal tradition that stresses historical continuity and development. As Giroux (2003) explains, “critical theory points educators toward a mode of analysis that stresses the breaks, discontinuities, and tensions in history, all of which become valuable in that they highlight the centrality of human agency and struggle while simultaneously revealing the gap between society as it presently exists and society as it might be.” Giroux’s comment reflects three of the approaches underlying my analysis in this chapter: a dialectical investigation that replaces a traditionally positivist approach, an examination of human agency in periods of struggle and a focus on a prescription for the future that is emancipatory.

Two important offshoots of critical theory also shape this part of my dissertation. It is undeniable that the recognition of ethnic and racial difference challenges traditionally French conceptions of nationhood, but as Doytcheva highlighted above, recent waves of immigration have required France to revisit this question. I do so in my analysis of history textbooks by

finding inspiration in critical race theory, specifically in Solorzano and Yosso's (2001) contribution synthesizing such an approach to education. They place race and racism at the center of analyses of subordination, challenge dominant ideologies, emphasize a commitment to social justice, favor experiential knowledge and promote an interdisciplinary perspective. As I embrace these principles in my dissertation, I also look to critical media literacy for both theoretical and methodological support. This is especially fitting as textbooks are prime examples of media objects. Critical media literacy is grounded in the idea that students in a multicultural society must be sensitized to inequities and injustices based on gender, race and class (Kellner & Share, 2005). It provides students and practitioners with tools to deconstruct media messages and points of view in order to forge their own, resulting in both empowerment and transformation.

### ***Establishing Specific Inquiry Methods for Textbook Research***

History textbooks are powerful symbols and rich sources of information that chronologically trace how a nation-state presents itself to its citizens. The question of whether or not they are "mirrors of the nation" has even inspired a recent collection of essays in France on national models, representations of the "other", language questions, images, and national values (Verdelhan-Bourgade et al., 2007). Teachers obviously have freedom and flexibility in how they use these "mirrors of the nation" in their classrooms, but they nevertheless provide a significant level of uniformity that provides a foundation for generalization. This is especially true in a country like France where curricula are centrally created and provide the basis for national examinations and the inspection of teacher performance throughout the country.

Although the Ministry of Education does not produce textbooks or assess those sold to students by private publishing houses, the handful of existing publishers diverge only narrowly from national curricula, especially at the high school level where students end their studies with the national baccalaureate examination. Bergeron (1992) significantly notes that there is no integrated instruction of history and the social sciences in France. Today, students take separate courses in “History,” “Economic and Social Sciences,” and “Civic, Legal and Social Education” and content may vary slightly in each of these depending on the disciplinary track students choose for their diploma: scientific, literary, economic and social sciences, or others. Let us note that courses in both social sciences and civics education devote units to solidarity, immigration and integration. My focus, however, remains on history texts and historical representations of nationhood.

For this chapter, I have chosen to take advantage of the accessible history of history textbooks in order to design a chronological study. Selecting books from the French equivalent of sophomore, junior and senior years (*seconde, première* and *terminale*), I have focused this part of my investigation on the portrayal of three periods in the history of France: 1) the revolution of 1789 and the founding of the republic; 2) colonization and the eventual emancipation of the colonies, and; 3) current events, especially as they relate to globalization, immigration and integration. Interested in the evolution of representations of brotherhood within the nation-state context, I analyzed three textbooks from the 1960s, three from the 1980s and

three from the 2000s.<sup>9</sup> They come from a variety of publishers and were chosen for their accessibility and range and not for any justification associated with a particular publishing house.

Although the representations of nationhood have elicited attention in recent scholarship on textbooks, in-depth textual analysis is missing. Nuhoglu-Soysal, Bertilotti and Mannitz (2005) make a valuable contribution to the literature by looking at nationhood in France and Germany in the context of European integration, focusing on how the nation is valued in contemporary textbooks, how Europe is celebrated and how diversity is recognized. They rely on civics textbooks in examining diversity and conclude that in those published since the 1980s, “ample space is devoted to substantiate and prescribe plurality and tolerance as correctives to racism and discrimination.” This conclusion serves as a starting point for my research. Limage (2003) also examines the place for cultural and religious minority perspectives in French education, but takes a systemic approach as opposed to the text-based investigation we present here.

As mentioned above, Rust (2004) distinguishes between methodology and research methods and it is toward the latter that I now turn in order to introduce how I collected, interpreted and analyzed data for this chapter. Noting Weinbrenner’s (1992) critique that “schoolbook research needs to include much more than the ‘analysis of content’ usually associated with the term,” I rely on the taxonomy he created to propose “product-oriented” textbook research that focuses on theory of knowledge, subject content and subject theory. The discussion of results below will reflect Weinbrenner’s understanding of “theory of knowledge” as including analyses of epistemologies, statements, concepts, value judgments and ideologies,

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A for a list of textbooks studied.

“subject content” as consisting of curriculum models, methods and the treatment of controversiality, and “subject theory” principally as a question of problem orientation. I have found concrete examples and inspiration in the work of Avery and Simmons (2000) and Foster (1999). Avery and Simmons’ (2000) study of civic life and its portrayal in civics and history textbooks in the United States, part of a larger International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Project, includes a meta-analysis of content studies conducted on history books in the 1980s and also presents an original study of the “meaning of civic life,” and how “ethnic and gender inclusivity, issues orientation, and contextualization are all part of that larger picture.” Of particular interest are their investigations into national identity and diversity. In looking at national identity, they remind us that “part of civic socialization is enabling young people to see themselves as part of a grander, ongoing narrative.” To measure this, they performed a series of quantitative analyses, counting the number of references to citizens’ rights versus those referencing their responsibilities, enumerating what types of figures and personalities are most represented and examining how textbooks frame a nation’s relationship to the international community. In a similar vein, Foster (1999) studied the treatment of ethnic groups in history textbooks in the United States. He performed a more classical, qualitative content analysis, concluding that despite efforts to portray the contested and pluralistic nature of nationhood, conservative forces ensure that “American history textbooks cling to an idealized image of society based on common traditions established more than two centuries ago.” With these conclusions and research methods in mind, the stage is set for me to present results of this part of my dissertation on representations of nationhood in French history textbooks from the 1960s to the present day.

### ***Results - The revolution of 1789 and the birth of the French nation-state***

The French Revolution occupies a uniquely valuable place not only in the history of France, but in the social, political and human history of the world. Given this significance, it has also been the object of countless historical analyses and presentations since events took place in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century replacing the old order with a new republic. These representations have continually evolved as is evidenced by notable differences between sophomore-level (*seconde*) textbooks from 1960 (Nathan), 1987 (Bordas) and 2005 (Bordas). Before discussing these changes in more detail, it is important to note the amount of attention given to revolutionary events in each of the textbooks. 139 text-rich pages are devoted to the 1789-1799 period in 1960, only 48 pages treat the events of the “eve” of the revolution to the installation of the Consulate in the 1987 textbook, and a single chapter of 22 pages is dedicated to the revolution in 2005. This is noteworthy as diminishing amounts of textual treatment have indisputable impacts on what Weinbrenner (1992) labels “theory of knowledge,” “subject content,” and “subject theory.”

Within the different contexts encompassed by the various curricula, the revolution is framed differently. In 1960, the sophomore program of study includes French history from 1789 to 1848 with minor chapters on England, Europe and the United States. In 1987, the curriculum shifts to include greater coverage of European and world history and is chronologically limited to roughly 1789-1890. Finally, 2005 sees the French Revolution covered, but in a curriculum that addresses “foundations of the contemporary world.” These “foundations” include six themes: 1) citizenship in ancient Greece; 2) the birth and diffusion of Christianity; 3) the Mediterranean of



the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a crossroads of three civilizations; 4) Humanism and the Renaissance; 5) The French Revolution and politics in France through 1851, and; 6) transformations in Europe in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These changes in the framing of the revolution reveal substantial divergences in “concept formation”, one of Weinbrenner’s sub-components of “theory of knowledge.” Specifically, this shift gives rise to two different portrayals of the French Revolution: in earlier textbooks, where events are presented chronologically in an isolated French context, a chaotic and bloody struggle between competing interest groups is recounted; whereas in later textbooks, where the revolution is presented thematically in a global context, a more coherent, more singular and more ideologically-rooted *national* story is told.

Both approaches reveal changes in ideology and political philosophy that motivated participants in the revolution and both address the contested nature of struggles between interest groups; it is their treatment of human agency and participation that differs. This, in my view, will have the greatest impact on how readers conceive of brotherhood. In the 2005 text, the terms “the nation” and “the French people” are more often used, reflecting a more cohesive movement against the monarchy. In the 1960 and 1987 texts, individuals or sub-groups are the mobilizing forces. A concrete example can be found in the explanation of the “*cahiers de doléances*,” tablets in which grievances were noted by the three Estates before the meeting of the Estates General in May of 1789. In the most recent textbook (Bordas, 2005), a stand-alone section is devoted to the *cahiers* with the title “The French People Speak Out.” The sub-section headings, introducing primary source documents, all use the same expression, “The French People Thank their King,” “The French People Denounce the Abuses of the Nobility and the

Clergy,” “The French People Make Propositions for a Better Future.” To the uncritical eye or casual reader, it may not be clear that “the French people” presented here are actually just the Third Estate. Beyond that, divergent opinions from within the Third Estate are not presented. In the 1960 textbook, however, the *cahiers* are simply presented in the chronological recounting of events and not as a “phenomenon” like the French people “speaking out.” There is not a singular focus on those created by the Third Estate and the text even explicitly reminds the reader that “these *cahiers* bring to the surface the extreme diversity of the country.” The 1987 textbook makes two poignant observations not included in the most recent version: 1) “the ‘little people’ were barely able to make their voices heard,” and; 2) “one observes (in the *cahiers*) that the interests are often contradictory between the orders and within the orders.” Whereas the focus in 2005 is on the *idea* that “the major lines of a new world are already being drawn,” attention is drawn in earlier volumes to a plurality of voices and actors. This may lead one to believe that the notion of brotherhood is stressed in recent works as the collective voice is given value by the historian, but the creative communion that gives rise to brotherhood is not explained or problematized. It is simply given as a historical fact. Historiographically and retroactively establishing brotherhood does a disservice to students, preventing them from understanding the dynamics of how brotherhood actually comes about, consequently leaving them in the dark as to how go about creating it themselves. The earlier texts at least allow the students to do the historiographic work themselves, coming to their own conclusions about how brotherhood was formed.

Finally, it is of interest to note how the 2005 textbook grafts onto the revolutionary story interests and values that have arisen in contemporary society since the first textbook I studied was published in 1960. These include emphases on the role of women in the revolution, greater attention to the influence of global actors such as the American revolutionaries or English thinkers, and a historical revisiting of the abolition of slavery. The dossier on the participation of women falls victim to a problem that plagued many earlier multicultural histories of the United States: the added content is disjointed and not woven into the larger narrative in a dynamic way, ironically leaving the story of women more isolated. The additional coverage on the dismantling of slavery is linked ideologically to the same Enlightenment thinkers who fueled the revolution with ideas of freedom and equality. No voice is given to the slaves themselves as the three primary sources include only French “explorers” and administrators of the King. This dossier is even more awkwardly joined to the chronological history being discussed and the conclusion is the vague notion that Enlightenment ideas in Europe led to the end of slavery. The ultimate irony in the most recent textbook is that it attempts to include multiple perspectives but takes on a posture that could be labeled conservative at best, reactionary at worst. This is exemplified by the preponderance of national symbols in the 2005 textbook. The cover is adorned with a painting of 18<sup>th</sup> century French people gathered in the street, waving French flags and passing in front of a statue of Marianne who is holding a torch in one hand and a tablet with “the rights of man” in the other. An entire section is devoted in the 2005 book to “symbols of the revolution” with presentations of the tricolored flag, Marianne, the national anthem and the motto of “liberty, equality, fraternity.” We surmise that earlier textbooks did not see a need for such deliberate attempts to include symbols that presumably unify. Their presence in 2005, instead of portraying

unity, may counterintuitively reveal a forced posture that is attempting to cover up a search for self and national identity.

### ***Results - The Colonial Experience***

France's colonial enterprise began even before the republic rose from the revolution and extended to new continents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The vestiges of the colonial experience have inspired a flurry of recent scholarship and debate in France as is exemplified by the publication of "*La Fracture Coloniale*" in 2005. A play-on-words of the expression "*fracture sociale*," meaning "social inequalities," the volume interrogates the "colonial inequalities" that plague social relations in the contemporary French metropole. It specifically links current social questions like the ghettoization of *banlieues*, inter-community relations, integration and national identity, and secularism and Islam to France's colonial heritage (Blanchard et al., 2005). Interest in such questions has spilled over into scholarship on textbooks, notably in Morand's (2008) work on interpretations and representations of war in textbooks and Lanier's (2008) examination of colonization and decolonization in middle school history books. In concluding that the history of colonization is presented in dually partial ways, "partial" in that it is incomplete and "partial" in that it is biased, Lanier (2008) draws our attention to a "dehumanizing" story and simple succession of "facts." Her analyses reveal the omission of accounts from the perspective of the colonized, a focus on the economic benefits of colonization for the West, the legitimization of Western actions, and the minimization of their failures. Lanier's study, alongside my examination of high school textbooks across five decades will shed light on how the evolving history of colonization and decolonization shapes notions of brotherhood and nationhood.

This part of the study focuses on colonization and emancipation in Africa and Asia and is book-ended chronologically by the 1830 entry into Algeria and the 1962 end of the Algerian war. Covering such a span of time, related events are presented in the sophomore, junior and senior curricula (*seconde, première* and *terminale*.) As with the revolution, colonization and decolonization are treated more thematically in recent texts and chronologically in earlier ones. Another similarity is the central focus on individuals as motors of change in the 1960s and to some extent, the 1980s textbooks. In the 2000s, individual stories and perspectives are presented, but are shown as riding the waves of larger movements as opposed to catalyzing them. For example, in the 2000s, the 1830s Algerian conquest is not even mentioned and later colonial expansion there is portrayed in the larger framework of competition amongst European powers for domination of the globe and its resources. But it is precisely the turning point of 1830 that hinges upon individual acts. In 1960, the Nathan text gives credit to the singular Baron Portal, Minister of the Navy, for deciding to rebuild a naval flotilla to make up for what he saw as disgraceful French losses in the Americas and laying the groundwork for French “landing” in Algeria. The 1987 Bordas text shifts slightly, giving credit to an individual, but one who more deeply represented centralized state power, Charles X. In the decades studied, in this light, the role of the “nation” in the colonial enterprise is portrayed differently. Such a shift is also reflected in the usage of different possessive pronouns depending upon the era. In the 1960s, one can easily find the first person plural pronouns of we, us and our. For example, Nathan (1960) speaks of “our navy,” and “our commerce” and states that “we ran up against British policy.” In the 1980s, reflecting increasing distance, it is more common to find the third person pronouns of it, her and she. Delagrave (1988) comments that by 1914, France owes her vast colonial empire

to “her statesmen,” “her officers and explorers,” “her conquering admirals,” and “her missionaries.” By the 2000s, such personal pronouns disappear completely and the colonial project is hardly framed as being French, but being one of European superpowers.

The mentioning in Delagrave (1988) of missionaries turned the attention of my investigation to the presentation of Catholic forces during the period of colonization and decolonization. It was commonly recognized across the periods studied that missionaries, businessmen and the military forged colonial expansion, often pulling a reticent public behind them. The editorial and apparently contradictory comment of Delagrave (1988) that the regime in power encouraged missionary zeal despite its “anticlerical” positions piqued our interest and reminded us of the revolutionary period when, despite violent assaults on the Church and its possessions, the revolutionaries found inspiration in the Christian tradition of brotherhood. The commonly-embraced master narrative of French history and the principles enshrined in its policies call for distinct separation of Church and State and relegate religious practice to the private sphere. We argue, however, that while perhaps lacking official recognition from the apparatus of the State, Frenchness is often portrayed as embodying Christianity in history textbooks covering colonization and decolonization, especially in the earlier decades of the works studied. Hachette (1962) tells us that under the banner of Christianity, Napoleon III fought for a “Latin” state in Romania, went to the aid of a Christian minority in Syria, intervened in Indochina to protect Catholics in Annam and “adventured” in to Mexico to spread the light of Roman Catholicism, along with business and French political interests. The textbook also explicitly states that Algerians, in order to gain political rights in the colony had to abandon “the

Koranic status to which they were attached by traditions and values.” So, in order to become “French,” those on Algerian soil had to abandon Islam. By the 2000s, this fact disappears from the textbooks. There are several possible explanations for this including shame about forced assimilation practices and the desire to promote secular principles of the separation of church and state in contemporary society. Neglecting to dissect and problematize the role of the Church and its followers, however, particularly in these episodes of French history, is, in my view, detrimental to the goal of forging “new brotherhoods” as Manent (2009) calls for. Also, omission from historical accounts does not negate historical realities. Finally, when these realities were part of older citizens’ historical education, their omission today makes inter-generational dialogue more difficult.

To conclude the presentation of results on this historical period, it is toward one final omission that we should now turn. In Lanier’s (2008) work, she noted the absence of the voice and perspective of the colonized. I observed, actually, that recent textbooks attempt to give voice to a plurality of actors, including those of resistance from within the colonies, but a Euro-centric stance prevails. Today, we are far from the condescending and exocitized descriptions of Abd-el-Kader found in the 1960 Nathan text, but nevertheless, the resistant voices that are given value are those that were trained or spent time in the West. Nathan (1989) profiles Léopold Sédar Senghor and emphasizes his training in France, and his promotion of French language and culture. Similarly, Lacoste (2003) presents a biography of Ho Chi Minh in which his Western training and experiences are highlighted. Not only do Western backgrounds presumably have value in these texts; Western ideals and practices are also portrayed as allowing for the

emancipation of the colonized. A common thread running through the 1960s, 1980s and 2000s textbooks is that decolonization only happened because Europe was weakened by WWII and because the colonized were inspired by “Western” values of freedom, equality and brotherhood. Even under the guise of a more inclusive and pluralistic approach to history education today, Eurocentric accounts prevail. One must wonder how students of African and Asian origin react to this fact in French classrooms and how this might impact the cultivation of brotherhood in contemporary France.

### ***Results - The Current State of Affairs***

Historicizing current events is a difficult task given their recent nature and relative proximity. This closeness, however, gives us threefold access to historical understandings, to current social and political conceptualizations and to prescriptions for the future. The contemporary period is studied in history classes in the senior (*terminale*) year which in the 1966 (Hachette) text is considered to begin in 1914. In the 1989 (Nathan) textbook, the context begins with World War II and in the 2004 (Hatier) book, covers from 1945 to the date of publication. For my analysis here, I will focus on how immigration, integration and national identity are evoked and treated, attempting to place these themes in our framework of brotherhood.

As contemporary phenomena attract the attention of historians and social scientists alike, literature abounds on these topics, including on how they are treated in textbooks. Of growing richness is scholarship on the teaching of immigration, including a special issue of the journal *Diversité: Ville, École, Intégration* presenting the work of Falaize et al. (2007), the opening of the *Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration* in 2007, the publication of an edited volume on



“Migration in the Classroom: Otherness, Identities and Humanity” (Marie & Lucas, 2009) and ongoing research by Hanauer (2009). This is still a young field as most authors lament the absence of coverage of immigration history and provide prescriptions for change. The stakes that teachers see as essential, as Falaize (2007) formulates it, fall around students’ questions of identity and their personal history. “Here, we see a will to work toward recognizing students, revaluing self-esteem and legitimizing their presence in France.” In my research, I also work to elucidate this process of legitimization, the associated vectors of influence between individuals, communities and the nation-state, and also the development of brotherhood in this context.

Questions of immigration and integration are barely evoked in the 1966 (Hachette) textbook despite the fact that immigration occurred throughout the period covered (1914-1966). Since a history of immigration is omitted, let us address the treatment of current events. “Problems for today’s world” at that time included Americanization, the Cold War, the debate between collectivism and individualism and the role of the West in the newly-christened “Third World.” Two ironies arise related to this last question: the editors already warn of the pitfalls of neo-colonialism in discussing international development aid; and one of the solutions they offer to alleviate poverty there is to encourage emigration. This would lead one to believe that France was not preoccupied by “problems” of immigration and integration at that juncture. By 1989 (Nathan) and 2004 (Hatier), these questions had moved to the fore.

Nathan (1989) includes a one-page isolated presentation of “Immigration and Growth” during the *Trente Glorieuses*, 30 years of post-war prosperity, and concludes the textbook with a dossier devoted to French identity, how the “French view themselves” and how “others see

them.” The section on immigration and growth focuses primarily on the contribution of immigrant workers to the economic development of France. Divided into four primary source documents with a minor introduction, two portray immigrants as faceless and inhuman cogs in the country’s economic machine, but the other two reveal the day-to-day struggle of immigrants’ lived experience. The caption of a photo reminds readers that immigrants took on the most taxing and laborious tasks. Finally, an excerpt from a historical essay reveals that immigrants are unequally burdened: 1) economically, earning low salaries that are often in large portion repatriated; 2) administratively, being passed over for subsidized housing in favor of nationals; and, 3) socially, as the victim of discrimination and xenophobia. “He is exploited in work, in lodging and...is the preferred target of collective and individual hostility despite his fundamental role in the economic growth of industrialized countries,” (Nathan, 1989). Although these observations provide a more complete picture and begin to sow the seeds of an immigrant counter-story, they still omit the immigrant’s own voice, neglect to reflect upon how he/she interacts with other immigrants and other elements of the host society, and how experiences may vary within immigrant and host communities. The textbook ends with an examination of national identity that focuses on the diverse nature and history of all French people and a emphasis on the values and principles that unite them, much in the universalistic vein that runs through the history of the republic but with some recognition of difference. In 1989, however, the only differences explicitly noted are regional and not ethnic, racial or religious; mentioned in one of the excerpts are Occitans, Bretons, Basques, Alsatians, etc.

In 2004 (Hatier), racial differences are alluded to but not explicit. A chapter is devoted to “The French People since 1945” and the 2-page introductory section carries the headline “who are the French people after the war...and today?” The spread is dominated by two photos: one is of approximately 50, formally-dressed, perceivably white men and women posing for a picture with the caption reading, “The French people in 1954, as seen by the magazine “Réalités” in 1954; the other portrays a crowded train station, filled with a racially diverse group of casually-dressed travelers with the caption of “the French people today, Gare de Lyon Station in Paris, August, 2003.” No further explanation or textual support is given and it is up to the teacher and student to compare the images as they are asked to do in the guiding questions at the bottom of the page. This approach is indicative of that which guides the rest of the discussion of immigration and national identity in this text. It is superficial, vague and approaches controversy only indirectly. A dossier on “immigration and the crisis of integration” includes 6 “documents” on a two-page spread, one graph, one timeline, three photos and an excerpt from an article from a popular magazine. It is visually busy and lacks logical coherence and a narrative thread. The magazine article presents a glorified story of a diversifying Paris where immigrants easily find work, and the graphics break down the origins of foreigners in France and the difficulty or children born to foreign-parents to access higher education. The three photos portray a shantytown occupied by Portuguese immigrants in 1960, the Algerian-born gold medalist boxer Brahim Asloum, and a sea of signs being held in a demonstration that depict the yellow-hand logo of the organization *SOS Racisme*. The caption of this last photo simply says, “integration at the heart of public debate: a protest of the organization *SOS Racisme* in Paris, September 27, 1997. No context, narrative or commentary text accompanies this. Using a “subject content”

approach to analyze this mish-mash presentation of a complex set of issues, one is able to isolate the editor's treatment of controversiality. The role of the historian and author of the text is limited to choosing documents that represent, sometimes in unclear ways, the multiple facets of an issue and then allow teachers and students to dissect, analyze and contextualize them historically. This has the potential to both fuel agency and cultivate brotherhood if carried out in thoughtful and empowering ways. Unfortunately, it may also be brushed over or omitted, especially as it falls at the end of a senior-year book and will not likely appear on the baccalaureate examination. It is particularly apparent in this case that textbook research may only be a starting point for research on complex social issues and their treatment in schools.

### ***Revelations about history education***

The study presented as this chapter of my dissertation, although focused on the evolution of representations of brotherhood and national identity, also sheds great light on the evolution of history education in France. This is evidenced by the last example given in the previous section and by most of the analysis of textbooks from the 2000s. It reflects an attempt to transition to the “new history” from a traditional approach. Instead of focusing on knowledge transmission, chronological surveys, political and constitutional history, events and personalities, and national histories that incorporate only the largest national groups and dominant cultures, the “new history” has a greater emphasis on “students learning how to analyze, interpret and synthesize evidence obtained from a variety of primary and secondary sources,” (Stradling, 2003). The 1980s and 2000s textbooks include progressively more primary and secondary sources and most, if not all, historical narrative falls by the wayside. It is important to note however, that textbooks

even in the 1960s, rich with the historian's voice and narrative, included an abundance of primary and secondary sources, usually found as appendices at the end of chapters. Finally, the "new history" aims to be multiperspectival, including a "clearer focus on the history of social categories and groups who had previously been largely ignored: women, the poor, ethnic minorities, children, family and migrants," (*ibid.*, 2003). In my view, two problems arise in the application of the "new history" approach to French textbooks. Firstly, the attempt at multiperspectivity fails to fully integrate the viewpoint of those whose voice was previously ignored, often simply adding perspectives to the end of a subject's treatment in a disjointed way. Secondly, the reliance on primary and secondary sources gives the false impression of the historian's objectivity or even absence. It is a desirable goal to put students in the position of historian and to give them the tools to think historically. Unfortunately, cutting out the historian's narrative from the text removes an important and valuable historiographic model. Greater burden falls on the teacher in this context and leaves room for diverging approaches. Finally, the amount of text has greatly decreased, forcing editors to make even more difficult choices about what to include and what to omit.

In order to cultivate brotherhood in a period of significant transformation in both nation's demographics and its approach to history education, France would benefit from considering two questions that run counter to its historically universalistic orientation: those of group identifications/rights and race/racism. Going beyond the 19<sup>th</sup> century's liberal approach to individual rights, "the 21<sup>st</sup> century individual is infused with broad cultural rights reflecting cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. As a result, all sorts of collective identities are

activated...as group rights,” (Ramirez, Bromley & Russell, 2009). The traditionally French reflex to discussion of group identities is to warn of “*communautarisme*,” or the placing of group affiliations above national affiliations. Although this may be ideologically justifiable, the uncritical reflex and the concept of “*communatarisme*” must be discussed and problematized in order for new brotherhoods to come about. Finally, discussions of race would benefit from moving beyond simply recognizing and denouncing acts of racism to exploring the construction of whiteness and the notion of white privilege (Hughes, 2007). This would bring all students into the dialogue, allow them to dissect and understand oppression and to eventually re-imagine brotherhood in a diversifying national context.

## **Chapter 4 - Positioning the History Classroom: A Laboratory for Civic Participation**

The classroom is a unique intersection where public policy, private lives, historical knowledge, contemporary realities, ivory-tower academics and real-world pragmatism converge and compete. This is especially true in an examination of citizenship education where each of these ideas and actors markedly impacts both content and pedagogy. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, textbooks are valuable sources of information in studying what content is presented to students, how it is framed and how it might impact their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and the world. Recognizing the agency of teachers and the importance of student participation in the learning process, it is necessary to move beyond content presented in textbooks to study human interaction in the classroom setting.

The overarching focus of this study, as outlined in previous chapters, is the development of students as citizens. This includes how students conceive of citizenship and how they cultivate the skills necessary to participate civically. It extends to how they understand and identify with the nation and the larger world while maintaining individual and group affiliations. The subject of history plays a singularly significant role in the formation of such understandings and practices. It is one of the core compulsory subjects of secondary education and is the only subject whose explicit aims center around the civic process. This chapter endeavors to elucidate how classroom practices, specifically those in an early high school history course, shape students' identity formation, civic understanding and civic participation.

### *Standards and guidelines for the teaching of history*

Before analyzing data collected over the course of one year in a sophomore-level history classroom, it is necessary to first examine how history curricula are framed and presented to teachers by the bodies that inform and govern their work. In the United States, standards decreed by state departments of education as well as guidelines published by professional associations dictate teachers' approaches to instruction. In France, the centralized Ministry of Education publishes national curricula in "The Official Bulletin." These standards, guidelines and curricula are revealing not only of day-to-day content studied in classrooms, but of larger disciplinary, theoretical and epistemological assumptions put forth by academics and professional curriculum planners. Given the focus of this study, let us turn to those assumptions made in the content area of the social studies.

The US-based professional association, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) defines social studies as "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2012). The "social studies" draw from the wider body of social sciences, including anthropology, economics, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology to study civic issues. According to the association's goals, social studies "promotes knowledge of and involvement in civic affairs." Civics, in the framework of the NCSS, should be at the heart of social studies teaching.

Such an integrated approach to social sciences stems from efforts by progressive educators in the 1920s and 1930s to embrace John Dewey's notions of child-centeredness and distance themselves from what they perceived to be isolated, disciplinary, subject-centered courses (Mirel, 2011). Mirel points to the work of Paul Hanna, a Teachers College-educated



school teacher and Stanford professor who created an elementary school social studies curriculum that extrapolated basic human activities from the academic disciplines and focused on “human relations.” Since then, the role of the academic disciplines within the social studies has been a source of debate. In France, the individual disciplines and their academic leaders continue to reign supreme; no such integrated approach to the social sciences exists.

French students, following a general academic track, are exposed to three different social science courses: 1) History/Geography; 2) Economic and Social Sciences, and; 3) Civic and Legal Education. The third, Civic and Legal Education, is not actually a stand-alone course but is most often added to either History/Geography or French courses and is not tested on the high school exit examination, the *baccalauréat*. The extent to which this course is actually integrated will be discussed later in this chapter. Given that observations for this study took place in a sophomore-level History/Geography classroom, it will be useful to consider expectations of teachers of this subject as laid out in official guidelines.

The official goal of the History/Geography curriculum, as stated by the Ministry of Education, is to enable students to understand the contemporary world through: 1) the study of historical events that have shaped it and; 2) the study of actions societies currently take upon their territories (*Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, 2000*). The title of the History curriculum, “Foundations of the Contemporary World” makes it clear that historical events are to be interpreted and understood as they relate to the world in which students live today. The Geography curriculum, centered on how “men live on and organize the Earth” studies six contemporary themes as they relate to how human beings occupy space. In making these connections to the present, the History/Geography curriculum works towards its ultimate goal:

laying the foundation for citizenship “which at the age of high school, becomes a reality for students” (*ibid*). Presumably, this “reality” refers to students reaching the voting age of 18. The goal of the curriculum is broken down into four component parts: 1) the acquisition of knowledge; 2) the constant search for meaning; 3) the exercise of reason and a critical mind, and; 4) the development of a dynamic and “distanced” view of the world<sup>10</sup> (*ibid*). It is revealing that French curriculum specialists also place the History/Geography course in the optic of preparation for citizenship. Of particular interest will be if and how these goals are realized in practice.

### ***Student and teacher perceptions of the role of school***

Although education ministry officials, disciplinary experts and teacher-trainers put forth visions of the function and purpose of certain subjects and the school as a whole, these are not necessarily understood or embraced by practitioners and students. Data collection for this study provides two unique sources of information on student and teacher perceptions: 1) explicit answers provided to direct questions in interviews and questionnaires on this subject, and; 2) inferences I made as a researcher through long-term observation in the history classroom. In this section, I will present information gathered from the first source and reserve analysis of in-class observation to subsequent sections.

Before looking specifically at perceptions of history education, it will be useful to consider student and teacher ideas on the role of school in general. One of the open-ended items in the questionnaire presented to students asked them: “what purpose does school serve?”, “does

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix D for a detailed listing of themes addressed in the sophomore-level History/Geography curriculum

it achieve its goals?”, and “how could it do a better job?”.<sup>11</sup> In response to these questions, many of the 35 students of Madame Parnaud’s class addressed similar themes. The most popular answer concerning the role of the school (21 out of 35 respondents) indicated that it should prepare students for future work, most respondents explicitly mentioning job preparation. The only other answer reflected in a majority of questionnaires (19/35) was the somewhat vague notion that school was for learning. Other lessons that multiple students claimed should be learned through school were coded into the following categories: living together in society (7/35), socialization or making friends (6/35), individual growth/cultivation (6/35), and learning about the world (4/35). Ironically, only two students mentioned that school should foster “thinking” and only one evoked a “joy for learning.” The most common critiques were that certain classes and subjects were irrelevant (7/35) and that students should specialize at an earlier age to focus on what interests them (5/35). These critiques also surfaced in Likert-scaled multiple choice questions. Only five students found lessons in school to be very pertinent to their lives, with six saying they were somewhat pertinent. Only five students said teachers often made an effort to link lessons to their daily lives. Based on these findings, it is apparent that most students in this class have a utilitarian notion of school and few are aware of the civic and socially-oriented goals put forth by curriculum planners.

Understanding school in terms of job preparation not only defies official, state-sponsored civic objectives, it jeopardizes the larger democratic project put forth by critical educators. It is valuable to look to relevant insight from bell hooks (2003, p166):

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix E for students’ answers to this and the two other open-ended questions (in the original French).

“...education is so often geared toward the future, the perceived rewards that the imagined future will bring, that is difficult to teach students that the present is a place of meaning. In modern schooling the messages students receive is that everything that they learn in the classroom is the mere raw material for something that they will produce later in life. This displacement of meaning into the future makes it impossible for students to fully immerse themselves in the art of learning and to experience that immersion as a complete, satisfying moment of fulfillment.”

If students are not yet focused on the immersive, immediate and fulfilling nature of learning, do administrators and teachers guide them in this direction or do they share a similarly vocational understanding of education?

Interested in the priorities of school officials and students’ perceptions of those priorities, I probed students about what goals they believed were most important for teachers and administrators at Lycée Mitterand. Item 18 of the questionnaire asked students to rank in order (from 1 being most important to 5 being least important) the perceived priorities of school officials. Options included: “understanding each student’s needs and lived experiences,” “maintaining an orderly and functioning school,” “teaching and learning the academic subjects,” “preparing students to choose what career path fits them best,” and “creating a sense of community amongst students, teachers and families.” A simple calculation of arithmetic means, with proximity to 1 indicating relative importance, revealed that students believed teachers and administrators were most concerned with academic learning (1.94), followed by career preparation (2.30) and maintaining order (2.42). Significantly distant finishers were: understanding individual students (3.97) and creating a sense of community (4.37). These were perceptions of school officials’ goals, but little evidence points to students having dissimilar objectives themselves.

For teachers, the transmission of knowledge also often surfaces as the school's foremost priority. In our in-depth interview<sup>12</sup>, Madame Parnaud shared that she liked her students but that "(she's) not here to like them...I'm here to transmit knowledge to them, a savoir-faire." Unlike the students surveyed, she was aware of the additional need to cultivate intellectual curiosity. "To get them to have specific knowledge, that only minimally interests me," she said. She was more interested in stimulating "an opening of the mind, curiosity about what surrounds them." After I asked how one cultivated such curiosity, she responded, "with curricula, studying how different societies function at different time periods. That maybe leads one to ask questions about the importance of human diversity." It is interesting that this mentioning of "human diversity" did not instigate a desire within Madame Parnaud to cultivate solidarity or to contemplate the building of community in the diverse demographic context of her classroom or the larger city of Paris. In our interview, when I mentioned creating solidarity between students, she responded, "I don't know. I never asked myself that question." Visibly frustrated by this line of questioning, she allowed that a sense of community might exist in a select few elite Parisian high schools, but not elsewhere. In her mind, this notion was outside the purview of school.

### ***Why study history?***

After examining the larger role of the school, a more focused discussion of the role of history education is relevant and necessary. Reiterating that her duty was to transmit knowledge to students, Madame Parnaud was skeptical of linking history education and preparation for citizenship. "For me, it's problematic," she insisted. "History is not there (in the curriculum) to

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix F for a transcript of this in-depth interview with Madame Parnaud

make citizens. What is a citizen? We can very easily be a good citizen without having ever studied History/Geography.” She was particularly critical of the political nature of history curricula, stating that “the curricula are made by politicians.” After further probing, it became apparent that history education and the formation of the citizenry were not completely decoupled in her mind. “If it succeeds in enabling students to better understand the society in which they live, and give them keys to be able to understand what surrounds them, it’s in this way that the school can form responsible future citizens.” This supports the ministry’s vision of history as a vehicle for understanding the contemporary world. Again, what most concerns us for this study is whether or not such a link is actually made in the classroom and if so, how.

The six students from Lycée Mitterand with whom I conducted in-depth interviews unanimously remarked practical and contemporary applications for learning history. Many explained that learning from history’s “mistakes” enabled us to modify our behavior today in a positive way. In more general terms, “it’s important to learn the past. It helps us understand and improve the present; it helps us make progress,” according to one student, Catherine. Saman insightfully noted that history was “getting perspective on things that happened in the past from today’s viewpoint and seeing how things evolved and the different stages.” Finally, Thanina contrasted history education at the middle school level and her current sophomore-level course. “In middle school, we quickly learn about the main characters, we learn the dates; we don’t really get into the heart of the subject,” she said. “In high school, we get into the texts, into why, why this happened, what sparked certain events, how society is impacted...” When probed to give concrete examples, however, of how their study of history shaped their understanding of the present, the students struggled. A majority had difficulty recalling the details of episodes or

themes studied. Thanina, on the other hand, explained how studying the French Revolution enabled her to understand how rights were granted and how some citizens asserted that they were as capable and worthy as others. For Aminata, studying the Mediterranean of the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a crossroads of three civilizations enabled her to learn about “different religions and to discover them in a new light than the one we’re used to.”

Having conducted these interviews in June, at the end of the school year, I was honestly surprised to see students making such connections. My observations throughout the year led me to believe that history was presented in an isolated manner, studied for history’s sake alone, and connections to the present were minimal. Given this apparent disconnect, it would be informative to take a closer look at what happened in the classroom over three consecutive months of observation.

### ***Bridging content, civic competence and transformative citizenship?***

During the late fall and early winter of 2009, I observed Madame Parnaud’s class as it covered two units in the sophomore History curriculum and one in Geography. In History, students explored the Mediterranean of the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a “crossroads of three civilizations” and then studied Humanism and the Renaissance in Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Geography, they did a “cartographic case study” on borders, specifically looking at the US/Mexican border within the context of a unit on “6,000,000 Men on Earth.” Using this study’s theoretical framework, it is possible to examine these lessons through both civic competence and transformative citizenship education lenses. It will also be informative to

compare teaching and learning practices with the civic-oriented goals put forth by the Ministry of Education.

To begin to understand the complex puzzle of teaching and learning for citizenship, it is first necessary to consider the actual content presented in the curriculum, textbook and direct instruction. In its unit on the Mediterranean of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, Madame Parnaud's class studied the "Muslim", "Byzantine" and "Western" civilizations and their political, religious, economic, social and geographic properties.<sup>13</sup> They also looked at the different types of encounters between these groups, from confrontations such as the crusades and the "reconquista" to peaceful commercial, cultural and scientific exchanges. Studying Humanism and the Renaissance in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, students learned about conditions that brought about great changes in the vision of humanity and how these changes manifested themselves in culture, the arts, science and religion. Religious debate that gave rise to the Protestant Reformation occupied significant time and space in the curriculum. Finally, the Geography unit on borders presented a case study of the US/Mexican border in which the two countries were contrasted and border flows were analyzed. Students eventually compared this border region to the outermost delimitation of the Schengen<sup>14</sup> area in contemporary Europe. Details concerning these units will be revealed through subsequent analyses, but this broad overview first lays our foundation.

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<sup>13</sup> I have placed the names of these civilizations in quotation marks because I am directly quoting Madame Parnaud. The act of naming is neither simple nor neutral. It is revealing that one group is named for its religion, another for its culture and another for its geography. This will be problematized in a later section.

<sup>14</sup> Entering into force after the Schengen Treaty was signed in 1985, the Schengen area groups European signatories who mutually eliminated interior border controls while reinforcing controls at the periphery of the area.



Reflecting upon this content, it is evident that each of these units studied in class had the distinct potential to meet the ministry's goals of facilitating understanding of the contemporary world and creating the foundation of citizenship through the cultivation of the four core competencies discussed above: 1) acquisition of knowledge; 2) search for meaning; 3) exercise of reason and critical mind, and; 4) development of dynamic and distanced view of the world. They also stood poised to engage students in the "transformative citizenship education" Banks (2008) calls for, one in which students challenge inequalities, develop cosmopolitan values, and take actions to create just and democratic multicultural communities. Finally, content lent itself to the development of civic competencies as laid out in European Union directives. These include but are not limited to "knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights," "awareness of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements," and "the ability to engage effectively with others and display solidarity" (Official Journal of the European Union, 2006). Given this potential and keeping in mind the subject content details presented above, I endeavor now to examine whether or not classroom practices laid the foundation for citizenship as advocated by the Ministry of Education, cultivated civic competence, or provided the opportunity for transformation as called for by Banks. I will begin by addressing larger questions that shape overall approaches to the schooling process, teaching, learning, identity formation and the cultivation of solidarity. I will conclude my analysis with detailed prescriptions for change in history education in which the curricular content presented above will be scrutinized.

### *The Weight of the Baccalauréat*

Starting from a broader view of the school, it is useful to first examine overall aims. Aims and priorities of different educational systems are often reflected in how they assess students' knowledge and skills. Whereas standardized, state-wide or even national tests and graduation exit examinations are the subject of contemporary debate in the United States, the French *baccalauréat* has its roots in the middle ages and its "modern" form took shape under Napoleon in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A student only successfully completes high school in France after passing the *baccalauréat* examination. According to the Ministry of Education, the *baccalauréat* is a diploma which has "the dual particularity of sanctioning the end secondary studies and opening up access to higher education" ("*Le baccalauréat*", 2012). Referred to as "the *bac*" for short, there are three types of *baccalauréats* corresponding to the three tracks students may pursue for their secondary studies: general, technological and professional. Designed to prepare students for university studies, the "general" *bac* is organized into three different specializations: scientific, literary and economic/social. The technological *bac* often leads to post-secondary studies, but not usually in the university and instead in technical and professional schools. It is divided into seven separate tracks, ranging from management to health sciences, from agronomy to laboratory technical sciences. Finally, the professional *bac* is a diploma that validates professional competencies in over 80 areas and can be obtained through schooling, apprenticeship or professional experience. It is a terminal diploma that does not lead directly to further studies.

Lycée Mitterrand, the site of my research, serves students pursuing a "general" college preparatory track of studies but beyond providing curricula for the general scientific, literary and

economic/social specializations, the high school also proposes one technological track, “sciences and technologies of management.” Most students in the sophomore History class I observed over the course of the year expressed an interest in the economic/social *bac* upon entering the *lycée* and were grouped together accordingly. Their first year of high school, the sophomore or *seconde* year, is considered to be a “determining year” for their studies, one at the end of which they will be placed into a specialization they will keep until graduation two years later. Given that they have chosen an “end goal” upon entering Lycée Mitterand, it is toward this that they will work in their classes, gaining the knowledge and cultivating the skills necessary to succeed on the corresponding *bac* exam. The *bac* is a constant preoccupation and the curriculum is designed explicitly to prepare students for the exam.

It is important to understand the components of the History/Geography examination in order to measure the weight of the *bac* on the curriculum and pedagogy of Madame Parnaud’s course, the object of this study. The exam contains two main parts; in the first, students are asked to write a composition and study a group of primary and secondary source documents and in the second, students are called upon to do a geographical sketch and an explanation of a historical document. The French educational system places great value on method and each of these terms carries deep significance. The composition (*composition*), the document study (*étude d’un ensemble documentaire*), the geographical sketch (*croquis de géographie*) and the explanation (*explication d’un document historique*) each have very specific requirements and rigorous methodological expectations. Over the three-month period of intensive observation where I was present for each class, Madame Parnaud spent time training her students for each of these tasks, usually at the end of a unit as a culminating assessment. In our in-depth interview,

we discussed the *bac* at length. She explained how she was obligated to teach these well-defined exercises and she admitted that the focus was on methodology. “In spite of it all,” she said that these skills were useful, but she remained “against” this final examination.

Madame Parnaud’s commentary revealed two inter-related critiques of the *bac* examination: 1) it is too difficult and sets impossible expectations; 2) because of its unattainable objectives, instructors are forced to grade so generously that the exam loses value. It is particularly enlightening to consider Madame Parnaud’s exact words:

“What is asked of the students in History/Geography, and in the majority of subjects...what is asked in terms of theory is very difficult, excessively difficult...many of them can’t do it and so all of a sudden, we’re asked to boost scores; it doesn’t make any sense. In general, it’s too difficult. I consider that what we ask of our students, from 6<sup>th</sup>, even from primary school up through *Terminale*, is too hard. So, we find ourselves with many students who are in a situation of failure, some quit. I think the French system is based on discouraging students; some quit, some get help elsewhere but overall, it’s too difficult. When we’re asked to “problematize” a lesson, starting in 6<sup>th</sup> grade...I don’t know, I first saw the word “*problématique*” in my bachelors degree or even after that. Now, everything has to be “problematized”. Some things I correct are just simple questions and not “*problématiques*”. The students can’t problematize and I can’t penalize them for this. When the demands are too high, we have to grade them in a lax or generous way. They even tell us in grading meetings for the *bac* that we’re to grade generously because otherwise we wouldn’t have enough students passing. It becomes absurd and loses any value. And the students know it.”

Her observation about passage rates is also grounded in aggregate national-level data. The Ministry boasts of an ever-increasing percentage of the school-age population earning the *bac*, from 3% earning the *bac* in 1945 to 25% in 1975 and 72% in 2011, with 86% of those actually sitting for the exam passing (“*Le baccalauréat*”, 2012). One could contribute this increase to a number of factors, from greater access to education to improved pedagogy, but a common critique is that “the *bac* is not as rigorous or as rigorously graded as it used to be.” If this is the case, what difficult exercises are graded less rigorously?

In stressing the difficulty of the exam, Madame Parnaud repeatedly pointed to the emphasis placed on constructing a “problematic,” a task she deemed too difficult and one she claimed not to have seen in her own studies until university. In describing a “problematic”, the National Center for Textual and Lexical Resources (France) refers to it as the “art or science of posing problems”, specifying that “in active research, a researcher does not choose the problems to solve – they are imposed upon him – but he creates his problematic, that is to say, in order to solve a given problem, he chooses a certain number of criteria and elaborates his research approach from these” (CNRTL, 2012). The specific *baccalauréat* History examination task for which the Ministry refers to a “problematic” is the document study. In order to analyze a group of documents, students are asked to: 1) define a notion by relating it to the topic given; 2) explain certain passages from the documents in relationship to the topic given; 3) critically analyze a document by highlighting its limitations or its relevance to the topic given; 4) to evaluate the limits of the group of documents in relationship to the topic given; 5) “etc.” (“*Le baccalauréat*”, 2012). Although challenging, I believe that high school students are capable of completing such a task if trained properly. More importantly, especially as related to the focus of this study, defining and approaching a problematic as such falls directly in line with the civic-oriented goals of both the ministry and the European Union’s framework for civic competency. Both bodies highlight the necessity of cultivating the skills of application, analysis, contextualization and critical thinking in educating for citizenship.

Given the disconnect between curricular goals, end-of-school assessments and a teacher’s judgment of student capabilities, the task falls upon me as a researcher to attempt to put my finger on the source of this disconnect. After observing Madame Parnaud’s class over the

course of a year and witnessing every class meeting during an intensive observation period of three months, I have concluded that two major factors likely contribute to this group of students' lack of preparation for the *bac*'s complex tasks. Firstly, daily instruction and assessments rely too heavily on lower-order thinking skills, specifically on the simple recall of information. Higher-order skills like analysis and evaluation are not called upon until unit-ending assessments at a point when little to no scaffolding has been established. Secondly, depth is sacrificed for breadth as most lessons and the overall curriculum are chocked full of content that the teacher must ostensibly get through. On multiple occasions in my field notes, I compared Madame Parnaud's instruction to a bulldozer, plowing forward through content irrespective of students' understanding or their development of certain skills. It was clear to me that she had a certain amount of content to get through and would do so no matter the circumstances. What is ironic and what I learned only after researching the topics covered on the *bac* History exam is that the exam only covers content from the *terminale*, or senior year, but calls upon *skills* developed over the course of high school. I am thus perplexed by the fixation on content in the sophomore year. A more suitable approach in my opinion would be a thematic approach to content rather than a detailed approach with a focus on scaffolding the *skills* necessary to successfully complete the unit-ending tasks that are modeled on the *baccalauréat*. This would not only prepare students for the school-ending exam, but also for active and critically-engaged citizenship.

### ***School as a Sorting Mechanism***

Regardless of the difficulty of the exit exam or the training students receive, schools are often structured so that some will succeed and some will fail. This reflects the reality that on

many levels Lycée Mitterand serves as a sorting mechanism, setting students on different paths based on perceived interest, effort, performance and ability. The students who graciously cooperated with me for this study had already distinguished themselves from others in their peer group by attending a “general” (college preparatory) high school and being admitted to a high school that achieved some success if not at the level of the most elite Parisian high schools. The famous Henri IV, Louis le Grand, and Condorcet high schools often post 100% passage rates on the *bac*. Lycée Mitterand sits among the top 1/3 of Parisian high schools, with a passage rate in the low nineties. Parisian middle schoolers have a choice in what high school they will attend and rank their top choices. They are also ranked by the schools themselves based on their records and exams and are then placed into a school through a process of matching.

All students who participated in in-depth interviews claimed that Lycée Mitterand was their first choice. When I asked Saman how he chose Mitterand, he said, “it had a good reputation and (he) asked a few friends who were older. (His) mom also got information and everybody said that Mitterand was a good high school with a good level.” Many students referred to their parents’ help in ranking their top schools. Catherine, who had done all of her former schooling in Tunisia was forced to navigate the system from abroad. She relied heavily on her mother who was French and was employed by a French school in Tunisia. Catherine also interestingly said that Mitterand “corresponded with (her) scholastic level.” Already, at the end of middle school, Catherine felt that her “scholastic level” was not elevated enough for a school like Henri IV but was higher than those of other schools like Colbert in the 10<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement*. Beyond its solid reputation, the students also cited geographic proximity as a reason for attending Mitterand. No students interviewed crossed Paris to attend this particular high school.

It became clear that there was a pecking order in the world of Parisian secondary education and that these students were well aware of it from their middle school years.

In the 55-item questionnaire I submitted to students, one of three open-ended questions addressed the role of the school and its success in achieving its goals. Without prompting, a handful of students noted in response to this question that the school worked as a sorting mechanism. One respondent said, “for me, school is like a filter that ranks people; people from families integrated into the system and children of immigrants who work hard do general (college preparatory) studies. Otherwise, those who work less hard or who are less capable specialize earlier.” That student continued to say that school could better support “students who are left to their own devices by pushing them toward advanced studies so that they may earn a better living.” Another student pointed to the background of students’ parents as a criterion for advancement; “school ranks us unjustly depending on the ‘culture’ of our parents,” claiming that school pushed some into “short-term studies without (them) wanting that.” Finally, one respondent was more brutal in his/her criticism of the perceived filtering process; “I have the feeling that they want to kick us out of the system to let the naturally intelligent ones continue their studies and train others for uninteresting and low-paying jobs.” Although harsh, this rebuke is not far from a sentiment expressed by Madame Parnaud above. In our interview, she said “I think the French system is based on discouraging students.” She framed this as a critique but it will be interesting to see how actions she took as a teacher during the course of my observations either challenged or supported this tendency to discourage students.

To analyze the teacher’s role in encouraging or discouraging students, it is essential to first examine expectations. Teachers base expectations on different criteria and not all teachers



expect similar outcomes from similar groups of students. In our discussions Madame Parnaud often referred to her class of sophomores as one that was nice but only moderately capable. “They’re more homogenous than the sophomores I had last year. There are fewer ‘really good’ students. Last year, in a class the same size, we had 10 who were ‘really good’ and 10 who were ‘really weak’ and the rest in the middle. This year, we have ‘middle-of-the-road’ students, but they’re really participatory.” Ironically, Madame Parnaud often referred to how involved and dynamic her students were; I also observed this in class. However, she did not translate this dynamism into an opportunity to shake-up the perceived academic order; she seemed to subscribe to a fatalistic notion that the students’ academic destinies were pre-drawn. The other sophomore teachers described similar feelings. Reporting back on one class council, the student delegates mentioned that their teachers found them to be “pleasant and dynamic” but to have a “*petit niveau*,” a not-so-discreet way of saying their academic level was not advanced. So, the group of teachers essentially told students directly that they did not expect much from them. This may be harsh and hard to swallow for students, but I must also point out that Madame Parnaud did take opportunities to encourage the students. After the student delegates relayed the judgment of the sophomore teachers, she reassured them “you can all succeed; we don’t hang students out to dry.” Madame Parnaud’s words were kind and she consistently expressed kindness and empathy toward students, but I witnessed two major areas in which the History classroom and the larger school perpetuated pre-determined judgments of who would and should succeed.

The first shortcoming was in the area of individualized instruction. A difficult task for teachers is to ensure that all students are participating and that none gets left behind. Madame

Parnaud revealed that ensuring such equal participation was a goal, but I often observed her succumbing to a common pitfall: if students struggled in answering a question correctly, she did not probe them more deeply or help them figure it out; she simply moved on to the next student who was able to answer correctly. I believe that this was done in the interest of time as it takes time to guide students individually and there was a significant amount of curriculum to cover over the course of an hour. This, unfortunately, also led her to call on certain students on whom she could depend for correct answers when time was tight. As a final example of this tendency to value curriculum coverage over individualized learning, she often avoided engaging students who showed particularly profound insights in order to keep the entire class on the same page. Thusly, my first critique is an inability to individualize instruction so that all students advance in their learning. This problem directly menaces the democratic project according to Dewey in his Democracy and Education (1916). He says, “how one person’s abilities compare in quantity to those of another is none of the teacher’s business. It is irrelevant to his work. What is required is that every individual shall have opportunities to employ his own powers in activities that have meaning.” Madame Parnaud actually confessed to an inability to individualize instruction in our interview and somewhat validly blames it on the working conditions at the school. I will elaborate on this at the end of this section.

Secondly, at the end of the sophomore year, the school placed students into specializations not based on their interests or on their potential to succeed but on their perceived academic merits. Most disturbingly, those who came from less rigorous middle schools started off the year behind and were not given the opportunity to catch up. Hashani, for example, revealed in our interview that “originally, (she) wanted to do an ES *bac*.” This is one of the

college-prep general *bacs*. “But I didn’t have good enough grades,” she said. “Since it doesn’t displease me, I chose STG.” This refers to the technological *bac* that focuses on management. She elaborated, saying that most students from her disreputable middle school went on to do professional *bacs* and that only two or three students from there landed at Mitterand. Similarly, Aminata changed her plans at the end of sophomore year. “Initially, I wanted to do (the scientific *bac*) because I was really good at math, but my level came down and I had to choose ES,” she explained. Beyond the general-technological-professional hierarchy, there are sub-hierarchies within each track. For the general track, the most rigorous and prestigious is scientific, followed by literary and ending with economic/social. Not being deemed capable, Aminata “descended” from scientific to economic/social. These changes impact students’ future studies and career choices. For example, Fatima also hoped to do an “S” *bac* upon entering Mitterand because she wanted to become a midwife. It came to the surface in our interview that she had thought about this at length and even spent time shadowing a midwife. However, she explained, “when I saw my grades, an ‘S’ *bac* was no longer possible, (so) I asked to do ‘ES’.” Her career plans have subsequently changed. She still hopes to work with kids but instead as a childcare assistant. Midwife training will not be accessible to her if she graduates with an “ES” *bac*. Fatima and her peers are constantly and demonstrably sorted and re-sorted.

The notion of a “sorting mechanism” evokes machinery and it is thus not coincidental that Madame Parnaud refers to working conditions at Mitterand as factory-like. She recently came to this large Parisian high school from a smaller middle school in the *banlieue*. “It’s a factory; I don’t feel right in this school,” she said. “I can’t leave because I lost all of my (seniority) points transferring here. So now I’m here for 10 years and I tell myself that it’s

impossible to work in such conditions.” I know that she does not have her own classroom at Mitterand and must switch for each class, but I probed her further on what is different and problematic. “The middle school was smaller; here, we have 2000 students. We don’t have sufficient facilities. You arrive in a classroom that they say is equipped with information technology; you try two or three times and base your course on it, and it doesn’t work. Then you give up.” The facility and the size raised constant objections from Madame Parnaud and so did larger changes that arose in the teaching profession. All of these factors actually changed her teaching by her own admission. “The profession of teaching has been degraded (but) not because of anything students have done,” she claimed. “We’re required to do more and more things with less and less time. We have side duties that bog us down and keep us from our main duties: guidance tasks, administrative paperwork, meetings that aren’t very useful. All of this requires energy and in my mind, it’s not what is most important.” I then asked her what she considered to be important. “To have time to correctly prepare classes, to correctly grade papers.” I wondered what it meant to ‘correctly’ grade a paper. She said, “to explain in detail what’s wrong, to have time to re-teach things in front of the class that are common mistakes across papers.” Madame Parnaud pointed out that in her old school she used to call students in during an hour of down-time to go over things. “We absolutely can’t do (that) here because we don’t have our own classrooms and we’re always running all over the place.” It is evident that the conditions and Madame Parnaud’s reaction to these conditions impact her approach to instruction, the individualization of teaching and students’ position at the exit of the sorting mechanism.

### ***The Teacher-Student relationship***

School-wide forces, such as a tendency toward sorting students, shape individual trajectories, but perhaps more impactful are rapports between teachers and student. Teachers' duties, roles and positioning are complex as they are called to serve as mentors, role models, purveyors of information, disciplinarians, confidants and more. In public schools, as agents of the state, they also represent the power and the responsibility of the state. Of particular interest to this study is how teachers' understanding and implementation of authority may impact student reactions not only to authority in general but ultimately to state power. Jean Vanier, founder of l'Arche, an international network of communities for the mentally disabled, describes the dilemma that rises from authority especially as it relates to those in service professions:

“The word ‘authority’ comes from the Latin ‘*augere*’ (to grow). All authority, whether it be civil, parental, religious, or community is intended to help people grow towards greater freedom, justice, and truth. Often, however, it is used for the honor, power, privilege, and positive self-image of those who exercise it” (Vanier, 2012).

Critical educators are keenly aware of this dilemma of authority facing teachers. bell hooks notes that students need teachers who are models of democratic education, explaining that authoritarian models run contrary to this (2003). Freire critiques an authoritarian “banking model of education” and instead promotes an approach to teaching that poses problems that students and teachers work collectively to elucidate. “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach.” He goes on to say that “they become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on ‘authority’ are no longer valid” (Freire, 2007). Such a collaborative model of teaching would naturally extend itself to a social and

political model that brings citizens and elected officials together to collectively solve problems. The question we must address is here is what model and what power dynamics are embraced by Madame Parnaud.

The authoritative position of the teacher revealed itself in physical manifestations from very early on in my observations. Physically, Madame Parnaud stood on a raised platform about one foot above the level of her students' desks as is common in most French classrooms. Not having her own room, she possessed keys for the rooms in which she taught and students were forced to wait outside in the hallway until she unlocked the door and let them in. This fact not only prevented students from taking ownership of the space in which they studied, but also reminded them that they were not trusted to enter the space until accompanied by an adult. Finally, upon entering, students stood at attention until they were told to sit. These three physical representations of authority were not as remarkable or as strict as they might sound and students reacted to them as if they were commonplace, parts of a routine they had come to accept throughout their schooling. Having conducted fieldwork in other schools and been a student myself in France, I would argue that these physical barriers are quite common and not unique to Madame Parnaud's history class. They are reflective, however, of a general tendency toward hierarchy in the French system and the concentration of power in authoritative hands.

The aforementioned factors created physical distance between teacher and student but more significant in my observation was the distance created by language. Two repeated language choices deepened the gulf between teacher and student: 1) students calling the teacher by the simple title or honorific "madame" without adding her last name, and; 2) Madame Parnaud's usage of the distant third-person pronoun "*on*" even when directly addressing

individual students. To understand how this distance is created, it is useful to look to linguistic theory. In decoding political messages, Anderson (1996) elaborated upon the notion of “interlocutor distance,” one created by linguists to explain how features of an utterance may emphasize distance in social identity between speaker and hearer or writer and reader. He notes, “Any natural language offers the possibility of formulating alternative messages that communicate the same semantic information but that either affirm or deny the sharing of social identity between the participants in the communication. Distancing messages are constructed by manipulating (1) the length of the utterance, (2) the choice of pronouns, and (3) negativity and conjunction.”

Let us first examine the use of the generic “madame” as a marker of interlocutor distance. When a student has a question in the United States, he or she will usually get a teacher’s attention by using the teacher’s title and last name, for instance “Mr. Nesbitt.” This marks both respect for authority (“Mr.”) and an acknowledgement of the teacher’s individual identity (“Nesbitt”). It is true that “sir” and “ma’am” provide an option in American English not to use an interlocutor’s last name, but these are mostly reserved in today’s world for encounters with strangers, for example a salesperson or a waiter. Such generic address would seem inappropriately distant for a teacher, someone with whom students spend significant time and presumably build personal relationships. The usage of a simple “madame” in French on some level indicates that students are interacting with a role and not an individual human being, the equivalent in English being the decision to simply call Mr. Nesbitt “teacher.” It would appear that someone who is referred to as “madame” or “prof” is an interchangeable cog and not an individual human with whom bonds are forged. Secondly, distance between teacher and student manifested itself in Madame Parnaud’s constant usage of the pronoun “*on*” when “*tu*” would have been more appropriate and personal. “*On*” is a third-person pronoun and “*tu*” is second-person. In addition to the third-

person pronouns “he,” “she,” and “it,” the French language includes the pronoun “one”. “One,” or “*on*” in French, is usually used in one of two ways: 1) to talk in broad terms about what “one” does in general (in France, “one” speaks French), and 2) to replace the first-person plural pronoun “we” in colloquial speech. Even when directly addressing students, Madame Parnaud insisted on the first usage of “*on*” instead of employing the second-person pronoun “you” (“*tu*”). For example, if Madame Parnaud noticed Sophie gazing off into space, she would say “*on relit sa leçon*”, or “one re-reads one’s lessons.” Commonly, the teacher would say “one puts one’s things on the floor,” “one shuts one’s mouth,” or “one gets out one’s books.” This phrasing made Madame Parnaud seem as if she were perched on high spouting universal rules rather than directly addressing students. This language use is more common in elementary school in France where teachers first start to explain what is universally accepted for students in general. At the high school level, such language use in my opinion is both pejorative and distant.

Interlocutor distance revealed itself indirectly through language choice, but Madame Parnaud also distanced herself from students by making deliberate decisions about content that she included or omitted in her conversations with them. The teacher never shared any personal information with her students even when it was relevant to what they were studying or to her state of mind. Similarly, she did not engage students about their lives outside of school. For example, when Madame Parnaud was late or absent, she did not explain why. When students came back from a two-week vacation, she did not ask them what they had done or where they had traveled. She simply started right back in with the lesson at hand. When students’ personal experiences might be relevant to lessons studied, they were not solicited. Madame Parnaud clearly made a conscious decision to leave the individual at the door, including herself. The only



exception to this rule was her willingness to engage students around their individual academic performance and the direction of their future studies.

No human interaction is black and white and despite the distance created between student and teacher, Madame Parnaud constantly displayed kindness and empathy toward her students. This was bolstered by her role as “lead teacher” to the students I observed; Madame Parnaud was responsible for communicating with this group and their parents on behalf of all of their teachers and the school. As a result, I observed her encouraging the class collectively after student progress reports came out or class councils were conducted. She also made individual appointments with students to discuss their grades and progress in all of their classes. The students remarked and appreciated this. Aminata noted that “Madame Parnaud, as soon as she sees that someone is not well, she goes to see him/her and tries to see what’s going on.” Thanina talked about the important role Madame Parnaud played in helping students orient themselves toward a particular bac. “It’s really our lead teacher that plays a major role. Madame Parnaud helps us a lot.” In general, students accepted their teacher’s distant and authoritative kindness.

### ***Community***

When teacher/student relations are primarily defined by distance and authority, it is difficult to imagine how linkages of community and solidarity could be forged amongst students, teachers, families, administrators, the neighborhood and ultimately the nation. Let it be noted that “creating a sense of community” was perceived by students as the last priority of the school from amongst five options on their questionnaire. The notion of belonging and the creation of community, however, are at the heart of the democratic project and inextricably linked to

citizenship. In enumerating civic competences, the European Union makes specific reference to “shared values” and “community cohesion,” stressing that students display “both a sense of belonging to one’s locality, country, the EU and Europe in general, and to the world” (OJEU, 2006). Critical educators also emphasize the importance of community and promote it as a tool for oppressed groups to combat domination. bell hooks argues that “dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity” (2003). She continues to say that “moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.” Given the value of community to a thriving democracy, it is important to examine bonds of solidarity amongst Lycée Mitterand students.

Let us first look at a traditional vehicle for the facilitation of community in the American educational system: school spirit. School spirit has been historically linked to citizenship as identifying with a larger group on a school level was considered to translate to similar shared identification on a national level. Under some approaches, this could be problematized as an assimilationist approach to community building, one where space may not exist for “reveling in our differences” as hooks calls for. For the purpose of this study, however, I would like to consider school spirit at face value. At this level, it is a tool that enables students to look outside of their individual identity to identify with a larger, collective body. According to one administrator in Texas, “it is about believing in something bigger than one's self... School spirit is about believing that you, as an individual, are an important piece of this big picture, and that what you belong to is something to be proud of and excited about” (Colburn, 2000). Many tools are used to cultivate school spirit, from symbols like school colors and mascots, to shared

activities like sports and clubs. In a historical examination of this phenomenon, Terzian (2004) discovered that students articulated three dimensions of school spirit: participation, loyalty and pride. Participation is certainly extolled as a virtue by critical educators and I would argue that pride fuels participation. Loyalty, I conclude, results from trust and certainty of shared values and reciprocal duties. School pride is therefore a useful lens through to which to examine community building and preparation for citizenship.

School pride is a foreign concept at Lycée Mitterand and as Madame Parnaud argues, the existence of school-centered camaraderie may be limited to the elite high schools of Paris. There are no symbols that unify members of the Mitterand community. Large signs outside of the school and even stamps on student chairs inside classrooms read “*Conseil Regional – Ile de France*,” evoking the regional council for Ile de France, the region in which Paris is located, and not the unique, individual school. Remarking this and the absence of decorations in the school, I reflected in my October 22 field notes, “I wonder how this primary identification (with Ile de France and not Lycée Mitterand) impacts feelings of belonging or pride. I’m fairly certain that students don’t rally around or have pride in their affiliation with Ile de France.” Over the course of my observations, there were no symbols that unified Lycee Mitterand students and there also lacked extracurricular activities through which students could come together. Athletic students participated in private clubs outside of the school. In terms of clubs, Madame Parnaud referenced one club in our interview that organized student trips but she was unaware of any pertinent details. Her ignorance of clubs and their activities reflected both their absence and minimal importance. Given this lack of extra-curricular activities, the school was simply a place

where students studied and socialized; vehicles for participation, pride and loyalty were markedly absent.

Observing early on an absence of community-building symbols, activities and programs, I endeavored to probe students in end-of-the-year in-depth interviews about their feelings of belonging and solidarity. These notions were so foreign to the students that I was forced to give a belabored explanation of what I meant by “belonging” and “solidarity” before we could address their associated feelings. None felt a particular attachment to Mitterand or saw the school as central to his/her identity or social practices. Aminata’s perplexed reaction to my questions about belonging at school reflects the similar attitudes of her peers: “hmm... a feeling of belonging? A little, nevertheless. I go to school there and take my classes there so I belong there in some way.” No particular bonds are apparently formed with the school and it does not persist as a source of pride or identification. I then wondered who or what students identified with and used to create community. The answer was simple: friends. “With my friends I can be myself,” Aminata said. Although students unanimously identified friends as a source of belonging, one particular obstacle to a larger or more universal solidarity presented itself. Students seemed to forge bonds with others who were like-minded or shared commonalities with them. Thanina explained, “I spend time with people I understand and who understand me. I get along with them and I don’t try to hang out with people who I know I won’t get along with or who have different ideas.” Catherine, who moved from Tunisia to France commented, “I feel good with other Arabs, who like me are not in their country. I’m more comfortable with them than with the Beurs that are in France. Often, we think similarly and we have a lot of things in common that bring us together.” This is obviously far from the “reveling in our differences”

type of unity that bell hooks alludes to and supports her position that dominating social forces “make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity.” Some students, however, expressed an awareness of these pitfalls associated with dominator culture. “I don’t belong to a group. In a way, I don’t think it’s good to belong to a group. It’s better to be, I don’t know...neutral,” according to Fatima. Saman said that for himself, personally, “life is cool. I’m at ease; I accept anybody who wants to come into my group.” Since race and culture arose in these discussions of belonging and identity, let us turn to these questions and their treatment in both the classroom and larger school settings.

### ***Race and Culture***

Both the historical background and theoretical approaches to this study revealed a tendency in France to address questions of race and culture from an assimilationist perspective. From on-the-ground observations over the course of a year, I remarked the dominance of such an approach, especially in teaching, but also unearthed nuances in individual students’ lived experiences that may challenge the paradigm of assimilation. In the questionnaire, I probed students to engage questions of race and multiculturalism. The mere mentioning of the word “race” proved to be shocking to Madame Parnaud. She said this “because we don’t define, or I don’t define a human being by his race.” For her and for many academics with whom I exchanged ideas, race was simply a social construct and as such was dismissible. I welcomed her critique and pointed out that I understood the social construction of race but insisted that as a social construct, race influenced social interactions, sparking my interest in this line of questioning. For her, race was not nearly as influential as social class. She claimed that “a

black person with a lot of money would not have any problems.” Ironically, she did not seize an opportunity to share her relevant lived experience that may have justified this position even with me, and instead maintained professional distance. I knew, although the fact she once shared this with me had apparently slipped her mind, that her husband, a lawyer by training and high-ranking diplomat, was of African origin. Like in our conversation, she refused to share this potentially pertinent fact in her class discussions with students. Finally, she felt it necessary to add that she was “deeply against” affirmative action. In line with a traditionally French approach to equality, she argued that college admissions, securing jobs and social promotion should be blind to race and social class.

On the surface, students similarly expressed through words and behavior a conscious effort to ignore racial, cultural and religious differences. Race seemed to play no role in where students sat in class, the friends they chose or how they participated in academic and social activities. I asked students in the questionnaire what aspects of their identity they considered most important, how they interacted with others and how they might be treated differently based on certain traits or affiliations. For the vast majority of students, race played only a minor role, if any, in identity formation. Sex, male or female, was highlighted by nearly 2/3 of the class as the trait that most impacted their identity. Interestingly, the only segregation I noticed in class was based on sex; girls tended to sit next to and socialize with each other and boys did the same. Racially, the students appeared to be very mixed in class and out. It is not surprising then that 32 of 35 students responded that race and ethnicity did not matter when making friends.

The subject of race relations became murkier when students were asked to move beyond explaining their experiences in school and talk about their perceptions of their neighborhoods

and the larger French society. Nearly every student said that race relations were positive at school, that students of different races mixed effortlessly and that racism was not a problem. When discussing the neighborhood, however, a common critique was of the older generation. Several students mentioned that attitudes and behaviors were “changing” or “evolving” but that racism persisted amongst their parents and grandparents. The following short answer from one student reflected a sentiment shared by many in the class:

“I think that relations between people of different ‘races’ are better at school than elsewhere. At school, we need to make friends and it’s good to learn to know people of different ‘races’ in order to better understand them. I also think that adults are more cruel when it comes to ‘race’ because the older generations experienced more racism.”

Another student was blunter in his/her assessment, stating “origins and skin color have no importance at school, a little in the neighborhood.” Although prompted to do so, unfortunately few students decided to reflect upon race relations in the larger French society. In one revealing response a student elaborated upon the absence of race-centered discussions in French public discourse:

“I’ve never really witnessed disputes or debates on this topic because I think that because of the history of our country, this topic is taboo and we know that talking about it can create conflict. Not everybody has the same ideas and we surely need to talk about it, but not all of the time.”

Discussions of race are markedly absent in public discourse unless framed in an optic of promoting equality and combating racism. Race, out of a common apprehension in France of “*communautarisme*,” is rarely mentioned as potential vehicle of self-affirmation or group solidarity.

In light of scholarship and practices of ethnic identity affirmation in the contemporary United States, I was curious to see if certain Mitterand students might be thinking or behaving

outside of the dominant assimilationist paradigm. Two of the students with whom I conducted in-depth interviews were first generation immigrants of Sri Lankan origin. I asked one boy, Saman, if he shared any bonds with Hashani given their similar backgrounds. “No, not really,” he giggled in response. He said a more relevant motivator for bonding with other students was what foreign language they chose to study, German or English, because that impacted their daily schedule and who they were in classes with. Responding to my initial question, he did reveal that he was part of a Sri Lankan association in Paris and that he was taking Tamil language classes through this group. I insisted that this must link him and Hashani. He again answered “no” and went on to say:

“talking of comparable experiences, there was a classmate who was in tears recently because she had a family problem and I understood and felt the same way because my dad died. I perfectly understood what she was feeling. Since I had lived through a similar experience, I went to see her and talk to her.”

Saman empathized with classmates and formed bonds around shared experiences. He also demonstrated a desire to explore his Sri Lankan roots but this apparently did not bring him closer to students who shared similar backgrounds. Culture and language did not translate into automatic bonds but more concrete lived experiences did. For some students, however, race and cultural origins were more relevant. In the questionnaire, one student wrote that “we don’t make distinctions, but I admit from a practical standpoint that it’s better to have friends of the same origin because you understand each other better.” In our interview, Catherine, the student who just moved to France from Tunisia, reflected a similar sentiment in sharing that “she felt good with other Arabs, who, like her, were not in their country.” She said that they thought similarly and had a lot of things in common that brought them together. Catherine made a revealing



distinction between recently-arrived Arabs and second and third generation “Beurs.” “It’s not the same mentality,” she said. “(The *Beurs*) are often more aggressive and they seem sadder and more depressed. Arabs that come here from abroad are more optimistic, whereas the Beurs are pessimistic and have a more difficult life.” This observation reveals that cleavages remain despite students’ positive appraisals of race relations.

Madame Parnaud weighed in on this discussion of race and cultural origins as potential self-affirming and/or unifying traits amongst students. She initially restated her support of assimilation but eventually revealed a more nuanced position. “We function under the idea of assimilation, so each time there was a great migration, say with the Italians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were pointed out and people threw stones at them during recess at school,” she explained. “Then, they were assimilated.” Pushing our discussion further, I talked about different approaches to integration in the United States and she responded that our two countries had different histories and different models. I wondered aloud if differentiation and recognition of cultures of origin might boost minority kids in the *banlieues* who struggled academically or financially. “These *milieux* no longer have a culture of origin,” she retorted. “You have students who can’t even pronounce their last names...they don’t know Africa.” I conceded that they may be unfamiliar with Africa but asked if the intermediate space they occupy might have its own value, understanding or contribution. On this point, Madame Parnaud broke from her embrace of assimilationism. She claimed that this intermediate space did have value. She said, “we’re going to have to take this into consideration because it’s a particular culture. But just like each group in society. I worked in a rural middle school in the middle of nowhere and when we read about rushing to avoid getting the Metro doors stuck on you, they didn’t understand. Everybody has their own culture. What is ‘Culture’ with a capital ‘C’? I don’t know. But I agree that we can’t shun cultures of origin and I’ve always fought for the Education Ministry to

recognize this. I don't consider this to be well-done because certain people are getting devalued."

Interestingly, Madame Parnaud agreed that cultural differentiation might be valuable and that some subgroups were getting short shrift but she saw culture in a broader light. Finally, what she omitted in this broader line of dialogue and specifically when commenting on students of African origin was again telling. I knew that she had spent time in Africa, studied African questions and married an African man but she thought that I was unaware of this and that this information remained protected and private. Her own lived experience could have been a rich resource for our discussion and for our students but it was buried under the principle that private lives should remain private.

### ***Educating for Civic Participation***

Shifting from the private sphere to the public sphere, let us examine how content, pedagogy, relationships and identity impact how students at Lycée Mitterrand participate civically. It is essential to extend an analysis of educational practice to this domain if educators are to fulfill their duty of fostering democratic participation. To meet such expectations, bell hooks reminds us that teachers must not limit learning to the classroom, but instead contextualize learning in the lives and real-world experiences of students.

"Teachers who have a vision of democratic education assume that learning is never confined solely to institutionalized classroom... Embracing the concept of a democratic education we see teaching and learning as taking place constantly. We share the knowledge gleaned in classrooms beyond those settings thereby working to challenge the construction of certain forms of knowledge as always and only available to the elite" (hooks, 2003).

Inspired by hooks' philosophy, I brought up the idea with Madame Parnaud that students need to cultivate an understanding of the society in which they live and asked why this did not seem to

come up often in the History classes that I observed. “We talk about it, we talk about different political models,” she responded. I inquired, “but does it remain abstract? Is it not distant? Are they able to link what they learn and what they live.” Madame Parnaud conceded, “I think that it remains very abstract.” I gathered from subsequent comments that as a teacher she accepted this fact because she believed that it was up to students to make such connections on their own outside of class. She shared with me a very personal example of how she had made meaningful connections in her own life. “I’ve always taught about dictatorship,” she told me. “I had the opportunity to go live in a dictatorship. When I went and I lived it, that’s when I understood what I was teaching,” she added. Excited by this recognition of how valuable lived experiences were in cultivating understanding, I thought that surely she tapped into her own experience in teaching. I asked if she succeeded in transmitting a different type of lesson that superseded the abstract and theoretical given the concrete nature what she lived through. “I’m not sure; I’m not convinced,” she answered. Admittedly, I was a bit disappointed but I better understood her philosophy as our conversation continued. “It’s amongst themselves that they’re going to reflect,” she insisted. “In my classes, I show them certain things. They understand or they don’t. After that, I don’t know; they’re free.” So clearly for Madame Parnaud there is a line beyond which students are on their own in making connections to the larger world.

The official curriculum provides a concrete path toward forging real-world connections especially in relation to civics: Civic and Legal Education (CLE). Although it is not a stand-alone class like History/Geography or Economic/Social Sciences and despite the fact that it is not tested on the *bac*, Civic and Legal Education is an official part of the curriculum that endeavors to “contribute to the formation of citizens,” “one of the fundamental missions of the educational

system” (Official Bulletin, 8/5/1999). In the sophomore year, the CLE curriculum is entitled “From Life in Society to Citizenship” and its implementation is often the responsibility of History/Geography teachers although it is possible that French or other disciplines may be assigned the task. Units covered in the official curriculum include: 1) What is Citizenship; 2) Citizenship and Civility; 3) Citizenship and Integration; 4) Citizenship and Work; 5) Citizenship and Families. In terms of skills students are expected to develop, the program addresses research, analysis of sources, organization of debates, the writing of syntheses and the mastery of notions of citizenship (Nathan, 2000). For the class I observed at Lycée Mitterand, Madame Parnaud was given the responsibility of covering Civic and Legal Education.

Exercising the freedom associated with teaching a subject not linked to *baccalauréat* testing, Madame Parnaud chose not to directly teach the CLE curriculum; instead, she chose to assign group projects through which students would ostensibly address the themes covered in the official program. Through discussions with other French students, I discerned that teachers embraced a variety of approaches when addressing Civic and Legal Education, from traditional lectures and note-taking to in-class debates to inviting outside speakers who worked in specific civic-related fields. Madame Parnaud justified her choice not to teach the curriculum in two ways: 1) she did not deem herself qualified to teach CLE, and; 2) the group projects would serve as a first step in individual theses students would be responsible for writing and orally defending in the junior year. “I have a colleague who does veritable lessons in CLE,” she told me. “He organizes debates, but it’s not my thing. Voila.” In our interview, she explained in more detail why she does not do Civic and Legal Education. “It bothers me because I don’t have the intellectual knowledge, at least at the high school level,” she claimed. “I see that the CLE

curriculum is really well done and it's done by teachers who teach social science and economics. They've studied economics and sociology and law and I have done absolutely none of that." She argued that she had not studied those disciplines and subsequently concluded, "I consider myself inept and unable to correctly teach them." "That was not part of my training." Feeling some sense of professional obligation, she did not drop the curriculum completely. She supervised students as they researched civic-related questions and evaluated end-of-the-year oral presentations on their findings. I was able to return to Lycée Mitterand in June for one day of CLE student presentations.

Since I was not present when Madame Parnaud assigned group projects, I attempted to gather information from students during in-depth interviews on how this process unfolded and what goals might be. "In the beginning, she sort of recapitulated themes that we should cover for those doing S or ES next year," Aminata explained. This particular student added that "we were going to work in groups of three and turn in a dossier on a specific topic with a problematic that we came up with. (The teacher) gave us three themes from which we could choose specific cases." Themes apparently dealt with integration, discrimination and citizenship. I learned that they were expected to use different sources, including personal testimonials and were given time in class and at the library to do this. When I observed presentations in June, topics included "the integration of homosexuals," "discrimination in hiring the handicapped," "is graffiti an incivility?" and "the integration of immigrants in France." It was the second-to-last half-group meeting of the year and I remarked in my field notes that it was warm and sunny and that the proximity of summer vacation was evident in temperature and mood. A relaxed atmosphere reigned compared to my last visit when the stress of covering curriculum content was palpable.

Four groups presented that day and Madame Parnaud politely intervened after a question-and-answer period between student observers and student presenters. In attempting to tease out revealing characteristics or common themes from five typed, single-spaced pages of field notes from that day, I realized how Madame Parnaud's philosophy surfaced in her treatment of student presentations. She simply threw the questions out there and let the students have at it.

Admittedly, she worked to keep them on topic and pushed them in their thinking but she fell far short of the Education Ministry's expectations of teachers. They are supposed to guide students in preparing, debating and evaluating contemporary social questions. From my notes, "she's trying to push them with her questions, but not too hard. It's clearly less important than the history and geography lessons but still an opportunity to learn." "Also, I'm reminded," I wrote to myself "that she claimed to be inadequately prepared in terms of content knowledge to truly guide them on these topics." Madame Parnaud is a conscientious teacher but as I concluded in the section above on the *baccalauréat*, content was covered in some way, but necessary skills were not developed. Interestingly, another theme reappeared in student presentations: no space was provided for exploring the personal, lived experience of students. Not one spoke of his or her experiences with immigration, homophobia or graffiti. In front of the class, as presenters, students respected the same public/private separation that their teacher modeled for them.

Given my impression that neither Civic and Legal Education group projects nor History/Geography lessons provided sufficient opportunities to explore civic understandings, values and competences, I endeavored to explore what students thought of the political process and their ability to make a difference. In short answers to the questionnaire, a majority of students revealed confidence in the political process and their capacity to combat injustices

although many stressed the need to act collectively. Madame Parnaud opined that students were active participants in social and political circles. “I don’t think they’re as disengaged as one might say. Maybe they engage themselves differently, but they think. I’m not pessimistic at all,” she said. Some students revealed how they actually participated. “I don’t think participating in protests and such is really helpful,” one said, “but if there’s a way to change society, it’s for the children of immigrants to work hard in school, succeed and prove that they have the same capacities as them.” Others argued the protests were essential and many cited the need to critically engage the media. Some expectedly expressed pessimism in the system’s ability to change while others proposed creative ways to fight for a cause. “Sure, there’s the political process that can change society because it allows people to express their personal opinions,” one student explained while continuing to argue that “there are other ways to express one’s views like music, literature, film, etc.” For the most part, it appeared that students were making those connections that Madame Parnaud hoped they would make on their own. I would argue, however, that this could have been better facilitated.

***Prescription for change: Developing the historiographic abilities of students***

The subject of History is uniquely conceived and framed to prepare students for active, transformative citizenship. In previous sections, I have attempted to paint a picture of one class’ journey of learning, identity formation, community building and citizenship cultivation through History. What will ultimately be useful are concrete prescriptions for change based on the lessons I observed over the course of the year in Madame Parnaud’s class at Lycée Mitterand. A significant inspiration for these suggestions lies in Charles Lawrence’s pedagogical project in

one of his law classes, described in detail in “The Word and the River: Pedagogy as Scholarship as Struggle” (1991-92). In this seminal Critical Race Studies piece, Lawrence exposes how he and his students arrived at praxis, understanding and acting upon the world together as they found inspiration in the African-American tradition of “the Word” and used it as a vehicle for liberation. He reminds us that “the work is ‘consciously historical and revisionist.’ It recognizes the subjectivity of perspective and the need to tell stories that have not been told and that are not being told.” This is rooted in Lawrence’s critique of the traditional view of the scholar as someone who is “objective” and “value-free”, someone who tries to “clarify the world rather than to change it.” Such an approach directly challenges how teachers relate to authority and how they understand and frame the content they are expected to teach.

In their Geography unit on the US/Mexican border, I intervened twice as a guest lecturer and as I looked back on my field notes from those days, I noticed pedagogical differences between my approach and Madame Parnaud’s that may be elucidated by Lawrence’s philosophy described above. The main ideas studied in this unit were the division of labor, income inequality, immigration flows, the North/South divide, measures of development, and the contested nature of borders. During the relevant lessons I observed, an attempt to “clarify the world” was evident, but it was so narrowly focused that the class missed an opportunity to examine and situate larger questions about the creation of borders, sovereignty and nationalism, questions central to citizenship. In order to facilitate the change and liberation Lawrence calls for, I would advocate for two modifications to the teaching I observed: 1) stepping outside of the curriculum and examining the curriculum itself as an object of study, and; 2) soliciting students’ personal experiences as they relate to the topics studied. My natural reaction when I was first



called to the front of the class was to directly ask students “in your opinion, why is this text part of your curriculum?” In a Socratic way, our conversation organically progressed to include discussion of economic neo-liberalism, a contrast of European and American models, and the subjectivity of the text they were given. In my mind, this was a way of modeling how a critically focused citizen might engage such a topic. It differed greatly from Madame Parnaud’s “transmission of knowledge” approach and her questions that mainly centered on factual recall. Two weeks later when I stood before the class again, I was intent on drawing upon students’ personal experiences in a way I had not seen during my observations. I addressed the fact that one of the main themes of the chapter was the evolution of borders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and asked students what their personal experiences had been with borders and this evolution. Elaborating upon this, I asked if there were cases in which borders had been useful or contrarily restrictive in their lives; had they had any impact at all? From this, I learned about one student’s Sri Lankan family who emigrated to Canada and the disparate nature of the Sri Lankan diaspora. As a class we actually deconstructed the distinction earlier lessons had made between interior and exterior borders of the Schengen area. A student of North African origin shared his experience being stopped by police in Spain and asked for papers. Madame Parnaud interjected that intra-European borders still existed for minors, but the student pressed her on this. He said, “I’m asked for my papers...because I’m ‘tan’.” The class giggled but the racial implications were obvious and the “being a minor” rationale was challenged. Another student explained how many clandestine Moroccan immigrants came through Spain. Had this forum for sharing personal experiences not existed, we undoubtedly would not have reached such a nuanced understanding of Schengen border policies and ramifications on people’s lives.

The History units observed first suffered from an insufficient exploration of the question “what is history?” It is apparently no longer addressed as part of the curriculum. “We used to do it; we don’t anymore,” Madame Parnaud explained to me. “Before, there was a lesson on it, but it was really theoretical for young students, so it was removed from the curriculum.” It may not be a part of the official curriculum, but this does not forcibly impede teachers from injecting it into their lessons and how they approach them. Young students, in my opinion, are capable of dissecting this essential question and in fact need to in order to fully benefit from studying history. Grappling with how history is understood, formulated, framed, documented, used, manipulated and changed will undoubtedly serve students as they contemplate the contemporary world.

The National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA developed a three-pronged approach to history instruction entitled “Lessons from History” that if applied to Madame Parnaud’s units on “The Mediterranean of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century” and “Humanism, the Renaissance and Reformation” would have enabled students to engage the curriculum and participate in a more transformative way. Developing a rationale for history and selecting content are joined to a third prong: principles associated with effective teaching and learning history. These include: 1) chronological, analytical narrative; 2) interpretation of narrative; 3) inclusiveness; 4) pausing for depth; 5) contingency and complexity; 6) exploring causality; 7) active learning and critical inquiry (Frederick, 1993). Although Madame Parnaud and her class did engage these ideas on some level, a more profound and holistic respect of these principles would be beneficial. For example, analyzing chronology, students would be forced to ask themselves why they skipped 300 years of human history between the two units studied. Interpreting historical narrative

would lead them to problematize the distinctions made between Western Christianity, Byzantine Christianity and North African and Middle Eastern Islam in their historiography. Inclusiveness would force a class to investigate what influenced Humanist thinkers beyond their revisitation of classical Greco-Roman texts, such as their exposure to Arab scholarship. Pausing for depth is essential when studying what social and political forces were at play in the religious debates of the reformation. Contingency and complexity obligate students to examine the past on its own terms and not through today's lens. Causality should be the essential question in any study of the onset of the Renaissance after the Middle Ages. Finally, active learning and critical inquiry are primordial in grasping the complexity of history and making connections to the present day. This is only a handful of examples but it provides a framework for examining the lessons observed in Madame Parnaud's class and suggesting prescriptions for change.

Finally, our understanding of history is shaped by the master narratives that we embrace. History teachers must constantly work to understand, relate, deconstruct and reformulate these master narratives. Charles Lawrence provides a meaningful example. He writes eloquently of an important shift in narrative that completely upended his and his students' understanding of the evolution of civil rights law. As Americans, we often view this evolution as one in which laws slowly but surely expanded freedom and power for blacks. Lawrence and his students challenged this and instead posited that a more accurate master narrative would tell us that civil rights laws actually evolved in order to serve and preserve race and class oppression. Scholars and students may agree or disagree with this new framing but the underlying lesson remains pertinent: objective facts are only processed and understood within the story of history and the master narrative that frames this story ultimately shapes what we learn. Teachers of history,

especially as they prepare students for citizenship, must be mindful and critical of the influence of these master narratives.

## **Chapter 5 – Civil Society: Cultivating Citizenship beyond the State**

The French democracy took root more than two centuries ago, so it is not surprising that over this long period, citizens of France have come together outside of the state apparatus to form a rich and vibrant civil society. Whereas previous chapters have focused on the role of the state in cultivating civic competence amongst teenage students through schooling and its associated curriculum, I endeavor in this final data-reporting and analysis chapter to illuminate the influence of community and non-governmental organizations. According to Craiutu (2008), “most contemporary democratic theorists agree that an orderly and viable democracy ultimately depends on the existence of a vibrant associational life consisting of a multiplicity of social networks, associations, and groups.” In his work, Craiutu highlights the fact that a Frenchman studying democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville, was actually one of the first to theorize the importance of civil society and its relationship to the state. For this study, I have focused on two civic organizations and their work with adolescents: *SOS Racisme* and the student union FIDL. Finally, I return the spotlight to the state and one way in which it has attempted to bridge the work of the government and civil society, by organizing town hall meetings with community associations in the context of the national debate on national identity. Specifically, I analyze and report on a meeting organized for youth associations at the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and National Identity.

### ***SOS Racisme***

*SOS Racisme* is a non-governmental organization that was founded in the early 1980s to combat racism and anti-Semitism in France. It is widely known amongst French people for its

highly visible “yellow hand” media campaign in which the slogan “*touche pas à mon pote*,” or “don’t touch my buddy” is written across a yellow hand that appears poised to halt an oncoming person. The organization has its roots in the economic difficulties France was facing in the late 1970s, early 1980s and the influx of immigrants, especially those of North African and sub-Saharan African origin. Events such as a clash between striking unionists and immigrant laborers at the Peugeot automobile plant at Poissy and the *Marche des Beurs*, a 1983 national march for equality stemming from acts of racism in a suburb of Lyon, consolidated the burgeoning anti-racist movement in France and gave rise to this new actor in French civic and political life, *SOS Racisme* (Morris, 1999). The organization was initially led by left-leaning political figures and had strong ties to the Socialist Party. Today, it is officially apolitical but it does receive subsidies from the state for its operating budget as do many other associations that are considered a vital part of civil society. Its major activities include “testing” campaigns in which companies are tested for racism in their hiring practices, legal advocacy, public awareness and school-based curricular interventions. Given this last activity, I sought out an opportunity with *SOS Racisme* during my year of fieldwork in France to gain a better understanding of how a non-governmental organization’s work could either complement or challenge the work of the school in fostering civic engagement amongst young people.

### ***Conducting Research on SOS Racisme’s Educational Interventions***

As a researcher, gaining access to a site is often the most difficult aspect of conducting a study. Secondly, once on the inside, it is a challenge to determine the utility and value of the site in relationship to the original goals of the study. In the case of *SOS Racisme*, questions of access

and utility were quickly alleviated as the organization proved to be not only open and welcoming, but also actively involved on the ground in educating teenagers about questions that are at the heart of my study. Early in the winter of my fieldwork year, I reached out to a young man who coordinated the organization's school-site educational programs, Antoine Deslus,<sup>15</sup> in the form of a cold email. He quickly responded and invited me to the organization's headquarters for a tour and interview. While speaking with him and learning the details of their programming in schools, I asked if I could tag along during one or two of their curricular interventions. He obliged and the two sessions I observed in different school settings and the interview I conducted in the *SOS* Paris office provide the raw data analyzed as part of this chapter.

When I first arrived at the organization's Parisian headquarters, Antoine was standing in front of the building, casually smoking a cigarette and donning what most passersby would consider to be street clothes instead of professional attire. After polite introductions, he led me into the building where a diverse young crowd was actively milling about in a large open space, filled with boxes, flyers, posters, a mish mash of office furniture, random supplies, equipment and a mix of permanent employees and volunteers. It appeared to be a racially diverse crowd but whites in my initial impression seemed over-represented in the full-time paid positions. Antoine was a young man of color but his racial, ethnic and cultural heritage and make-up were not made known. He introduced me to about twenty-five different staff members and volunteers and then escorted me into an office that he would have to "squat" for the first portion of our interview as

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<sup>15</sup> This is a pseudonym used to protect confidentiality.

the small office he shared with two other colleagues was being used. Amidst the “productive chaos” of the offices, we would be interrupted by phone calls and pop-in visits and eventually conclude our interview in his office and include another colleague who joined simply because he overheard our conversation and became interested. From this interview, I learned about the school-based programs, *interventions en milieu scolaire*, in theory and later was able to observe these in practice both in Paris and in a distant, almost rural “suburb” in the outlying region.

### ***The SOS School-based Program – In Theory***

In collaboration with the Union of Jewish Students of France (UEJF), *SOS Racisme* conducts one of its two major school-based programs entitled “Co-Exist.” It is designed to last two hours and is directed at students in the equivalent of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. In Antoine’s mind, “this is an age where people start figuring out who they are and developing their identities.” He argues that this is also an age when stereotypes become ingrained and explains that the goal of the educational module is to enable students to “put their finger on prejudice and to deconstruct it.” SOS and the UEJF created the curriculum with the help of a psycho-sociologist and psychotherapist who specialize in adolescence.

To enable students to identify their pre-conceived notions and prejudice, the program begins by asking them to do a free word association. The facilitator, a trained volunteer or paid staff member from *SOS Racisme*, supplies the students with a list of words such as “Arab,” “Jew,” “genocide,” “French,” “black,” “Asian,” “homosexual,” etc. The students are then divided into groups and a scribe writes down the word associations for the entire group. To get them started, the facilitator gives an example, such as Paris and explains that words associated



with Paris might be “metro,” “Eiffel Tower,” “capital,” etc. While students begin brainstorming their word associations, the trainers float around the room and push them to dig deeper. They then distribute construction paper and markers and ask students to draw or visually represent the words they have chosen. According to Antoine, “it is rare that a class not participate, say nothing or censor themselves.” His colleague Patrick who joined our interview added that “it’s gotten heated several times but it’s never been physical.” The facilitators are trained to keep things “calm, rational and under control.” Patrick added, however that “by definition, by intention, the module works on an emotional level, so it’s inevitable and even desirable to elicit an emotional response.” This often happens in the second part of the module when the trainers try to highlight what they found inaccurate, shocking and potentially harmful in the free word associations.

Antoine walked me through some of the recurring prejudices that come up. He interestingly began by saying that the most heated exchanges happen when students discuss gender stereotypes and what words they associate with man and woman. This is of note because as I explained in Chapter 4, the only grouping distinctions I noticed carrying weight in Madame Parnaud’s classroom were based on gender. Coming back to the primary focus of this study, the word association with “French” is revealing. Antoine often hears “beret,” “baguette,” “wine,” “cheese” and “pig.” I questioned him about the choice of “pig” and he said that Muslim students point out that “French” people eat pork. He says that sometimes they even write down “white” and “Catholic” for the “French” word association. To respond to this disconnect between participating students and the word “French,” Antoine and other mediators often ask those in the room who are French to raise their hands. It is apparently not uncommon for only a few students

to raise their hands. However, when asked who holds a French passport or ID card, the whole room responds in the affirmative. Antoine told me “we explain that French isn’t a skin color or religion; it’s a nationality, but the students respond that they were talking about the *français de souche*.” The only real French people in many students’ minds are evidently those who are white and whose ancestors lived in France. Similar misconceptions also arise when considering the word “Muslim” as many students incorrectly treat “Arab” and “Muslim” as synonyms and assume that veiled women are “submissive.” The facilitators wrap up the intervention by deconstructing these stereotypes, by encouraging students to “focus on what they have actually observed in their lives and not things they hear from others or on TV,” and by pointing out that prejudice can lead to racism and discrimination.

The second program conducted by *SOS Racisme* is called “Roll back discrimination!” or “*Fais reculer les discriminations!*” It is used exclusively with 9<sup>th</sup> graders, students who are in their last year of junior high school in the French system. The intervention is divided into two parts; in the first, facilitators define discrimination and in the second, they speak about how to react if one is a victim. After providing a definition, facilitators break students into groups, give them two case studies each, ask them to read them and decide if the protagonists are victims of discrimination. Group leaders present the cases to the whole class and they collectively analyze whether or not discrimination has taken place. In the second phase of the module, students discuss what they would do if they were certain to have been discriminated against. According to Antoine, “you always have four or five who say they’d physically attack the person as revenge.” He says the other type of discourse is a “fatalistic one where kids just accept it and let it roll off their backs.” In the SOS program, facilitators use Martin Luther King, Emmitt Till and

Rosa Parks as examples of non-violence that have been fruitful. They specifically talk about the 2005 riots in France and evaluate how the “message society took from them was that the young Arabs and blacks from the suburbs only cause trouble and destruction.” They then evaluate how non-violent methods may have been used in the place of such destruction. Finally, the program ends with the projection of a comedic short film<sup>16</sup> in cartoon form that talks about prejudice, *communautarisme*, and racism. It is made by the “Lascars” and uses humor to poke fun at how we construct and subscribe to stereotypes.

### ***The SOS School-based Program – In Practice***

Discussing curriculum and anecdotal evidence from an office in Paris is insufficient if one’s goal is to understand how actual French students integrate such programming into their education, identity-formation, values and civic practice. For the purposes of this study, it is important to first examine how *SOS Racisme* arrives in a school classroom with its programming considering our goal here is to bridge the work of civil society and educational practice. The two curricular interventions I observed arose in very different contexts. The first, at a diverse middle school in the outer-ring of Parisian *arrondissements*, took place as part of “*Les Journées Citoyennes*,” or “Citizenship Days” and benefitted from a tradition and existing structures at the school that actively brought in a wide variety of groups from civil society to conduct programs. The second was the result of a simple phone call placed by a thoughtful but overwhelmed young teacher in a rural and predominantly white school who saw a need for such programming amongst her student population and deemed herself inadequately prepared to conduct it. She

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<sup>16</sup> The film is currently available on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEyxbOo9bdc>

was inspired by a piece written by Tahar Ben Jelloun called “Racism Explained to my Daughter” and telephoned *SOS Racisme*. It was the first intervention of its kind at her school. From my observations, three or four students out of her group of 34 were students of color, whereas 20 out of 22 students in the Parisian middle school were students of color.

Both schools received the “Roll Back Discriminations!” curriculum and as explained by Antoine, this first centered on establishing a legal definition of discrimination so that students could recognize it. In Paris, a single facilitator, Ousmane (pseudonym), conducted the intervention whereas Antoine partnered with another volunteer, Abdel (pseudonym), to put on the program in the rural school. All three used the same definition for discrimination: unequal treatment in an area protected by law such as employment and housing based on origin, sex, age or 15 other criteria.<sup>17</sup> After a definition was established, students were given case studies that included a man who was not hired at a night club because he was black, a woman with a foreign-sounding name who was taunted at work, and a handicapped person who could not access a restaurant because it was not properly equipped. In both school settings, students had difficulty differentiating between discrimination and racism and often confused related concepts that fell short of discrimination, such as harassment, moral prejudice or even insult. This confusion could have led to a fruitful discussion of the social impact of all of these related phenomena, but the focus was strictly legal with the goal of teaching kids how to detect discrimination.

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<sup>17</sup> The 18 criteria include origin, sex, family situation, pregnancy, physical appearance, family name, physical health, handicap, genetic characteristics, values, sexual orientation, age, political opinions, union activity, belonging (or not) to an ethnicity, nation, race or religion.

Unfortunately, the result of such a singularly legal focus is the missed opportunity to dissect the social construction of race and the underlying existence of white privilege.

Given the program's focus on the law, Ousmane, Antoine and Abdel highlighted that discrimination is illegal but explained that it is hard to prove. This is where *SOS Racisme's* testing efforts come into play. According to Ousmane, a candidate is seven times less likely to receive a job interview if his name is foreign-sounding. After giving this statistic, students began to share personal anecdotes of people who were discriminated against or who "even had to change their name." Their teacher reminded them that they recently did internships and asked if any of them had faced discrimination in the process. The school nurse who was also in the room as a chaperone halted the teacher's question and asked, "have you ever thought that maybe it was your CV that was bad and that it wasn't discrimination?" One student claimed to be dismissed because of his race and the cooperating teacher actually fell in line with the nurse, saying "maybe, but you can't always play the victim card." He told his students that it could also be linked to how they presented themselves. He did recognize that discrimination existed, but encouraged them: "you have to be strong and not defeatist." It is very difficult as an outside observer in this setting to know if the teacher was being insensitive or if the rapport was so honest and strong that he could call out legitimate weaknesses in his students. Ultimately, this comes down to individual teacher and student relationships and whether or not opportunities for personal connections arise in the classroom setting. I will address this in more detail in the following analysis section.

As prescribed, both sessions ended with a discussion of how students should react to discrimination. The facilitators discussed legal remedies but focused on the larger concept of

reacting non-violently, using the examples of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks that I cited above. Unfortunately, this part of the program suffered from three common setbacks in each setting: 1) students were tired and withdrawn during this segment as it arose at the end of a long session; 2) the examples were historically and geographically distant and thus not easily accessible to students; 3) the facilitators lacked knowledge of the historical context surrounding the stories of these important figures. Antoine faced a tired and withdrawn group and in turn became more didactic, insisting that “Martin Luther King got things done, but Malcom X got prison time.” In Ousmane’s intervention, he wandered into a tangential and incorrect explanation of the US federal system and shared questionable anecdotes about how civil rights leaders were recruited in the schools of the American South.

### ***Putting the organization’s work in perspective***

In all educational settings, individual teachers probably have the largest impact on the direction and efficaciousness of the course. The SOS educational modules are no exception and this is not only true for the SOS facilitators but also for the cooperating teachers hosting them in the school. In some ways this was quite positive over the course of my observations. For example, one of the Parisian teachers made a clear effort to model for students how to be active listeners and how to engage the presenter. In the rural area, the young teacher showed a compassionate and personal interest in her students’ engagement with the material. On the other hand, teachers’ shortcomings can also impede the impact of the intervention. For example, a Parisian teacher let her prejudice vis-à-vis certain students shine through and this visibly affected how they participated in the module. She explicitly said that one student who was refused a job

at an electronics store deserved it and that he “needed to get over it; it’s not because he’s black.” She continued to say that “the two in front, the black with the big mouth and the Arab, are violent criminals and that they never come to class. Plus, they smoke so much dope that they are never really here.” Her comments may be grounded in some reality, but they are hard to swallow given the presentation’s focus on racism and discrimination and given the importance of establishing personal relationships based on trust in order for education to truly take place.

A two-hour intervention by outside presenters will obviously have its limitations, but Antoine and his central office colleague, Patrick, emphasized the “consciousness-raising” they have witnessed in the numerous classrooms they visited. I am not sure that it often meets Freire’s criteria for conscientization or how much students understand the dynamics of oppression, but Antoine underlined one specific anecdote in our interview. He spoke of a child from a department known for its rough reputation (93) who went to summer camp and had other students refuse to bunk with him based on where he was from. The same child later in the SOS program said “a faggot lives next to me and I don’t want to take the elevator with him.” Antoine pointed out that the child committed the same judgment he had previously complained about. The child reportedly recognized “crap, I did the same thing.” These “light bulb” moments may occur and demonstrate opportunities often lost in the traditional classroom setting but Antoine and Patrick do not place their complete faith in the short educational interventions of SOS Racisme. In both of their minds, the only real solution can be found in population mixing, in a deliberate effort to maintain communities that are racially, culturally and socio-economically heterogeneous. This reflects the need for other public and private institutions outside of the

education sector to focus on the social problems that give rise to discrimination, plant obstacles to civic engagement and impede student learning.

### ***Unionizing as a student – the FIDL***

France has a long tradition of organized labor, tracing its history back to the country's reaction to the Industrial Revolution that began in Britain. Today in the field of education, teachers unions exert significant pressure on the executive and legislative branches of government at each moment that reforms are proposed. Inspired by their teachers and historic events that gave rise to massive student mobilizations, students both at the high school and university levels have formed similar "unions" to advocate for student rights and better learning conditions. The FIDL, or Independent and Democratic (High School) Student Federation was founded in 1987 as the consolidation of an organic movement that assembled to protest the Devaquet laws, legislation that sought to make university admissions a selective process in France. From its beginnings, the FIDL has been closely linked with the racial equality movement, especially with the organization *SOS Racisme*. It remains one of a handful of active student unions in France today and played a particularly visible role during my year of fieldwork in organizing protests and school blockages; the Ministry of Education was proposing a massive overhaul of the curriculum and the suppression of thousands of teaching posts.

I visited the headquarters of the FIDL in Paris' 19<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* after hearing one of its leaders intervene at the youth debate on national identity sponsored by the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and National Identity. Similar to *SOS Racisme*, the organization's headquarters were located in a diverse "outer-ring" district in a semi-industrial bare-bones space.



The FIDL's offices did not share the size or hustle and bustle of its anti-racist counterpart, but a handful of bright-eyed and dedicated students were working diligently and hopefully when I popped in for my interview. Mathieu DaSilva (pseudonym) invited me to come and speak to him after I introduced myself at the post-national identity debate cocktail hour. He proudly spoke to me of the union's history, membership and activities over the course of an hour and a half and then invited me to the FIDL national congress later that spring.

The FIDL experienced a moment of renewal in 2009 as students rallied against curricular and staffing reforms at the high school level. "Kids are more active," Mathieu told me, highlighting that the FIDL was present in 60 *départements* across the country and included 7,000 members on its mailing list, 1,000 active members and 500 registered for the national congress. Some scholars have critiqued the representativity of such unions given the large population of over 2 million high school students and the roughly 5,000 members of each union (Rollot, 2008). The same scholars do concede that if the leadership and local delegates are active that unions can make their voices heard. This appeared to be the case with Mathieu who boasted of his recent meeting with the Minister of Education and of the FIDL's role in the national movement against the education reform legislation. They have actively recruited new members through participation in festivals like Solidays, *Fête de l'Humanité* and Gay Pride, through supporting local grass-roots organizations and through their partnership with *SOS Racisme*. Mathieu explained that members register with the union for a number of reasons and in different ways: some stumble upon it, others know students in their schools who are active, while others hear teachers or the press speak of the FIDL and many get recruited by active members at protests. "They come from all walks of life," Mathieu said, "from wealthy neighborhoods to ghettos to the

countryside.” Most tend to have left-leaning political views or are apolitical. I probed Mathieu about what led him to become more active. “I was at a protest when I was younger and my sister was participating in the movement. I Google searched student unions and found the one that was closest to me,” he explained. He told me that his parents were politically active and that he is doing an Economics/Social Science baccalaureate. Interestingly, he revealed that he did not like school and that he found it too theoretical and distant; he even failed a grade and had to repeat. As a result, he has thrown himself into the work of the union and struggles to juggle this and his school obligations.

FIDL works on a variety of issues and sponsors campaigns and activities on violence prevention, drug and alcohol abuse, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, homophobia, and immigration. Concretely, they produced a manual on violence prevention for school libraries and an accompanying video that is available on line. To incite student participation and engagement, FIDL organized a graphic design contest for a violence prevention poster it would hang up in schools throughout the country. Coincidentally, a similar campaign was at the heart of Mathieu’s meeting with the Education Minister; the union was called upon to design an anti-homophobia poster for schools in the context of the ministry’s campaign to fight discrimination. To combat AIDS, FIDL leaders distributed condoms at student protests and in certain schools whose principals agreed. The union has organized public meetings and small group discussions on drug abuse, immigration and homophobia. Its largest activity outside its organization of protests is its biannual national congress.

***“A weekend to change everything”***

In the early spring, the union organized its biannual congress in Lyon around the theme “a weekend to change everything.” The agenda was ambitious and included: 1) entertainment; 2) plenary sessions on violence and homophobia; 3) workshops on diversity, access to education, immigration, civic education, health, the environment, and educational technology; 4) training sessions on unionizing; 5) elections; 6) platform development; 7) film screenings, and; 8) many opportunities for socializing and networking. Mathieu’s prediction of about 500 attendees proved correct and when I first arrived at the community center, it appeared as if I had found what I was looking for: a forum in which diverse students shared their voices, lived experiences and ideas to shape their communities and their education. Not surprisingly, the end result was not as perfect or as transformative as I had hoped, but the congress held promise.<sup>18</sup> The crowd was very mixed, casual, racially diverse and energetic. The room was full, literally standing room only for the first plenary session and the spoken French I heard would be associated by most with “street French” and not the French one is encouraged to speak in political circles or the nation’s *Grandes Écoles*. To this bountiful and diverse crowd, the first speaker and one of the student organizers gave the first *mot d’ordre*: participate! “The goal is to create proposals this weekend and I want you all to participate and voice your thoughts; this is an association of the students,” she said. She encouraged them to prove that youth are engaged even though stereotypes insist that they are not. In light of these hopeful and optimistic messages, I was curious to see if the weekend played out as she and the other organizers had envisioned.

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix G for a public interest piece I wrote on my experience at the FIDL conference for the UCLA Social Science and Comparative Education Newsletter, Vol. 2 No. 1.

After opening remarks and a racy comedy show to get the crowd going, the first plenary session tackled violence and centered on the notion of “respect.” The panel included three high school students and three adults. The students were FIDL leaders and the adults came from *SOS Racisme*, a national PTA group and mid-sized municipal government. Certain themes emerged across the panelists’ interventions. Firstly, dialog and increased psychological support in the schools was put forward as a healthier and more productive alternative to the repressive measures students found at their schools after episodes of violence: video surveillance cameras, locked gates and an increased police presence. Secondly, two different panelists stressed the need to promote cooperation instead of competition at school. Finally, a common observation was that teachers and support staff needed more training in how to prevent and deal with violent conflict. Although these ideas held promise and the day’s earlier instructions were for students to actively participate, by midway through the first speaker, I witnessed at least 50 students leave. Many of the speeches were long and too academic to engage a teenage audience. Instead of listening to the young audience or addressing its needs, one of the FIDL leader’s preferred responses was to “shush” the crowd and scold them for being disrespectful. No one was clearly able to re-center the debate or re-focus the participants’ attention. Witnessing this, I wanted to dig deeper into how the students were responding in their own minds to the day’s proceedings.

At lunch, I randomly approached groups of students while they were eating, introduced myself and my work and asked them what brought them to the conference and what they thought of what they had witnessed up until that point. The groups I approached were all racially mixed and represented the north, west and south of France, Lille, Rennes and Marseille. The first group “came for the debate, to listen.” They claimed that the first plenary session was interesting but

they said they were tired and that is why they did not participate much. They had traveled a long way and needed to eat, they said. I wondered if they were active back home when they were well-rested and their bellies were full. “We participate in protests and school blockages,” they said. When I pushed them and asked if these types of events could have an impact, they said “yes if it were happening all over France. The bigger the numbers, the larger the impact.” A second group, comprised only of young men, came from Marseille. They were a wily bunch who seemed to have been dragged to the conference as they were not engaged in the proceedings, incessantly clowning around and only wanted to talk about the evening’s Olympique Marseille soccer match. They said that one of their classmates signed them up and since it was a free trip to Lyon and they had never been there before, they thought they would check it out. On the opposite end of the engagement spectrum was a young girl from Brittany who led a local FIDL chapter there. “I work a lot on engaging young people,” she told me. “I have already been elected to the student advisory council in my local school district. Belonging to FIDL is very dear to my heart. It took me a long time to get here from Brittany, four hours in a train and then 6 hours in a bus. Given the problems facing kids, the FIDL makes me feel useful. When I see how the organization helps students who are expelled and then deported to their countries of origin or other students who are bullied or beaten up by a band of young FN members...” The final group I solicited included two thoughtful newcomers who had been persuaded to come by a friend of theirs from school. They were ES students and had learned about unions at school and wanted to see the inner workings from themselves. They thought it was “premature to give an impression of the conference since we’ve only had one plenary session and haven’t started the workshops yet,” but they were anxious to see more. So was I. Overall, I witnessed many kids in

the lobby eating, playing cards and chatting. Although they were not necessarily talking politics, at least they were mixing and interacting. A certain solidarity was forming and “Frenchness” was shared across racial groupings and geographic/cultural regions of origin; black and white, *Lillois* and *Lyonnais* became one group.

The remaining civics education workshop and homophobia plenary session proved to be the most revealing and most relevant to my research. The workshop took place in a small room that could only fit about 30 participants and there was a line out the door of those wanting to get in; unfortunately, every attendee was white except for one. The racial diversity I observed at lunch had disappeared. The “workshop” took the same form as the plenary session, just on a smaller school. Students sat in rows facing panelists and mainly listened until a final question and answer period. By the end of the lengthy “discussion,” only 15 students remained in the room with the four panelists. The content of the workshop focused on mechanisms that allowed for student participation in schools and in larger regional consultative councils organized by the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, much of the information focused on insider politics and was dominated by young social climbers who had mastered the lingo, abbreviations and human capital network in order to gain access. An innocent and thoughtful audience member regretted that these things were not taught in ECJS classes at school. Others echoed her comment, insisting that ECJS was a joke. This is interestingly supported by what I observed in Madame Parnaud’s classroom. One teacher on this particular FIDL panel shared valuable insight on the curricular reform proposed by the Sarkozy government. Economic and social sciences were to no longer be required for those doing a science baccalaureate. He said “SES is targeted for its subversive potential because it exposes truths that contradict the official message. For example,

we don't have a real meritocracy and that most power relationships suffer from domination.”

This man had real potential to raise the consciousness level of those in the room, but his participation was limited and the overall content got weighed down by internal union politics.

The biggest letdown occurred on the last day when a plenary session on homophobia nearly turned into a brawl. The room was only 20% full as many conference attendees were tired from too much socializing the night before. The FIDL “insiders” were present and a bunch of stragglers filled some of the other seats. It began with the similar format of panelists, separated from the crowd by tables, speaking at the audience instead of with them. They spoke of vague notions of living together and accepting diversity and opened the floor to questions. At this point, one young man said he did not have to accept “faggots.” “For us, it’s a sin,” he said. Another boy bravely stood up and responded, “you still need to be respectful; Islam doesn’t say to discriminate.” Unfortunately, this began a back and forth that spiraled out of control and had students standing, pointing fingers and getting in each other’s faces. One of the panelists, who struggled desperately to facilitate, tried to remind them of the secular nature of French politics and the inappropriateness of citing religious justifications. However, his soft-spoken and academic comment was barely audible and those who did hear it seemed to dismiss it. For this small group of homophobes, the issue was black and white and it came out in an answer to the question, “would you rather have two loving gay parents or two violent straights?” A young Arab girl yelled out, “I’d rather be alone.” Her friend continued by saying, “it’s society that makes people gay.” At this point, I disappointedly saw the promise of the conference evaporate and watched the “debate” continue to degenerate. Some people left crying, others left angry. The panel sat there in dismay and no “head organizer” from the FIDL came in to save the day or

refocus the discussion. Eventually all fizzled out and there was no conclusion to the panel as the room completely emptied out.

The debacle that occurred brought to the surface my major critique of the weekend: in what could have been a valuable educational setting, no real teachers were present. Most panels were populated by students, elected officials and leaders of community organizations, none with any pedagogical training. A few teachers made appearances on panels but they were not these kids' teachers. In order to teach students, you must know them and first establish a climate of safety and trust. In this setting, real education was impossible. The foundations for a grass-roots movement were present but at the end of the day, it came down to leadership and unfortunately, leadership was sorely lacking.

### ***The Youth Debate on National Identity***

Whereas *SOS Racisme* and FIDL represent civic engagement from the ground up, it is also possible for the state to play an active role in stimulating civil society. As a part of the National Debate on National Identity, organized by President Sarkozy's Minister of Immigration, Integration and National Identity Eric Besson, youth were called to participate in their own special session of the debate at the ministry itself. As mentioned in previous sections of this dissertation, local debates took place in town halls and public buildings across France with delegates reporting back to the ministry. In the case of the youth debate, the minister was present and served as a panelist alongside Azzedine Jabr, a young elected official at the municipal level and member of the RED (*Réseau des élus de la diversité*) network and Alexandre Brugere, leader of a youth collective called "France à Venir." The crowd gathered in



the palatial ministry room of large mirrors, gold-leaf molding, crystal chandeliers, parquet floors and gold-threaded curtains appeared to include mostly twenty-somethings although a few teenagers could be spotted. The crowd was predominantly white with a spattering of visible minorities who seemed to be seated in small clusters based on ethnicity. The room overflowed, but I am not sure that the debate was as “public” as advertised. Most in attendance were clearly young politicians who worked in government and I even recognized some faces and future-politician handshakes from my days at Sciences Po. It was also reported in the *Nouvel Obs*<sup>19</sup> of the following day that only right-leaning associations and elected officials had been invited to attend. It is clear that politics will often work to limit access to serve its own interests and that civic engagement will attract citizens by varying degrees but if the goal is to create a more active civil society and widen participation, this debate was not achieving that goal at least in the immediate term. It did not help that the minister appeared bothered, impatient and condescending throughout most of the proceedings.

Since the debate was sponsored by youth organizations and targeted a young audience, it was left to Brugere to start the introductions and frame the debate. He claimed that “the French people are interested and passionate about this debate. It’s a popular success due in part to the youth.” Young people, in his mind, have a unique and trailblazing voice as they often refuse to follow carved out paths. His approach to the question of national identity encompassed three main points: 1) the nation is not static; it has changed along with the world and created a new, ‘mixed’ generation; 2) the republic as a principle is beyond reproach but it has struggled recently

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<sup>19</sup> <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/contre-debat-sur-l-identite-nationale/20091208.OBS0042/des-jeunes-de-la-diversite-oui-mais-de-droite.html>

to foster cohesion as exemplified by the fact that only 10% of students at the elite *Grandes Écoles* come from underserved communities; 3) France has a proud past of receiving immigrants and immigrants make significant contributions to French society. To follow up, Jabr introduced himself and told the audience that minorities must be elected to office and that elected officials must be representative of the French people as a whole. “The French people have always come from elsewhere,” he said, reminding the audience of the most famous Frank, Clovis. “What unites us,” he concluded “are our values.” At that point, the Minister arose and asked the collective France à Venir to present its proposals.

I will outline the proposals here, but it is first necessary to give background on the “collective.” I was able to interview Alexandre Brugere a few months after the debate and at that point it became clear to me that “France à Venir” was not a ground-up civic association, but a group chosen and assembled by the UMP, President Sarkozy’s political party. Brugere had been chosen to lead it because he was the president of a local chapter of the Young UMP. This was not clear at the time of the debate and this was not explicitly explained to the audience; some in the room were undoubtedly confused as some of the collective’s proposals were even moderately left-leaning. For example, its first proposal was to sponsor a 3-week training course for all high school graduates right after graduation in which they would share personal perspectives and be trained in solidarity and “national cohesion.” The details were ambiguous on what this course would look like, but the Sarkozy-appointed Minister applauded it for its potential to lower rates of crime and tax evasion. Although a right-wing approach may have been buried under the surface of the first proposal, such leanings were evident in the following two. Firstly, the collective insisted that all French youth master the French language and pass a proficiency test in

the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Immigrants would have their own test as “illiteracy rates are high and this prevents social cohesion.” Finally, Brugere and France à Venir (in reality, the Young UMP in disguise) called for systematized and regular “welcoming ceremonies” to the nation in which the oath to the nation “goes further” and in which “people are asked to express themselves on what it means to be French.” Going along with this, he said there should be a national calendar for commemorations, including important dates in French history like November 11, May 8, July 14, etc. Some of the details of these proposals were quite reactionary, especially coming from the younger generation, but it would be interesting to examine how the room reacted, especially if a truly diverse sample had been allowed to attend.

Responses from the crowd reflected general ideas about the larger national debate and not a critique of the specific proposals outlined by Brugere. The first speaker from the audience question-and-answer portion applauded the efforts of young people but insisted that the older generation must change its mentality and actions too. He also reminded the room of the racism that exists in France and pointed particularly to the *cités*, which he claimed had been neglected. Another participant in the crowd shared his personal struggles growing up between social services and foster families. “I don’t know what France is, except violence and racism,” he said. Others spoke of disproportionate amounts of police controls and identity checks for minorities while adding that the police had failed to make their neighborhoods safe. One young woman brought up the problems of illiteracy and drop-out rates amongst minorities and invited Alexandre to come and see for himself the reality of her neighborhood. The woman sitting next to her exclaimed that the debate should not be about national identity but about national unity. A Frenchman of Arab descent argued that “integration” was not applicable to him because he was

“born here” and wished that “this debate wouldn’t force people to identify with certain communities.” He claimed to be a “product of French meritocracy” and defended the idea that people should be considered on merit alone. One of the final voices of the public came from Mathieu of the FIDL. He voiced a concern that this debate was supposed to bring together young people but he felt that it had failed to do this. For him, the question of today should not address “what it means to be French” but instead should tackle “what it means to be European.”

The Minister and his two young co-panelists reacted to these questions and concerns in a back-and-forth that lasted nearly two hours. Many of these reactions reflected larger questions that have been raised throughout the course of this dissertation, for example how can diversity be recognized if no ethnic statistics are allowed to be collected and what space exists for difference within what is considered to be French. Besson began his remarks with a nostalgic revisiting of a recent trip to Brazil. He contrasted the French national holiday, which is predominantly military-focused and which he considered to be “nice and impressive, but strict,” to the Brazilian holiday in which Samba dancers and athletes parade alongside politicians. “We can’t reproduce this,” he said “but we need to give a civic sense back to this holiday.” Overall for the Minister, the debate should not just be about immigration but should extend to larger questions of solidarity, global governance, the role of France in the European Union, and the juggling of multiple identities. It is interesting that the Minister left space for multiple identities as the dominant discourse coming from the Elysée at that time centered on what commonalities united and bound the French people together. This may come from his own birth in Morocco to mixed parents, but it did not push him to stray from the UMP’s “anti-communitarian” line. Pointing to the example of a Muslim identity, he posed “the question is whether or not belonging to a

Muslim community is more important than being French.” For Besson, it is primordial that citizens’ primary identification be with the French republic. He recognized that integration of all people into the republic has not occurred seamlessly, “but it has worked.” In responding to a critique of injustice in the *cit *, he said “I do not contest the social reality that you have described.” Jabr chimed in and said “we have two options: accept it or work for change.” Besson added that “we need to value and reinforce meritocracy and equality of opportunity.”

As exemplified by the panelists’ remarks and those of the audience, the ongoing “debate” on national identity is fluid and lacks a singular focus. The actual meeting at the ministry was more political theater than productive policy consultation but it did reveal larger questions that the French people must address. Ultimately, the shared goals of all parties seem to integrate notions of equality and national cohesion. Questions arise and divergence occurs when remedies or prescriptions for change are put forward.

### ***What role for civil society in educating young people about citizenship?***

It became evident in earlier chapters that neither textbooks nor classroom teaching sufficiently prepare students to engage in the transformative citizenship education that Banks proposes. This should not be surprising as no individual educational opportunity can mimic or simulate the complex web of social and political interactions in which young adults will take part after graduation or after reaching voting age. Each plays a role but it is important to look outside the school and consider here how civil society may impact the civic education of young people in a transformative way, keeping in mind Banks’ call to challenge inequality, develop cosmopolitan values and create just and democratic multicultural communities (2008).

Students must first be exposed to and learn about the multitude of actors that make up civil society. The appropriate place for such exposure seems to be the classroom. I am reminded of the young duo I met in Lyon who mentioned studying unions in their social science course and subsequently sought out an opportunity to examine the inner workings for themselves by attending the FIDL conference. It is important, however, for this to descend from the abstract and become concrete for students for them to truly understand and appreciate what civil society does. Therefore, it is necessary to have some sort of bridge between the theoretical work done in the classroom and the pragmatic work done on the ground. This could take the form of a class assignment requiring students to attend an organizational meeting and report back or learning could happen in the opposite way; organizations could make an explicit attempt to connect their work to the lessons that appear in the school curriculum. If people and ideas pass back and forth between the two spheres, the most meaningful learning and engagement will take place.

Secondly, adults who facilitate youth participation in unions and community organizations need to be trained in the pedagogical and psycho-social needs of students and in best practices for teaching adolescents. Training is only one required ingredient, however. As analyses revealed above, youth and adults need time when working together to cultivate trust, confidence and fruitful working relationships. A classroom teacher has the advantage of getting to know students and families over the course of a year or years; the SOS facilitators have two hours and the panelists at the FIDL conference sometimes only had fifteen minutes. These short, outside interventions are also valuable and have the potential to plant the seeds for change but they should follow the same principle of establishing an appropriate and safe learning climate before jumping into the lesson at hand.

Finally, it is apparent that young adults need mentors who can skillfully help them navigate this complex web of school and extra-curricular learning opportunities. Those most suited and best positioned to do so are parents. Ultimately, parents have the greatest potential to shape the civic practices of their children, but they themselves must be informed and equipped to navigate both school and civil society. Ultimately, civil society has the advantage of being free from the chains of the academic curriculum and brings a unique expertise and position to students who engage with it, but for civil society to play an important role in teaching students about civic engagement, its actions must be thoughtfully integrated with those of the school and the family.

## Chapter 6 – Conclusion: Transferring Lessons learned abroad to the US Context

After spending years reading, learning, formulating a research proposal, conducting fieldwork, analyzing data and presenting conclusions through this dissertation, it is important to ask what all of it means and what purpose it can serve. As I reflect on this question, I cannot help but think about a recent opinion piece written in the New York Times by Gary Gutting (2012), a professor of philosophy at Notre Dame. In it, he examines the “reliability of the social sciences.” Both this dissertation and the division of the university that has sponsored my research ground themselves in the theories and research practices of the social sciences. “How much authority should we give to such work in our policy decisions,” Gutting asks. He poses this question in the context of President Obama’s usage of statistical studies that linked a teacher’s ability to raise student test scores to her ability to raise college attendance, salaries and retirement for those same students. For Gutting, the value of any science relies in its predictive power. “When it comes to generating reliable scientific knowledge, there is nothing more important than frequent and detailed prediction of future events,” he claims. “Because of the many interrelated causes at work in social systems,” he continues, “many questions are simply ‘impervious to experimentation.’” I witnessed firsthand this complex web of influences and causes, from textbooks to teachers to national debates, but left my year of fieldwork with a much different conclusion. Social science experimentation simply calls for unique methodologies that do not elicit *predictions* for the future but actually allow the subjects of experimentation to *shape* the future.



### ***Directions for Future Research***

Research should be dynamic, a constant back and forth between theory and experimentation, question-formation and data collection, analysis and explication. Its progress is often dialectical as an original thesis butts heads with an antithesis and ultimately yields a new synthesis. Given this trajectory, it is important to revisit initial assumptions before moving forward with future research. As I sift back through the body of work I have read and produced over the last few years, it appears to me that certain theories and questions have not been sufficiently examined. For example, contemporary researchers have backed away from examining the moral aspect of citizenship engagement and have favored analyzing the rights of young citizens over their responsibilities. Secondly, they have neglected the important role of parental modeling and the subsequent need for education to support this. Thirdly, Freire's call to start educating students from the "here and now" of their lives has repeatedly failed to be implemented. Consequently, more research that focuses on curriculum design and implementation should be done. Finally, researchers may be quick to promote the inclusion of minority perspectives in educational, civic and political arenas, but this must also occur in the academy itself. Universities have made strides in recruiting and training a more diverse group of scholars, but much progress can still be made.

For my own research agenda, I am lucky to have an abundance of data that promises to complement the studies put forth here. As mentioned in previous chapters, I often questioned the representativity of my subjects over the course of my year of fieldwork in France. I subsequently observed history and social science teaching in two other schools and spoke at length with professors there. I worked as an adjunct professor at a teacher-training institute and

took advantage of that opportunity to study how future teachers are taught to deliver transformative instruction. Finally, I was able to attend a host of lectures by scholars in the fields of education, sociology, political science and literature and am inspired to tap into the wealth of research that is being conducted *on* and *with* the uniquely diverse population of France today. What remains at the heart of my fascination with French-related research today is “who gets to be French.” Again, the New York Times editorial page has proven that it has its pulse on relevant contemporary dilemmas as a recent op-ed piece by Karl Meyer (2012) addresses that very question. In the wake of a violent killing spree in Toulouse, the perpetrator’s Frenchness came into question as he was of Algerian descent and his motives were tied to foreign-rooted terrorist organizations. The debate essentially reflected the tension between assimilationist and multicultural approaches, a debate that is at the heart of this dissertation. Clearly, it has not yet been resolved and I propose that the classroom is the most appropriate place for continued examination.

Although I did not conduct a comparative study, it is undeniable that my work is rooted in intercultural and comparative analysis. Most likely, readers of this dissertation will have an interest in the French context but most will probably approach it from an Anglo-American perspective just as I have. It is therefore important for future research to analyze what forces in the United States today may pose similar questions that globalization and immigration have piqued in France. In the domestic context, all signs point to neoliberal economics as a threat to the type of transformative and democratic education that I have promoted throughout my study. I endeavor in the final pages of this dissertation to lay out how I might approach research in the American context.

## ***Neoliberalism and Education Policy in the United States***

*“(Under neoliberal reforms), rather than schooling being aimed at creating critically democratic citizenship as its ultimate goal..., the entire process can slowly become aimed instead at the generation of profit for shareholders or a site whose hidden purpose is to document the efficiency of newly empowered managerial forms within the now supposedly more business-like state” (Apple, 2007, p. 114).*

Nelly Stromquist, in Education in a Globalized World, provides a succinct summation of how neoliberal philosophies and policies have impacted education. Citing Cuban (2001), Lipman (2000) and Oakes (2000), she enumerates what she calls “business norms in education”, including accountability, uniform standards and performance-based rewards (2002, p. 40). Such norms did not gain traction without significant provocation. To understand what gave rise to such policies in the United States, it is necessary to turn to the publication of “A Nation at Risk” in 1983, a report by President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education. According to Noddings, the report “used alarmist language to rouse the American public to the great danger posed by a supposedly failing school system” (2004: 338). It concluded that SAT scores had dropped dramatically, that students lacked basic skills that previous generations possessed and that American pupils lagged behind their foreign counterparts in core subjects. Reacting to the report, states rushed to enact what they concluded to be rigorous content-area standards, longer school calendars, improved teacher training and strict accountability measures.

At the core of the aforementioned reforms were state-mandated standards and related accountability mechanisms, mainly in the form of standardized testing regimes. Standards were adopted in most states at each grade level and for each subject area, dictating the content and skills students were to develop. In the core subjects, students were to be assessed on the mastery

of such content and skills through standardized tests. Benveniste and Ravela, as cited in Stromquist, assert that standardized testing has been justified by its proponents on multiple levels: such tests provide current and detailed information to schools, allow for more efficient management based on hard data, facilitate decision-making pertaining to funding allocations, evaluate teacher productivity, measure the impact of educational policies and innovations and aid in the development of a more productive labor force (2002, p. 41). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 took such high-stakes testing to the federal level, mandating a schedule, target populations and reporting procedures for high-stakes testing and academic standards (Spring: 2004, 186). In principle, the results of standardized tests are supposed to help identify low-performing schools and low-performing sub-populations of students, including racial and ethnic minorities, students with limited English proficiency, low-income students and students with disabilities. Schools that do not improve, or that do not achieve “adequate yearly progress” across these sub-populations must bear imposed reforms, face sanctions and risk being ultimately closed down.

The rhetoric of neoliberal education reform often promotes notions of flexibility and parental choice. As in the free-market economy, logic follows that if schools are allowed to compete and parents are allowed to choose schools for their children based on the results of this competition, failing schools will be forced to improve. With subsequent school improvement, all children will ideally have access to a quality education. “Parental choice is therefore being closely linked to the principle of equality of opportunity” (Stromquist, 2002, p. 45). The use of such rhetoric is undeniably questionable, but a critique of such framing and of the larger neoliberal agenda are reserved for subsequent paragraphs. It is essential here, to understand the

dynamics of neoliberal reforms, in this case, the promotion of parental choice. Choice is generally understood in the contexts of voucher programs and of charter schools. Vouchers allow parents to remove their children from public schools that are perceived to be failing and to send them to private or religious schools with funds from the state. Charters are granted to allow private, nonprofit and for-profit groups to operate schools with more autonomy while receiving public funds to do so. Their charters may not be renewed if performance is deemed inadequate. It is important to note that charter school teachers are often not subject to the same credentialing standards as traditional public school teachers and they rarely benefit from the same union protections as traditional teachers.

Continuing in this vein, it is necessary to turn to a third pillar of the neoliberal education agenda, that of privatization. A significantly larger number of for-profit enterprises have begun selling goods and services to education providers. Some have even begun operating schools themselves. A 2000 article in EdInvest News observed that the multi-billion dollar educational market consists of providing consulting services for testing, evaluation and teacher training, alongside a wide variety of services. Privately provided non-educational services range from catering to cleaning, but some core functions are also being outsourced, such as the inspection of schools and the collection and analysis of data on educational expenditures (Stromquist: 2002, 50). In the realm of charter school operations, for-profit companies such as Edison Schools Inc., run hundreds of schools across the country. Finally, commercial interests are more present in schools than ever in their history. Joel Spring (2004: 173) points to the presence of Channel One news and its accompanying commercials in over 25% of the nation's schools, the exclusive contracts signed between school districts and soft-drink companies for monopolies on

distribution, the purchasing of data on student computer usage by advertising firms, the presence of brand names in officially-adopted textbooks and the donation of “free” computers that frequently flash ads to students. School and district administrators often justify the presence of such commercialism by pointing to decreased funding from state and local governments.

As demonstrated above, it is evident that neoliberalism has dramatically influenced primary and secondary education, but it has also significantly impacted how universities operate around the world. As standardized testing has ventured to serve as an evaluation tool for public schools, accreditation and ranking systems attempt to assess the performance of universities. Rankings released by publications such as US News and World Report or The Times Educational Supplement shape students’ admissions decisions and thus force administrators to take note of the criteria used, and shape their policies to improve in these areas. Stromquist also highlights other areas in which the university has succumbed to neoliberal pressures: greater competition between universities, departments, professors and students; an increased emphasis on “productivity” and soliciting external funds; higher user fees for students; the prevalence of consumerism across all realms of the university; governance that focuses on “professionalized management” and economic principles; and deteriorating working conditions for professors (2004: 112-118). In addition, one can also observe public disengagement from the university and an increased emphasis on efficiency.

### ***Critiquing the Neoliberal Influence***

*“(A) failure to engage in vigorous discussion of educational aims has marked a movement toward standardization and high-stakes testing....(talk of such aims) is to education what freedom is to democracy. Without freedom, democracy degenerates into a form quite different*

*from liberal democracy. Similarly, without continual, reflective discussion of aims, education may become a poor substitute for its best vision” (Noddings: 2004, 332-334).*

Heeding Noddings’ call to continually reflect on the larger aims of education, it is necessary to critique the neoliberal influence in schools. Critical theory and political sociology of education provide a unique and powerful lens through which one can conduct such questioning. According to Torres (2009, p. 56-57), critical scholars provide a critique of the system by using the “logic of determinate negation,” offering society, “like a mirror, the critical aspects that need to be considered and improved in dealing with the mechanisms of sociability, production, and political exchanges.” Grounding their work in critical theory, contemporary researchers such as Torres, Michael Apple, Joel Spring, Nelly Stromquist and Nel Noddings have been able to expose the underlying fallacies and detriments of the neoliberal agenda. Starting with the pragmatic and practical applications of their work and shifting to the philosophical and theoretical, it is toward such critique that we should now turn.

An intensified focus on standards and high-stakes testing has narrowed the panoply of the curriculum, especially for low-income students and students of color. Many schools dedicate a significant amount of the school year to preparation for test-taking (Center for Education Policy, 2009). With accountability policies in mind, the larger aims of education are reduced to success on state-mandated tests. What counts as legitimate knowledge worthy of appearing on tests is ultimately reductive and “flies in the face of decades of struggle over the politics of official knowledge and over the inclusion of cultures, languages, histories and values of a country made of cultures from all over the world” (Apple, 2007, p. 111). Spring argues that beyond reducing content, standardized tests focus on lower-order thinking skills (2004, p. 90). Schools struggling

to improve test scores devote more time to these skills, rather than incorporating higher-order thinking skills. “This compounds the problem for children from low-income families. They seldom are given projects and independent work designed to enhance critical thinking. Instead, their teachers follow scripted lessons for improving performance on tests” (Spring, 2004, p. 90). Consequently, the role of the teacher is simplified and reduced.

Rooted in the movement toward standardization and in the larger neoliberal educational agenda is a mistrust of teachers and of teachers unions (Apple, 2007, p. 109). Teachers are perceived as obstacles to needed reforms and their unions are portrayed as being unilaterally focused on their own welfare to the detriment of students. Apple compares such framing to “the ways in which business leaders blame their economic woes on paid workers and their unions, at the very same time that they are making decisions that destroy the lives and hopes of so many of these very same people” (2007, p. 109). Teacher professionalization is consequently called into question and ultimately harmed. The skills cultivated in teacher training programs and in years of service are rejected and reduced to robotic script delivery and test preparation. Union membership, historically a force in protecting professionalization, is threatened, especially in many urban areas where charter schools are siphoning teachers and students from traditional public schools.

The application of business models to the education sector has led to what Apple has labeled an “audit culture” and the transformation of education into a commodity. He points to Olssen (1996) who asserted that neoliberalism requires that evidence be constantly gathered to prove that one is acting efficiently and correctly. Contrary to neoliberalism’s purported goal of decentralization, centralized evaluation structures seize power from local teachers and



administrators and expose their work to outside assessments in whose creation they had no voice. “The widespread nature of these evaluative and measurement pressures, and their ability to become parts of our common sense, crowd out other conceptions of effectiveness and democracy” (Apple, 2007, p. 112). Problematically, the principles of democracy have been replaced by the principles of the market as education has been conceptualized as a product to be created, marketed, bought, sold and evaluated. This has not only occurred in the educational realm but in other public service sectors. David Marquand (2000) critiques the application of market logic to such areas, including education and health care. “Doctors and nurses do not ‘sell’ medical services; students are not ‘customers’ of their teachers. The attempt to force these relationships into a market model undermines the service ethic, degrades the institutions that embody it and robs the notion of common citizenship as part of its meaning” (as quoted in Apple, 2007, p. 115). The larger question then becomes one of framing.

As mentioned above, neoliberal reforms are not only framed in the language and logic of business, but business-minded policy makers have co-opted progressive language and philosophy in marketing their reforms to citizens and political leaders. Apple understands such tactics through the work of Smith who observed that in the “political spectacle”, proposals that are desired by the least powerful actors and used to gain legitimacy for the agenda of those in power and often run in contradiction to their original aims. He also looks to Fraser’s analysis of needs discourse where she claims that dominant groups keenly observe and capture the discourse from below and use it in framing their reform agendas even though these agendas are clearly counter to the needs and desires of subordinate groups (2007, p. 110). In education, such discourse has centered on notions of freedom, choice, equality and democracy. Perhaps

Noddings said it best when she wrote that “the use of democratic language suggests that the same education for all is a generous and properly democratic measure when, in fact, it may well be both undemocratic and ineffective” (2004, p. 335). The manipulation of language and the increased politicization of educational reforms makes it evident that a return to the core philosophical question of educational aims is necessary.

Noddings aptly observed that “it has always been one function of philosophers of education to critique the aims of education in light of their contemporary cultures. It has been another of their functions to criticize society with respect to a vision of education” (2004: 333). Paulo Freire, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, did just that. His critique and specifically his notion of “conscientization” and his advocacy for problem-posing pedagogy must be revisited. The conscientization and humanization I have written about throughout this dissertation are markedly absent in an era of standards and high-stakes testing.

What Freire and other philosophers of education encourage us to do is return to the fundamental questions underlying education. What are we teaching and why? Who benefits and who is the focus, the individual or the society or both? In an era in which discussions revolve around economics, what are the ramifications on education? In the contemporary context, Noddings draws our attention to a return to these core questions. Her conclusion is the promotion of happiness as a central aim of education. Students must be happy to learn and students find happiness in subjects and courses that are adapted to their interests. Noddings promotes schooling that takes on different forms for students with different talents and interests. She references Dewey who believed that the best and wisest parent would want an education that is best for each individual child (339). It is evident that an education that is individually-relevant

and values student happiness and self-actualization is jeopardized by recent moves toward standardization.

## **Conclusion**

*“(In progressive communities), they endeavor to shape the experiences of the young so that instead of reproducing current habits, better habits shall be formed, and thus the future adult society be an improvement on their own. Men have long had intimation of the extent to which education may be consciously used to eliminate obvious social evils through starting the young on paths which shall not produce these ills, and some idea of the extent to which education may be made an instrument of realizing the better hopes of men. But we are doubtless far from realizing the potential efficacy of education as a constructive agency of improving society, from realizing that it represents not only a development of children and youth but also of the future society of which they will be constituents” (Dewey, 1997, p. 79).*

It is fitting to end an examination of the educational influence of neoliberalism in the US context and globalization in the French context with a quotation from Dewey. What Dewey understands and makes clear to his readers is that education has the power and potential to transform both the lives of students and the larger community. In fact, education only gains meaning through such transformation. Both the encroaching neoliberal agenda and the reactionary focus on national identity threaten the transformative potential of education and negate its democratic foundations. It is essential for contemporary researchers and practitioners to recognize, dissect, understand and challenge the forces of neoliberalism and globalization so that curriculum and pedagogy may realize their potential to enlighten, empower and transform. With the current financial crisis making the pitfalls of deregulation evident and with the election of a progressive administration in the United States, the time is ripe for a refocusing of the educational agenda here. In France, similar promise may be found in the newly elected Socialist government. Ultimately, however, the power rests in the hands of the citizens in both

democracies. It only remains to be seen if education will empower them to shape governance and civil society in a way that promotes access, equality and agency for all citizens.

## Appendix A – List of Textbooks Studied for Chapter 2

### I. Sophomore Year (Seconde)

#### *Antiquity – 1850*

1. Bordas, 1987
2. Nathan, 2005

### II. Junior Year (Première)

#### *Industrialization – WWII*

1. Delagrave, 1988
2. Bertrand Lacoste, 2003

### III. Senior Year (Terminale)

#### *WWII – Present Day*

1. Hachette, 1966
2. Colin, 1983
3. Hatier, 1989
4. Hatier, 2004
5. Nathan, 2008

## Appendix B – Student Questionnaire in French (Original Format)

CETTE ENQUÊTE EST ANONYME. MERCI DE NE PAS METTRE TON NOM OU D'AUTRES INFORMATIONS QUI ME PERMETTRAIENT DE T'IDENTIFIER PERSONNELLEMENT.

RÉPONDSE SEULEMENT AUX QUESTIONS AUXQUELLES TU SOUHAITES RÉPONDRE. TU PEUX SAUTER N'IMPORTE QUELLE QUESTION QUI TE METTRAIT MAL À L'AISE ET TU PEUX ARRÊTER L'ENQUÊTE À N'IMPORTE QUEL MOMENT. POUR M'AIDER, JE TE DEMANDERAI DE RÉPONDRE SINCÈREMENT AU PLUS GRAND NOMBRE DE QUESTIONS POSSIBLE.

### Comment t'identifies-tu? Les autres?

1. Certains aspects de notre identité nous sont plus importants quand on pense à qui on est. Classe les aspects suivants dans l'ordre d'importance dans tes réflexions personnelles quand tu cultives ton identité. (1 – le PLUS important -> 2 -> 3 -> 4 -> 5 – le MOINS important).  
\_\_\_\_ Nationalité (français ou autre)  
\_\_\_\_ Couleur de Peau/« Race »/ethnie  
\_\_\_\_ Religion  
\_\_\_\_ Sexe (homme/femme)  
\_\_\_\_ Sexualité (hétérosexuel, bisexuel, homosexuel)
2. Quand un inconnu me voit dans la rue, en premier il voit mon/ma (encercle UNE réponse):  
a. nationalité    b. couleur de peau/« race »/ethnie    c. religion    d. sexe    e. sexualité
3. Préfères-tu te faire des ami(e)s du même sexe?  
a. oui, je préfère avoir des ami(e)s du même sexe  
b. le sexe de mes ami(e)s n'a pas d'importance  
c. non, je préfère avoir des ami(e)s du sexe opposé
4. Préfères-tu te faire des ami(e)s de la même couleur de peau/« race »/ethnie que toi?  
a. oui, je préfère avoir des ami(e)s de la même couleur de peau/« race »/ethnie que moi  
b. la couleur de peau/« race »/ethnie de mes ami(e)s n'a pas d'importance  
c. non, je préfère avoir des ami(e)s de couleurs de peau/« races »/ethnies différentes de la mienne
5. Préfères-tu te faire des ami(e)s qui sont de la même religion que toi?  
a. oui, je préfère avoir des ami(e)s de la même religion  
b. la religion de mes ami(e)s n'a pas d'importance  
c. non, je préfère avoir des ami(e)s de religions différentes de la mienne
6. À quel point peux-tu te mettre dans la peau et comprendre les expériences des élèves du sexe opposé?  
a. très bien    b. bien    c. moyennement    d. un peu    e. pas très bien
7. À quel point peux-tu te mettre dans la peau et comprendre les expériences des élèves de « races » différentes?  
a. très bien    b. bien    c. moyennement    d. un peu    e. pas très bien
8. À quel point peux-tu te mettre dans la peau et comprendre les expériences des élèves de religions différentes?  
a. très bien    b. bien    c. moyennement    d. un peu    e. pas très bien
9. En général, ceux qui sont d'une couleur de peau/« race »/ethnie différente, comprennent-ils ta « race »?  
a. Oui, pour la plupart    b. un peu    c. non, pas très bien
10. En général, ceux qui sont d'une religion différente, comprennent-ils ta religion?  
a. Oui, pour la plupart    b. un peu    c. non, pas très bien    d. Je ne pratique pas une religion

11. Considères-tu faire partie d'une minorité visible ?  
a. oui b. non

12. Considères-tu faire partie d'une minorité invisible ?  
a. oui b. non

#### L'école

13. En classe avec tes profs, y a-t-il des opportunités pour parler des questions raciales?  
a. Oui, il y en a beaucoup b. Oui, il y en a un peu c. Je ne suis pas sûr(e) d. Non/elles sont rares

14. En classe avec tes profs, y a-t-il des opportunités pour parler de religion?  
a. Oui, il y en a beaucoup b. Oui, il y en a un peu c. Je ne suis pas sûr(e) d. Non/elles sont rares

15. En classe avec tes profs, y a-t-il des opportunités pour parler de l'immigration en France?  
a. Oui, il y en a beaucoup b. Oui, il y en a un peu c. Je ne suis pas sûr(e) d. Non/elles sont rares

16. Penses-tu que tes profs et l'administration de l'école essaient de créer un esprit de solidarité à l'école?  
a. Oui, je crois que oui b. Je ne suis pas sûr(e) c. Non, je crois que non

17. Ressens-tu qu'un esprit de communauté/solidarité est cultivé par les élèves de ton école?  
a. Oui, elle est forte b. Oui, elle est un peu présente c. Je ne suis pas sûr(e) d. Non, pas vraiment

18. Les écoles essaient de réaliser différents objectifs. A ton avis, quels sont les objectifs les plus importants pour tes profs et pour l'administration de ton école? (1-le PLUS important ->2 -> 3 -> 4 -> 5-le MOINS important)

\_\_\_\_\_ Comprendre les besoins et les expériences individuelles de chaque élève

\_\_\_\_\_ Maintenir l'ordre et le bon fonctionnement de l'école

\_\_\_\_\_ Enseigner et apprendre les différentes matières académiques

\_\_\_\_\_ Préparer les élèves pour les métiers/études qui leur conviennent

\_\_\_\_\_ Créer un esprit de communauté/solidarité entre les élèves, les profs, les familles des élèves, etc.

19. Crois-tu que ce que tu apprends à l'école est pertinent et te servira dans ta vie ?  
a. Oui, très pertinent b. Oui, un peu pertinent c. Je ne suis pas sûr(e) d. Non, pas vraiment

20. Les profs, font-ils l'effort de faire « des ponts » entre ce qu'ils enseignent et ta réalité quotidienne ?  
a. Oui, souvent b. Oui, des fois c. Oui, mais rarement d. Non, jamais

21. Les profs, en général, comprennent-ils ta réalité quotidienne ?  
a. Oui, vraiment b. Oui, un peu c. Pas vraiment d. Pas du tout

22. La France qui est décrite dans tes manuels, correspond-elle à la France que tu côtoies quotidiennement ?  
a. Oui, vraiment b. Oui, un peu c. Pas vraiment d. Pas du tout

#### En dehors de l'école

23. Participes-tu régulièrement dans la vie associative?  OUI / NON

24. Vas-tu régulièrement à l'église/à la mosquée/à la synagogue/etc.?  OUI / NON

25. Regardes-tu souvent le journal télévisé ou lis-tu le journal écrit (même en ligne)? OUI / NON .

26. La politique t'intéresse-t-elle? OUI / NON .

27. Passes-tu la plupart de ton temps seul(e) ou avec tes ami(e)s? SEUL(E) / AVEC MES AMI(E)S .

28. Parles-tu souvent à des gens de ton quartier qui ne font pas partie de ta famille? OUI / NON .

29. Participes-tu souvent dans des activités artistiques ou musicales? OUI / NON .

30. Fais-tu souvent du shopping? OUI / NON .

#### La vie adulte

Sur une échelle de 1 à 5 (1 Très Important; 5=Pas du tout important), quelle importance auront les choses suivantes dans ta vie d'adulte?

	Très Important				Pas du tout important
31. Gagner beaucoup d'argent	1	2	3	4	5
32. Un job qui te rend heureux	1	2	3	4	5
33. Continuer d'apprendre	1	2	3	4	5
34. Connaître tes voisins	1	2	3	4	5
35. Préserver la culture de tes parents	1	2	3	4	5
36. Être militant/membre d'un parti politique	1	2	3	4	5
37. La vie associative	1	2	3	4	5
38. Voyager à l'étranger	1	2	3	4	5

#### La politique et la société

Dis-moi à quel point tu es d'accord avec les déclarations suivantes.

39. Je fais confiance aux leaders politiques de faire ce qui rendra ma vie meilleure.  
a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord

40. Si je ne suis pas d'accord avec nos leaders, je peux faire en sorte que mes critiques soient entendues.  
a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord

41. Nos leaders politiques comprennent d'où je viens.  
a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord

42. Un jour, je pourrais devenir un leader politique et mettre en place des changements importants.  
a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord



43. La vie associative joue un rôle important et réussit à rendre meilleure la vie des gens.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
44. Les églises/mosquées/synagogues jouent un rôle important et réussissent à rendre meilleure la vie des gens.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
45. Dans mon quartier, la plupart des gens sont de la même race/ethnie.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
46. Dans mon quartier, il existe un esprit de communauté/solidarité très fort.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
47. Il est important pour moi de combattre les injustices.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
48. Il est important pour moi d'aider les autres.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
49. Quand je serai adulte, j'espère avoir des ami(e)s de races et cultures différentes.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
50. Je voudrais voyager à l'étranger et apprendre d'autres modes de vie.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
51. Il m'est important d'avoir des vêtements à la mode, un portable récent, etc.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord
52. L'argent est un symbole important de la réussite.  
 a. Oui, vraiment d'accord      b. Un peu d'accord      c. Pas sûr(e)      d. Pas du tout d'accord

**Questions approfondies**

*Merci de répondre aux questions suivantes dans l'espace donné. Essaie d'être le plus précis possible. Si tu as besoin de plus d'espace pour écrire, n'hésite pas à écrire au dos de la page.*

53. Aux États-Unis et en France, nous avons traversé des périodes difficiles de tension raciale et des débats passionnés concernant l'immigration. A ton avis, comment sont les relations entre les élèves des différentes couleurs de peau et des différents pays d'origine au sein de ton école? Dans ton quartier? Pourquoi penses-tu que les relations soient ainsi?

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## Appendix C – Student Questionnaire in English (translation only, modified format)

THIS SURVEY IS ANONYMOUS. PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME OR OTHER SPECIFIC IDENTIFYING INFORMATION.

ANSWER ONLY QUESTIONS THAT YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING. YOU MAY SKIP ANY QUESTION THAT YOU WISH AND STOP AT ANY TIME. TO HELP THE RESEARCHER, PLEASE HONESTLY ANSWER AS MANY QUESTIONS AS YOU ARE COMFORTABLE ANSWERING.

### How do you identify yourself? Others?

1. Certain parts of our identity are more important to us when we think about who we are. Rank the following criteria in order of importance in how you identify yourself (1 – most important; 5 – least important).  
\_\_\_\_ Nationality (French or other)  
\_\_\_\_ Skin color/“race”/ethnicity  
\_\_\_\_ Religion  
\_\_\_\_ Gender  
\_\_\_\_ Sexuality
2. When a stranger sees me in the street, he/she first sees my (circle one):  
a. nationality    b. race/ethnicity    c. religion    d. gender    e. sexuality
3. Do you prefer to make friends with people of your same gender?  
a. yes, I prefer friends of my gender    b. it doesn't matter    c. no, I prefer friends of the opposite gender
4. Do you prefer to make friends with people of your same “race”/ethnicity?  
a. yes, I prefer friends of my “race”    b. it doesn't matter    c. no, I prefer friends of other “races”
5. Do you prefer to make friends with people of your same religion?  
a. yes, I prefer friends of my religion    b. it doesn't matter    c. no, I prefer friends of other religions
6. How well do you understand the lived experiences of people of the opposite sex?  
a. very well    b. well    c. somewhat    d. a little    e. not very well
7. How well do you understand the lived experiences of people of different “races”?  
a. very well    b. well    c. somewhat    d. a little    e. not very well
8. How well do you understand the lived experiences of people of different religions?  
a. very well    b. well    c. somewhat    d. a little    e. not very well

9. Generally, do people of different “races” understand your “race”?  
 a. Yes, for the most part                      b. somewhat                      c. no, not very well
10. Generally, do people of different religions understand your religion?  
 a. Yes, for the most part                      b. somewhat                      c. no, not very well                      d. I don’t have a religion
11. Do you consider yourself to be part of a visible minority?  
 a. Yes                      b. no
12. Do you consider yourself to be part of an invisible minority?  
 a. Yes                      b. no

**School**

13. In class with teachers at school, are there opportunities to talk about racial questions?  
 a. Yes, there are many                      b. Yes, there are a few                      c. I’m not sure                      d. No, they are rare or never
14. In class with teachers at school, are there opportunities to talk about religion questions?  
 a. Yes, there are many                      b. Yes, there are a few                      c. I’m not sure                      d. No, they are rare or never
15. In class with teachers, do you talk about immigration in France?  
 a. Yes, often really                      b. Yes, sometimes                      c. I’m not sure                      d. No, not really
16. Do you think that your teachers and administrators try to create a sense of community at your school?  
 a. Yes, I think so                      b. I’m not sure                      c. No, I don’t think so
17. Do you feel a sense of community amongst the students at your school?  
 a. Yes, it is strong really                      b. Yes, it is somewhat presentc. I’m not sure                      d. No, not really
18. Schools try to achieve many different goals. In your opinion, what goals do your teachers and administrators value most? (1-value most, 5-value least)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Understanding each student’s needs and lived experiences  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Maintaining an orderly and functioning school  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching and learning the academic subjects  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Preparing students to choose what career path fits them best  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Creating a sense of community amongst students, teachers and families

19. Do you think that what you learn at school is pertinent and will be useful in life?  
a. Yes, very useful    b. Yes, a little    c. I'm not sure    d. No, not really

20. Do teachers try to link what they teach to your daily reality?  
a. Yes, often    b. Yes, sometimes    c. Yes, but rarely    d. No, never

21. Do teachers in general understand your daily reality?  
a. Yes, really    b. Yes, a little    c. Not really    d. Not at all

22. Does the France described in your textbook correspond with the France you see in your daily life?  
a. Yes, really    b. Yes, a little    c. Not really    d. Not at all

### Outside of School

23. Do you regularly participate in the activities of a non-profit/community organization?  
YES / NO .

24. Do you regularly attend a church/mosque/synagogue/other place of worship? YES / NO .

25. Do you regularly watch the TV news or read the newspaper (including online)? YES / NO .

26. Are you interested in what is happening politically in France? YES / NO .

27. Do you spend most of your free time alone or with friends? ALONE / WITH FRIENDS .

28. Do you often speak to people in your neighborhood who are not a part of your family?  
YES / NO .

29. Do you regularly participate in artistic or musical activities? YES / NO .

30. Do you often go shopping? YES / NO .

### Adult Life

*On a scale of 1-5 (1=Very Important; 5=Not important at all), how important will the following be to your adult life?*

Very Important ->----->----->Not at all important

31. Earning a lot of money	1	2	3	4	5
32. A job that makes me happy	1	2	3	4	5
33. Continuing to learn	1	2	3	4	5
34. Knowing my neighbors	1	2	3	4	5
35. Preserving my parents' culture	1	2	3	4	5
36. Being in a political party	1	2	3	4	5
37. Non-profit/community work	1	2	3	4	5
38. Traveling abroad	1	2	3	4	5

### **Politics and Society**

*Please state to what degree you agree with the following statements.*

39. I trust the country's political leaders to do what is in my best interest.  
a. Yes, I really agree.   b. I agree a little.   c. I'm not sure   d. I don't agree at all.
40. If I don't agree with our political leaders, I can make my voice heard.  
a. Yes, I really agree.   b. I agree a little.   c. I'm not sure   d. I don't agree at all.
41. Our political leaders understand where I come from.  
a. Yes, I really agree.   b. I agree a little.   c. I'm not sure   d. I don't agree at all.
42. One day, I could become a political leader and make important changes.  
a. Yes, I really agree.   b. I agree a little.   c. I'm not sure   d. I don't agree at all.
43. Community organizations play an important role in making peoples' lives better.  
a. Yes, I really agree.   b. I agree a little.   c. I'm not sure   d. I don't agree at all.
44. Churches/mosques/synagogues play an important role in making peoples' lives better.  
a. Yes, I really agree.   b. I agree a little.   c. I'm not sure   d. I don't agree at all.
45. In my neighborhood, most people are of the same ethnic/cultural background as me.  
a. Yes, I really agree.   b. I agree a little.   c. I'm not sure   d. I don't agree at all.

46. In my neighborhood, there is a strong sense of community.  
a. Yes, I really agree. b. I agree a little. c. I'm not sure d. I don't agree at all.
47. It is important for me to fight against injustice.  
a. Yes, I really agree. b. I agree a little. c. I'm not sure d. I don't agree at all.
48. It is important for to help others.  
a. Yes, I really agree. b. I agree a little. c. I'm not sure d. I don't agree at all.
49. In my adult life, I hope to have friends of different races and cultures.  
a. Yes, I really agree. b. I agree a little. c. I'm not sure d. I don't agree at all.
50. I would like to travel to foreign countries and learn about their lifestyles.  
a. Yes, I really agree. b. I agree a little. c. I'm not sure d. I don't agree at all.
51. I care about having the latest clothes, cell phones, etc.  
a. Yes, I really agree. b. I agree a little. c. I'm not sure d. I don't agree at all.
52. Money is an important symbol of success.  
a. Yes, I really agree. b. I agree a little. c. I'm not sure d. I don't agree at all.

### Open-ended questions

*Please answer the following questions in the space given on the next page. Please try to be as specific as possible. If you need more space, you can continue writing on the back side of the page.*

53. In the United States and in France, we have lived through periods of racial tension and heard people speaking for and against immigration. How do you consider relations between students of different races and different countries of origin in your school? In your neighborhood? Why do you think relations are like this?
54. In what setting do you feel the most comfortable? Where do you feel that people know you the best? Why?
55. If there are things in society that you think are unfair, do you feel that you have the power to change them? Do you believe in the political process (voting, working with political parties, protesting, etc.) and the power of citizens to make changes? If not, is there another way, outside of the traditional political process to make changes?

## **Appendix D – Themes in the Sophomore History/Geography Curriculum**

### History

Unit 1 – To be a Citizen in Athens in 500BC

Unit 2 – The Mediterranean in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century: Crossroads of Three Civilizations

Unit 3 – Humanism and the Renaissance in Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries

Unit 4 – The End of the Ancien Régime to the Birth of a New France in 1789

Unit 5 – The Revolutionary Period and its Heritage in France from 1789 to 1848

### Geography

Unit 1 – More than 6,000,000 Men on Earth

Unit 2 – Feeding more than 6,000,000 Men

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Unit 4 – Border Spaces and Societies in the World

Unit 5 – Cities and Urban Spaces in the World

Unit 6 – Societies Confront the Risks of the World



## Appendix E – Student answers to open-ended survey questions (verbatim)

### Question 53

**Aux États-Unis et en France, nous avons traversé des périodes difficiles de tension raciale et des débats passionnés concernant l'immigration. A ton avis, comment sont les relations entre les élèves des différentes races et des différents pays d'origine au sein de ton école ? Dans ton quartier ? Pourquoi penses-tu que les relations soient ainsi ?**

1. Cela dépend des gens car ils ont tous des caractéristiques différentes il y a certaines personnes avec qui je suis très solidaire il m'aime vraiment et je les aime, ce sont pratiquement des gens que je connais puis il y en a d'autres qui ont des visions très négatives, il y a des personnes qui croient que leur religion et la meilleure et donc ne respecte pas celle des autres, essaye de se moquer. Je pense que les immigrés sont très mal vus car j'en ai l'expérience en regardant ce que ça passe à la vie quotidienne, et plein d'autres choses. Certes dans ces pays il y a la liberté des droits, l'égalité ect...mais je pense franchement que tout cela c'est du bidon. Franchement il faut dire la vérité à par Rachida Dati ou Rama Yade il y'en a pas beaucoup des étrangers qui ont fait une carrière politique, une des causes qui est la principale c'est parce qu'ils sont des immigrés. C'est vrai qu'on peut me dire que Sarkozy est un Autrichien et il est président de France ou que Barack Obama est président américain mais cela ne me laisse qu'un petit espoir et je pense pas que la situation va s'améliorer et les gens qui voient les immigrés d'une autre façon c'est des gros « Bip ».

2. Les relations entre les élèves ayant différentes origines ou étant de « race » différentes sont généralement courtoises, certains sont très liés et font abstraction de leurs différentes cultures, d'autres font partager ou découvrir leur culture à leurs amis. Je pense qu'à l'école peu de gens sont racistes car l'on apprend à vivre avec des personnes, à les connaître sans les juger. Dans mon quartier je pense que les gens ne se regroupent pas selon leur « race » ou les pays d'origine mais selon le statut social car dans certains lieux les loyers sont plus chers que dans d'autres parties du quartier.

3. Au jour d'aujourd'hui je pense que « les races », l'origine ou autres n'a aucune importance, à l'école ou ailleurs, tout le monde s'entend bien quels que soient la couleur de peau, l'origine etc.... Les relations sont ainsi car les gens évoluent, leur mentalités évoluent, c'est pas le cas pour tous mais pour la majorité, oui. On ne peut pas généraliser. Certaines personnes sont racistes mais je pense que c'est leur éducation qui est responsable. De nos jours, les jeunes ne sont pas trop racistes...

4. Maintenant, l'importance de l'égalité nous est éduquée ce qui nous fait avoir des relations amicales et sincères avec n'importe quelle personne de « race » différentes ou pas. Dans Paris les quartiers ne sont pas solidaire je ne pense donc pas savoir. Mais je sais que je pense m'entendre avec quiconque que je trouve sympa. Les relations de bonne entente entre ethnies ont mis du temps à être acceptées, et il est

prouvé que les mentalités changent très lentement et ne sont toujours pas changé a ce jour il est donc normal que la racisme reste présent.

5. Dans mon école, les relations entre les élèves des différentes races et des différentes pays d'origine sont bonnes. Dans mon quartier, ces relations sont bonnes il y a un respect mutuelle. Je pense que les relations soient ainsi, car le monde et les gens ont évolués, ont appris à se respecter mutuellement.

6. Les relations entre les élèves des différentes races et des différentes pays d'origine au sein de l'école sont particulièrement bonne car les élèves habitent dans des quartier où c'est mixte, ils apprennent donc à se découvrir, à se connaître sans porter de jugement. Dans mon quartier les relations sont moyennes car il y a des personnes qui nous regarde mal et ne comprenne pas pourquoi on habite dans un quartier chic de Paris. Les relations sont ainsi car cela dépend de l'éducation des parents.

7. Dans mon quartier, les relations entre les personnes sont bonnes. Sauf les relations avec les juifs, qui restent en communautés et qui sont rejetes. Au lycée, les relations sont plutôt bonnes, ont découvrent de nouvelles personnes qui viennent de quartier différents de Paris. Je pense que la haine des juifs dans mon quartier est du à l'influence des parents qui eux sont généralement musulmans, et rejettent leurs haines sur les juifs.

8. Les élèves de différentes race ou religion sont souvent en désaccord sur leur religion comme les juifs et les musulmans. Mais je pense que ces problèmes sont dues au fait que les sociétés n'acceptaient pas les personnes différentes (religion, race). De nos jours les mentalités ont changés mais il reste des traces des conflits.

#### 9. PAS DE RÉPONSE

10. Dans le lycée je ne trouve pas que les relations change selon les races mais dans mon quartier je trouve qu'il y a des relations selon la race. Je suis loin d'être raciste mais je trouve que les personnes de peau noir ou foncé font plus peur au gens (surtout les personnes âgées).

11. Je pense que les relations entre les personnes de « races » différentes sont meilleurs à l'école que ailleurs. À l'école ont a besoin de se faire des ami(e)s et il est aussi bon d'apprendre à connaître des gens d'autre « race » pour pouvoir mieux les comprendre. Je pense aussi que les adultes sont plus cruels au niveau des « races » car les générations passé ont plus connu le racisme.

12. Au sein de l'école les races différentes ne sont pas du tout un problème. Nous fréquentons tout le monde, qu'il soit blanc, noir, chinois, etc.... Dans le quartier c'est un peu plus différent car peut-être que les gens ne sont pas habitué à voir ou fréquenté d'autre religions que la leurs, donc sa leur posent un problème.

13. Les relations entre les élèves de différent races et de pays sont bien. On ne fait pas la différence, même si je l'avou d'un côté pratique c'est mieux d'avoir des personnes de la même origine car on se

comprend mieux mais on remarque que tous le monde à une/un amis qui ne soient pas de la même religion. Je pense que les relations soient ainsi car moi-même j'ai des amis qui ne soient pas de la même religion. Je l'ai fréquente.

14. Dans mon quartier « populaire » les races ont très peu d'importance. Elles sont si diversifiée que les gens n'y prête plus d'attention. Dans mon environnement, les relations sont les même avec une personne de même ou différente races. Si ces relations sont ainsi c'est parce qu'on a pratiquement tous grandi dans des milieux populaires où les races n'ont pas d'importance.

15. Au sein de l'école et de mon quartier les différences raciales ont peu d'importance.

16. Les relations sont parfaites, il n'y a aucun problèmes raciaux étant donné qu'il y a un brassage de culture énorme.

17. Dans mon école les gens sont à peu près solidaire et les « races » ne sont pas trop différenciés par les autres élèves. Dans mon quartier il y a du racisme car les gens en France pense que se sont les étrangers qui leur prennent leur travail...

18. Les origines, les couleurs n'ont pas d'importance à l'école. Un petit peu dans mon quartier

19. Personnellement je pense que les relations ne sont pas trop mauvaise, Il y a une mixité des cultures, nous somme à l'écoute l'un de l'autre. Je pense que ces relations sont dû au fait que l'on soit dans un établissement public, les parent nous inculque une autres façon de penser, je pense que le milieu sociale joue un rôle dans les relations humaine. Les personne riche on tendance a ne voire qu'elle, il connaisse moin le sens du mot solidarité, alors que les personne a revenu modest, on plutôt tendance a ce soutenir, a tendre la main, même dans la difficultes il soutienne les autres. Je pense que la plupart des jeune suivre le chemin de leur parent, personnellement je suis ma propre voie.

20. Les relations entre les élèves de différents pays d'origine qui sont amis sont bonnes mais quand il n'y a pas d'amitié elles ne sont pas très bonnes. Il y a beaucoup de jugements et de nombreuses insultes sont liées aux races et aux origines. Je pense que la tolérance est plus présente qu'avant ainsi que le respect ce qui favorise les rapports cependant les esprits n'ont pas tellement changés et l'incomprehension des autres créer des conflits.

21. Je pense qu'il existe parfois des tensions avec des personnes stupides qui disent des choses incensés et infondés, ce qui gangrène la haine de « l'autre » et de sa civilisation, des mœurs...etc. Les relations entre élèves de « races » différentes sont très souvent très bonnes, mais parfois la bêtise l'emporte sur la raison.

22. Les relations des élèves de différentes « races » au sein de mon école et de mon quartier son moyenne, soit tout va bien (mélange, amitier...) soit les gens restent en groupe, chacun de son coté : je pense que cela est due au racisme mais aussi a la peur du racisme. Les gens ont peur de déranger, de se

mélanger. Ma mère est noire et mon père blanc je le vis très bien mais ma mère m'a raconté que lorsque je suis né des amis de mes grands parents paternel sont venus me voir et on dit : « Ah ! il n'est pas si noir que ça finalement ! » Je me souviens aussi du dîner où mon grand père a dit que l'homosexualité était une maladie que ce soigner. Je ne pense pas du tout comme lui. Je pense que les avis changent de nos jours ! Mon grand-père vit à la campagne là-bas des propos comme ça c'est « normal ». Alors qu'ici en ville, les mœurs ont changé.

23. Pour moi, les relations entre les gens de différents pays d'origine, ou de différentes races, n'affectent en aucun cas les relations entre les élèves de l'école. On est tous d'origine différente mais cela n'empêche pas qu'on soit de très bons amis. Ces relations sont ainsi parce que nous avons appris à vivre en communauté et c'est ce qui est bien dans la société. Dans mon quartier, les relations entre les gens différents, ne sont pas toujours comme celle de notre génération à nous, ils ont pour certains vécu pendant des périodes de racisme, et donc sont protecteurs de leur race, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'accepte que leur race et aucune autre race, ce qui peut expliquer certaines mauvaises relations entre certains individus.

24. Dans mon école, les relations entre les élèves des différentes races et des différents pays d'origine sont normales. Je ne pense pas que les élèves choisissent leurs amis selon ces critères. De même dans mon quartier. Je pense (j'espère...) que si les gens s'apprécient, c'est parce- qu'ils ont des points en commun (musique, films...). C'est plus simple peut-être chez les jeunes parce- que l'on est dans une génération qui suit un mouvement rassembleur.

25. Les relations sont très bonnes à l'école mais un peu moins dans mon quartier. Les relations sont très bonnes à l'école car elle est laïque, la plupart des élèves se connaissent depuis l'enfance une certaine confiance règne entre eux on essaie de comprendre la vie de chacun. Alors que dans le quartier les personnes sont plus hostiles car elles ne nous connaissent pas et ne cherchent pas à nous connaître. Elle nous catégorise se fie aux clichés, elles sont plus âgées donc elle n'ont pas un état d'esprit moderne et reste assez hostile elles rencontrent des choses nouvelles pour une partie majoritaire.

26. Je pense qu'entre les élèves au sein de l'école, il n'y a pas de périodes difficiles de tensions raciales, dans mon quartier non plus. Je pense que la plupart des gens ne font pas attention à la race ou religion.

27. Les relations sont très bonnes et très ouvertes. Le racisme est très mal vu et c'est compréhensible, on a tous le sang rouge juste une pigmentation de peau différente. Les relations sont ainsi car on a la chance d'avoir un concentré de cultures dans le quartier, il ne peut donc pas y avoir de généralisation bête sur des ethnies. Ainsi c'est une chance de vivre dans ce quartier, le racisme c'est la stupidité incarnée. Je ne comprend même pas pourquoi le racisme est traduit dans des groupes politiques.

28. Les relations entre les élèves d'origines différentes se passent bien aux lycées. En banlieue, dans les cités il y a une majorité d'arabes et de noirs et les gens d'origines françaises ne sont pas très appréciés à part si ils y vivent depuis petit. Mais à Paris je crois que cette tension est moins forte qu'en banlieue. Il

se passe l'inverse à la campagne car il y a beaucoup de racistes et les arabes ainsi que les noirs y sont souvent assez mal vu. Je pense qu'entre jeunes les tensions entre les gens d'origines différentes sont moins présentes en France.

29. Je pense que les relations des élèves, des gens de différentes « races » sont toute à fait normales. La race, le pays d'origine ne change rien au comportement qu'il faut avoir face aux gens. Et je pense que c'est ainsi pratiquement pourtant bien que certaines personnes restent enfermées dans leur racisme, mais d'après moi c'est de plus en plus rare, surtout notre génération et celles d'après est une génération de gens qui apprennent dès le plus jeune âge à accepter la différence de l'autre.

30. Les relations entre les élèves de différentes races et des différents pays d'origines, au sein de mon école, sont assez bonnes. Je n'ai pas vraiment assisté à des disputes ou des débats traitant ce sujet, car je pense qu'à cause du passé de notre pays ce sujet est tabou, et que nous savons qu'en parler pour créer des conflits. Tout le monde n'a pas les mêmes idées, il faut sûrement en parler, mais pas tout le temps. Mais les relations sont assez bonnes ou non, selon les caractères et l'attitude de chaque individu. Certains sont tolérants et ouverts d'esprits, d'autres non.

31. Les relations entre élèves de différentes races sont tout à fait normales ! Je n'ai jamais vu dans l'enceinte du lycée quelqu'un se faire insulter, taper ou mettre à l'écart à cause de sa couleur de peau. Par contre j'ai déjà eu écho de certaine personne qui était persécuté dans des lycées privés, « bourgeois ». Dans mon quartier règne une solidarité, les races n'ont aucune importance ! Je pense que la société a évolué, ainsi les races n'ont plus d'importance cela dit certaine personne reste focalisé sur le passé.

32. Les relations entre différentes races sont bien, on ne pense pas à notre race et on se sent tous pareil mais juste avec un différent visage et une différente couleur. On se taquine quelque fois mais sans aller à nous disputer à ce propos. Je pense que les relations sont ainsi car nous avons été éduqué de cette façon et nos écoles sont laïques.

33. Ces types de relations qui demeurent entre ces « différentes » personnes ne sont en aucun cas d'après moi présentes dans mon école. J'ai déjà assisté à un conflit racial que ce soit dans mon quartier ou autre part (Corse) et je dénonce ces paroles qui peuvent blesser les personnes qui ne font rien de mal. Je pense que les relations sont ainsi car chaque personne pense comme elle veut, pour ma part je ne connais aucune personne raciste dans mon entourage, et nous ne pouvons pas contrôler les pensées et les dires de chaque individu.

34. Les relations entre les élèves de ma classe ou de mon quartier de différentes races sont très bonnes car tout le monde est sympa avec tout le monde. Par exemple lorsque je suis arrivé en décembre, tous les élèves de ma classe m'ont très bien accueilli.

35. Dans l'école on pense plus à l'amitié, au caractère qu'à l'éthnie, et races, ce n'est pas le plus important. Dans mon quartier là cela dépend des gens je ne connais pas tout le monde mais comme

c'est un quartier avec beaucoup de « races » variées il se peut que cela soit moins important. Je pense que ce n'est pas la « race » ou la culture des gens qui doit choisir nos relations mais plutôt le caractère, ou plutôt sa doit être les différences qui nous attire.

#### **Question 54**

**Pour toi, à quoi sert l'école ? Est-ce qu'elle réalise cet objectif ? Comment pourrait-elle mieux faire ?**

1. Pour moi, l'école c'est quelque chose d'indispensable c'est elle qui nous instruit, nous donne des nouvelles connaissances au fur à mesure que l'on passe, nous aide à atteindre notre objectif car elle est bien construite, ouvre à plusieurs portes. Franchement l'école c'est l'un des trucs les plus importants qu'il existe, elle aide à atteindre un objectif. Je ne vois pas qu'est-ce qu'elle pourrait faire de mieux elle est parfaite.
2. Pour moi l'école sert à nous apprendre à vivre en société, à acquérir un « bagage » culturel c'est-à-dire découvrir de nouvelles cultures et même découvrir la culture du pays dans lequel on vit.
3. L'école nous sert à nous cultiver, à créer des relations sociales avec diverses personnes, fille, garçon, noir, blanc, etc.... Elle nous apprend à devenir autonome, elle nous prépare et nous forme pour notre vie d'adulte. L'école nous donne des diplômes qui nous offrent de meilleurs emplois, elle nous permet de rencontrer de nouvelles personnes, de savoir vivre en société, de savoir collaborer, à aboutir à faire des projets à plusieurs. L'école c'est un peu ennuyant, elle pourrait être davantage meilleure, elle pourrait nous enseigner différemment au lieu de parler pendant 1 heure ou 2 ou de nous faire écrire des choses sans intérêts, que l'on ne comprend pas forcément. Je n'ai pas d'idée pour améliorer tout cela mais je pense que ça pourrait être mieux...
4. L'école sert à nous instruire, l'histoire par exemple nous apprend les erreurs passées. Pour moi il est important de connaître toutes ces choses ou une culture plus approfondie est toujours utile. Dans l'ensemble chaque élève ressort plus cultivé de l'école mais l'éducation s'y prend très mal car pour moi une envie d'apprendre est plus importante que de nous contraindre à apprendre. Il y a trop de travail et le nombre d'heures de cours est trop élevé ce qui nous empêche de suivre correctement. Les profs sont trop théoriques et l'utilité des cours dans nos vies futures n'est pas toujours prouvée.
5. Pour moi, l'école sert à lire, écrire, s'exprimer correctement et à se socialiser, soit les bases fondamentales de la réussite au niveau scolaire, social et du travail. Je pense qu'elle réalise cet objectif. Elle pourrait mieux faire en organisant mieux la journée scolaire (les emplois du temps) et mieux répartir la quantité de travail.
6. L'école sert à nous instruire, à nous apprendre de nouvelles choses et nous explique pourquoi le monde est ainsi aujourd'hui. L'école sert à nous préparer pour un bon avenir et avoir le métier que l'on

souhaite. Oui elle réalise cet objectif. Elle pourrait faire mieux en aidant beaucoup plus les élèves dans leur orientation.

7. L'école nous sert à avoir une culture générale, aussi à nous préparer pour le travail. Je pense que les programmes sont mal construits, il y a des chapitres dans certaines matières qui ne nous servent pas. Je pense aussi que le niveau de langue d'ici est très mauvais, elle devrait la manière dont elle apprend aux élèves les langues étrangères, et favoriser les voyages pour nous entraîner. Je pense que les écoles professionnelles sont mieux elles nous préparent plutôt au travail qu'on veut faire.

8. L'école sert à donner un enseignement et un raisonnement aux jeunes.

9. L'école sert à apprendre et découvrir des choses. Elle nous forme pour pouvoir accéder plus tard à un métier que nous plaît.

10. Pour moi l'école sert à assurer mon avenir dans la société, je dois l'avouer je n'aime pas du tout l'école mais pour avoir un bon avenir je suis obligé. Je pense qu'elle pourrait faire mieux utilisant des ordinateurs pendant les cours.

11. L'école sert à nous apprendre des choses pour nous former à un métier futur. Certaines matières ne servent à rien pour un métier précis (ex : Pour devenir prof de français il n'y a pas trop besoin des maths). Il faudrait peut-être que les élèves soient plus libres dans leurs choix d'enseignement, quoi que la majorité ne sachant pas quoi faire de leur avenir ce n'est peut-être pas une très bonne idée.

12. L'école sert à apprendre certaines choses qui nous seront plus ou moins utiles dans la vie mais pas toujours. Elle sert également à rencontrer des camarades et à se faire des amis. L'école pourrait revoir un peu son système, retirer des choses pour pouvoir en mettre de nouvelles un peu plus appropriées.

13. L'école nous apprend des choses qui nous permettent de devenir quelqu'un et elle nous prépare au monde du travail. Entre autres oui, cela dépend aussi de l'établissement.

14. L'école joue un rôle très important chez l'homme. Elle le rend plus intelligent, plus cultivé, plus sociable et prépare un avenir correct. Mais parfois celle-ci n'est pas assez performante dans quelques points : certains professeurs ne s'intéressent pas assez à certains élèves ou ne sont pas assez présents personnellement pour des élèves, elle est parfois injuste, si les élèves sont agités ils ne savent pas vraiment faire pour qu'ils se calment, etc.

15. L'école sert essentiellement à s'instruire et à obtenir des diplômes pour des métiers futurs. Si l'école sert à s'instruire, par contre elle ne donne pas forcément un travail malgré les diplômes.

16. PAS DE RÉPONSE

17. À apprendre et à avoir un raisonnement à peu près sauf dans certaines matières que nous sommes obligés d'étudier alors que ce que l'on veut faire n'a aucun rapport. En laissant de la seconde les élèves

ne pas étudier une matière pour laquelle ils sont sûrs de ne l'utiliser plus tard et qui leur rapporte des mauvaises notes et baisse leur moyenne.

18. A apprendre et à rencontrer des gens pour le collège et la primaire

19. Pour moi l'école sert avant tout à réussir sa vie professionnelle, elle réalise ces objectifs au niveau scolaire, mais la vie ne se rapporte pas qu'à la scolarité, il y a aussi la vie ensemble, la soutient, la joie, la compréhension des autres et pour moi toutes ces valeurs ne sont pas présentes. Je pense qu'il faudrait améliorer les relations entre les élèves, trop de personnes ont des idées sur les personnes qu'ils ne connaissent pas, pour connaître une personne il faut pouvoir le comprendre, trop de personnes ne cherchent pas à comprendre il se contente juste de poser des étiquettes et de juger un livre juste à sa couverture.

20. Pour moi, l'école sert à apprendre la culture de notre pays, son passé. Apprendre de nombreuses matières qui nous permettront d'avoir un métier. Elle sert à se familiariser avec le monde du travail et nous y préparer. Elle doit également créer un cadre positif pour les élèves. Je pense que l'école réalise bien cet objectif et qu'elle essaie de mettre en place au maximum les conditions pour nous permettre de réussir. Elle pourrait néanmoins axer un peu plus ses exigences sur la tolérance, les contacts entre les gens, le respect. Elle pourrait créer des cadres un peu plus favorables en réduisant les exigences des professeurs qu'on tendance à déstabiliser les élèves.

21. Pour moi, l'école est une sorte de filtre, qui classe les personnes : les personnes avec une famille intégrée au système et les personnes qui sont des enfants d'immigrés et qui sont courageux ; ils font des études générales. Et de l'autre côté, les personnes moins courageuses ou qui ont moins de facilités qui se spécialisent plus tôt. L'école pourrait mieux faire en soutenant mieux les enfants livrés à eux-mêmes, les pousser vers des études longues afin qu'ils gagnent mieux leurs vies.

22. Pour moi, l'école sert à apprendre un métier, mais aussi à connaître le monde (histoire, géographies, langues...). L'école n'est pas spécialisée assez tôt. Je pense que l'on devrait nous parler d'orientation, de l'avenir, directement à l'entrée du collège. Je me demande souvent à quoi va me servir de savoir calculer les longueurs d'un triangle ou de connaître la structure d'un atome. Si j'avais eu le choix en 6ème (à peu près 11 ans) j'aurais arrêté les matières scientifiques et me serais concentré sur l'histoire et le français.

23. Pour moi, l'école sert avant tout à enseigner les élèves, à les faire cultiver, et leur apprendre la vie en communauté. Cet objectif se réalise, parce que on apprend beaucoup de choses sur la vie, grâce à l'histoire-géographie, et grâce à l'éducation civique. Ce qu'on apprend à l'école, nous permet de mieux nous connaître, de connaître le monde dans lequel on vit avec toute son histoire.

24. Je vais à l'école pour m'éduquer, apprendre la vie de tous les jours. Je n'y vais pas pour apprendre des choses par cœur. J'aime l'ambiance qu'il y a dans ma classe et je pense que c'est une chose importante. J'apprends à vivre en société, avec des individus de différents âges.



25. Pour moi elle nous forme a de futurs metiers, nous mélanger ethniquement mais a par quelques professeurs, la plupart n'essaie pas de nous aider, j'ai l'impression qu'on veut nous sortir du système scolaire afin de laisser les personnes intelligente naturellement suivre leurs études dès la seconde et de former les autre a des meteir pas interessant et mal remuneré.

26. Pour moi, l'école nous apprend des choses, avec l'école nous pouvons trouver un emploi plus tard, cela peut aider les relations entre les gens ; pour qu'il n'y est pas de racisme. L'école est laïque.

27. Pour moi l'école sert juste a nous classer, a nous classer injustement : en fonction de la culture des parents on sera inciter differement a poursuivre de longues études et ne voyant pas l'interet concret de l'école dans la vie on est pousses dans des études courtes sans le vouloir. Elle pourrait tous simplement nous apprendre : l'histoire (erreurs passés de l'homme + différents régimes/consaicances de ses régimes), les SES (comment fonctionne le monde) et nous apprendre a savoir dire ce que l'on pense.

28. L'école sert à nous apprendre des choses, et a nous orienter sur notre métier. Je pense que beaucoup de choses qui nous sont apprises seront pour la plupart inutiles car elles ne nous serviront a rien pour ce que nous voulons faire. On devrait être orienté et apprendre des choses sur le secteur dans lequel on compte travailler plus tôt.

29. L'école pourrait mieux faire en fesant un cour dédié aux différentes cultures dans le monde entier. L'idée serait d'étudier chaque société mais dans la vérité étudier ce qui est vrai et pas ce qu'on veut nous faire croire. L'école sert à instruire et à former la société de demain. L'école ne réalise pas totalement cet objectif, surtout le lycée on est plus libre et les élèves n'on pas besoin que les professeurs leurs explique qu'ils doivent acceptés les autres. C'est une chose qui est appris dans l'éducation des parents.

30. Pour moi, l'école sert à enseigner des choses, à nous apprendre des choses qui nous serviront à continuer des études, à se qualifier dans certains domaines et à aboutir à quelque chose de concret, comme un métier qui nous plaira et nous fera réussir dans la vie, financièrement, et qui nous mettra à l'aise dans la société et notre vie. L'école réalise plus ou moins bien cet objectif, car certains profs enseignent bien, et on l'esprit pédagogue, mais pas tous. Il faut savoir cerner les élèves, ne pas les enfoncer, et les aider dans leurs projets ou leurs difficultés.

31. L'école sert à acquire un savoir pour pouvoir faire un bon métier, mais elle aide aussi en ce qui concerne la communauté, apprendre à vivre ensemble. L'école réalise son objectif, chacun de nous a la possibilité à accérir le savoir.

32. L'école sert à nous instruire et à nous apprendre des choses qui nous serviront de pilier pour notre vie futur. L'école pourrait faire mieux si quelque professeurs était plus compréhensif et aide chaque élève individuellement pour sa réussite.

33. Pour moi l'école est un lieu d'apprentissage. Nous venons au lycée pour apprendre et faire en sorte que tout ce que l'on apprend nous aide dans notre vie future. C'est l'école et les diplômes que j'acquies au fil des études qui m'orienteront vers mon futur métier. L'école est la base, aujourd'hui dans notre société sans diplôme on est bloqué, on ne peut rien faire c'est pourquoi il faut travailler sérieusement à l'école. Elle réalise cet objectif ; je viens, je travaille et je rentre chez moi, rien de plus simple. En ce qui concerne des idées amélioratrices pour l'école je n'en ai pas car ça ne serait que des futilités (+ou de ci – de ça), rien de concret et d'important.

34. A mon avis l'école c'est d'abord pour apprendre à lire et à écrire... Mais elle sert aussi à aider à réaliser ce qu'on veut faire et à former les futures générations à faire pas seulement ce qu'ils ont envie de faire mais aussi ce que le pays où l'on vit ou où on veut vivre peut leur proposer de faire c'est pourquoi je crois que se serait bien de se spécialiser très tôt vers des filières qui proposent des emplois dans le pays où l'on vit peut nous donner.

35. L'école est un lieu pour apprendre. Mais certaines personnes ne sont pas conscientes de cela. Oui, c'est aussi un lieu de sociabilité mais le premier objectif c'est l'apprentissage. Mais je pense qu'il ne faut pas mettre des lourdeurs sur l'éducation et plutôt faire une éducation plus ludique peut-être qu'elle attirera plus de monde... Et bien sûr ne pas tout attendre des élèves et les laisser un petit peu respirer. Aussi investir plus sur l'éducation sera bénéfique.

#### **Question 55**

**Si tu penses qu'il existe des injustices dans la société, penses-tu avoir les capacités de les changer ? Crois-tu dans le processus politique (d'aller voter, travailler comme militant, participer dans des manifestations, etc.) et dans son pouvoir de changer la société ? Si non, y a-t-il d'autres moyens ou d'autres contextes, en dehors de la politique traditionnelle, où on peut espérer pouvoir changer des choses ?**

1. Oui, je pense qu'il y a beaucoup d'injustices dans la société, je pense avoir des capacités de les changer, car si j'ai une envie j'aurai une grande détermination je pense que participer à des manifestations et autres ça ne sert pas beaucoup. Si il y a un moyen de faire changer la société c'est que les enfants immigrés de maintenant travaillent bien à l'école réussissent leurs études et prouvent que l'on a les mêmes capacités qu'eux.

2. Je pense qu'il existe de nombreuses injustices dans la société et que nous avons les capacités de les changer à travers les droits civiques que nous avons. Je suis sûr que les manifestations par exemple peuvent influencer sur les choix de la société.

3. Je ne pense pas qu'une seule personne peut changer le monde mais à plusieurs même on arrive pas à changer les injustices on se serait au moins fait entendre. Voter c'est bien mais est-ce pour autant que ça va changer grand-chose ? Non je ne pense pas mais j'espère. Si on pouvait changer la façon de

penser de certaines personnes ça serait bien car avec ce qu'on montre à la télé, dans les journaux, etc.... les gens se font des fausses idées car je ne pense pas que les médias disent toujours la vérité, c'est pour cela en partie que la mentalité de certaines personnes n'est bien, même si j'ai aucun droits de juger la façon de penser de certaine personnes je le fais car on a la chance d'avoir une liberter d'expression en France mais maintenant chacun peut dire faire et pense ce qu'il veut sans qu'il n'offensent personnes. On peut toujours essayer de changer le monde parce que je pense qu'on a rien sans rien et qui ne tente rien n'a rien... Alors, je ne suis pas contre le faite de faire des manifestations ou de voter mais je ne pense pas que ça changera le monde.

4. Toutes les injustices sont déjà pointes du doigt et en cour de résolution et si je pense dire ma façon de penser aux autres, c'est la seul chose que je peux modifier. Des action de contact avec les enfants serait la meilleur solution.

5. Non, je ne pense pas avoir les capacités de les changer. Je ne crois pas au processus politique et dans son pouvoir de changer la société, mais je pense que seul l'éducation des enfants peut faire évoluer la société.

6. Non, je n'ai pas vraiment d'idée !

7. Non, je n'ai pas la capacité de les changer toute seule. Je pense qu'il y ora toujours des injustices.

8. PAS DE RÉPONSE

9. PAS DE RÉPONSE

10. On pourrait espérer de changer des choses au niveau du racisme, de l'homophobie.

11. Je ne penses pas pouvoir changer les injustices de la société. Pour défendre des causes il faut militer, et manifester. Pour faire avancer la politique, et donc certains changements, il faut voter. En ce qui concerne la xénophobie et l'homophobie, je pense que l'on peut changer la mentalité des gens. Il faudrait ouvrir leurs connaissances concernant ces deux sujets, il faudrai faire en sorte qu'ils voient les autres exactement comme eux.

12. Je ne pense pas avoir les capacités de les changer. Oui, sa a peut changer la société si les gens font part de leurs mécontentement, de leurs changement d'avis au niveau politique, etc.... Peut-être que la société va modifier se qui ne va pas.

13. Oui, il existe des injustices dans la société. Non je n'ai pas la capacité de les changers. (ex : vis-à-vis des femmes, elles ont toujours été désavantager et cela depuis des siècles. Malgré qu'il est eu le droit des femmes cela n'a pas changer grand-chose.) Non, je ne crois pas au processus politique.

14. Je ne pense pas pouvoir changer les injustices dans le monde, je pense pouvoir aider à les changer. Pouvoir changer toutes ces injustices est presque impossible, elles font partie de la vie et il y en aura

toujours, le but est de s'occuper des plus graves. Oui le processus politique change la société car il permet d'exprimer son avis personnelle librement mais il y a aussi d'autres moyens pour exprimer son avis comme la musique, la littérature, le cinéma, etc...

15. Pour réellement changer les choses il faut un soulèvement général de la population.

16. PAS DE RÉPONSE

17. Non, tout le monde doit essayer sinon quelque personnes seulement ne peuvent pas changer les choses mais on peut toujours essayer. Non plus les manifestations (des transport) gêne la plupart des gens qui veulent travailler. Oui au niveau de la discrimination au travail et autre.

18. Non, je ne pourrais rien changer. La politique peut provoquer des changements si les politiques avaient le courage de le faire. On peut esperer voir changer les choses si chacun faisait un effort (ex : pour l'ecologie) et si l'état allait aussi dans ce sens avec des lois.

19. Personnellement je ne pense pas être en pouvoir de changer les injustices. Je pense qu'ensemble, avec la solidarité il est possible de provoquer des réactions, des changements, mais pour cela il faut que les mouvement soit massif, car un mouvement personnel passe inaperçus. Pour changer les chose il peut y avoir des exemple que l'on peut prendre en compte, qui peuvent faire réagir comme le sport, la mixité des races, l'unions de personne de tous pays pour gagner un même jeux peut être révélateur et accroitre son pouvoir avec les spectateur...

20. Je ne pense pas avoir les capacités de les changer car je n'ai pas assez d'influence sur la société. Je pense que aller voter n'est pas efficace car le président peut changer la société et peut avoir cacher des projets, on ne peut donc pas prévoir. Participer à des manifestations peut faire changer la société car elles exercent une pression et peut faire céder les entreprises, les gens... Les associations qui militent ont des impacts sur la population car elles la sensibilise. Elles peuvent mobiliser de nombreuses personnes et elles ont déjà prouver qu'elles pouvaient avoir un impact sur la société. Leur rôle est important.

21. En France, exprimé ses idées est très difficile. Le parcours pour devenir politicien est très chère et très difficile. Etre le « fils de » aide beaucoup. On en a la preuve de Jean Sarkozy, le fils de notre 'très chère' Président de la République, qui, malgré avoir redoublé deux fois à Sciences Politique, a obtenu un poste de responsable politique. Mais le changement est possible : il faut avoir une volonté de fer.

22. J'ai cru (comme beaucoup de personnes) que Barack Obama à lui tout seul pourrait changer notre monde ! Il existe beaucoup d'injustice dans notre société mais c'est les bénéficiaires de ces injustices qui gouverne alors ils ne voient pas l'utilité de changer les choses. Je n'ai pas l'impression de pouvoir tout changer tout seul. J'ai souvent l'impression que l'on nous cache plein de choses (11 septembre, les

américains sur la lune, le secteur 54 ?...) les manifestations ne changent que peu de choses, seuls les révolutions font vraiment évoluer la société.

23. Dans la société, beaucoup d'injustice persiste. Certaines sont possible de changer, par des gestes simples comme par exemple en allant voter, pour montrer notre choix sur la vie politique, dire ce qu'on pense, on peut aussi participer aux manifestations, pour nous exprimer, montrer notre désaccord avec la société. Tous cela peut changer la société, parce que si les lois ne sont pas acceptées par les individus, et qu'elles sont protestées, les lois vont être pas appliquées, et d'autres lois vont être faites et en faveur des choix des individus.

24. Je pense qu'il faut savoir être audacieux pour se faire entendre. Tout seul, c'est très difficile. Il faut savoir ce que l'on veut vraiment et le montrer en allant voter et en participant à des manifestations. Je pense qu'il faut avoir un bon esprit d'équipe pour faire partager et échanger ses idées, car tout seul c'est presque impossible. Je pense que la musique peut influencer les avis des individus concernant des choix politiques. Par exemple, on entend souvent dans des textes de rap des révoltes contre le gouvernement actuel.

25. Ça serait que la population par des sondages émettent leurs idées et que si ces idées ont été émises plusieurs fois soit votées par un référendum.

26. Oui je pense que le processus politique permet de changer la société.

27. Je ne pense pas réellement pouvoir les changer, bien que je veux essayer, je ne pense pas réellement que la société nous le permet. Pour ma part je trouve qu'une élection présidentielle c'est la manipulation des citoyens, la preuve notre président actuel. Une manifestation et un militant peuvent très bien être ignorés. Pour changer quelque chose il faudrait créer un pays pacifiste et y rassembler des personnes ouvertes non pas attirés par l'appât du gain.

28. Il existe beaucoup d'injustices dans la société et je pense qu'il est possible de changer ça à condition d'être extrêmement nombreux et d'avoir des relations.

29. Il existe beaucoup d'injustices dans la société, je ne pense pas avoir les capacités de toutes les changer, mais je pourrai certainement en changer certaines. Je pense que pour changer les choses il faut vraiment sortir des gens de tout les jours et make a difference (you have to show them that you're really not scared) Pour que les choses changent il faut que les gens vous écoutent, savoir s'exprimer. Je pense que c'est en votant ou en manifestant qu'on change énormément de choses. Mais c'est déjà bien et absolument nécessaire pour le fonctionnement de la société et pour qu'elle soit un minimum égale.

30. Oui le processus politique peut changer la société, car chacun a le droit à la parole et peut exprimer ses avis. S'il n'est pas d'accord avec une réforme ou un sujet, il peut manifester et essayer de faire comprendre à la politique (du moins, ceux qui s'en charge), ses opinions.

31. C'est vrai qu'il y a beaucoup d'injustices dans la société, mais à 16 ans on ne peut pas faire grand-chose. Par exemple à la rentrée dernière beaucoup de lycéens et moi-même avons manifestés et bloqué le lycée contre la nouvelle réforme du lycée, cela dit la loi est passée. Je ne vois vraiment pas comment changer ça peut être créée une A.G face à face entre les personnes concernées et trouver une solution (par exemple un groupe de lycéens face à ceux qui veulent appliquer la réforme).

32. Je ne pense pas qu'il y a de lourdes injustices de notre pays, il faut juste que les aides soient plus performantes et que nos processus politiques se fassent de manière plus conjugale. C'est vrai qu'il existe encore le racisme dans la France, rien n'est parfait, mais le pays fait en sorte d'aider les gens par des aides financières (chômage, RSA,...), des aides médicales (CMU, sécurité sociale), une sécurité sociale et aussi des associations qui aident les plus démunies.

33. Dans la société d'aujourd'hui je constate malgré mon expérience de la vie très minime quelques injustices. Il y a plusieurs types d'injustice, par exemple quand je vois deux jeunes noirs marchant tranquillement se faire contrôler sans raison par la police tandis que quand c'est deux jeunes blancs la police leur dit carrément « bonjour », je suis choqué, il n'y a rien de plus discriminatoire pour deux jeunes que par leur couleur de peau ou leur style vestimentaire ils soient fichés ainsi. Je pense sérieusement que s'impliquer activement dans la vie politique ou dans les manifestations etc. peut amener des solutions mais bon après on ne peut dire « Stop à la discrimination raciale » mais comment faire ? C'est dans les pensées des gens, les clichés péjoratifs qu'ils peuvent avoir demeurent dans leur esprit. Avec un peu plus de tact et de savoir-faire, peut-être que les personnes évolueront, je l'espère.

34. PAS DE RÉPONSE

35. C'est sûr qu'il y a des injustices dans la société c'est très rare qu'il y en ait pas. Pour pouvoir changer quelque chose il faut que chacun fasse quelque chose et ne pas attendre que ça se passe, il faut être actif. Avec un peu d'effort donné par chacun c'est sûr qu'il y aura beaucoup de changement. Oui si l'on participe à la vie active sans en faire trop c'est sûr que les processus politiques auront un pouvoir de changer la société.

## Appendix F – Complete Transcript of Interview with Madame Parnaud

Transcript and Commentary  
Interview with Madame Parnaud  
Lycée Mitterrand  
February 19, 2010

1. Field notes, explanations and researcher comments appear in italics.
2. Direct quotes appear in normal type.
3. The interview was conducted in French and the translation is my own.

----- TRANSCRIPT -----

*- At first glance/listening, she already sounds a bit tired, maybe dejected, maybe frustrated by my questions.*

*- She's worried about the representativity of my study, given that I'm only studying one teacher/class.*

*- She says the Ministry had done a study with a representative sample a couple of years ago. Teachers across different types of schools (from prestigious ones to ZEPs) received questionnaires with closed, yes/no questions that they returned and were then analyzed.*

*- I explain that my goal is not necessarily to be representative, although I do wonder about this question. I say that there are trends in comparative educational research, whereas quantitative data and large samples were once given priority, qualitative/ethnographic data has gained ground. I talk about the mixed methods of my study.*

TRAVIS: This is why I also have to ask you questions about who these students and how they got here.

MADAME PARNAUD: There, you'll have to ask the principal. I don't know. I just got here.

TRAVIS: But from what you perceive?

MADAME PARNAUD: I know nothing. I don't know what criteria are used in Paris to distribute students in the high schools. I know there are selective high schools, but apparently, the criteria change every year, according to some former colleagues of mine. But I know absolutely nothing about this. You'll have to see the administration. I don't know.

TRAVIS: (Kind of chuckling) Ok, I will do that.

*I haven't gotten my point across that she has to have SOME idea about who these kids are from simply interacting with them. She won't go in to this.*

MADAME PARNAUD: All I can tell you is that we don't have the worst.

TRAVIS: But not the worst either...

MADAME PARNAUD: Not the worst either. Apparently, Lycée DELETED, the school next to us, has slightly superior recruitment to ours. How it's done, I have no idea. You can go to the administration or to a guidance counselor".

TRAVIS: (4:05) So this means that the class makeup that you have doesn't impact your teaching?

MADAME PARNAUD: Oh, yes it does. We have really heterogeneous classes, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-5 (apparently the name of the class I'm observing) not really, but others are.

TRAVIS: So, the class I'm observing is more homogenous?

MADAME PARNAUD: Uh, yes, they're more homogenous than the sophomores ('secondes') I had last year.

TRAVIS: How so?

MADAME PARNAUD: There are fewer 'really good' students. Last year, in a class the same size, we had 10 that were really good and 10 that were really weak and the rest in the middle. This year, we have middle of the road students, but they're really participatory.

TRAVIS: So to describe them, you'd say they're mediocre...

MADAME PARNAUD: No, not mediocre, middle of the road ('moyen'), but that's the problem with these Parisian high schools. There's a little minority that have these little goals of entering a prépa...

TRAVIS: That are realistic or not?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, that are realistic. So, what to do for those students, who you have to obviously push? Even though you get push the entire class? That creates a problem for me. In 2<sup>nd</sup>, not so much because it's a general class. But in 1<sup>st</sup> and Terminale, you've got to push your class and then it's evaluating, assessing differently...

TRAVIS: Meaning?

MADAME PARNAUD: Meaning not expecting the same answers from everybody. The bar is higher for some students. Well, that's how I do it. I expect more from some than others.

TRAVIS: I understand, I think that's normal.

TRAVIS: In comparison with the middle school you were teaching at before in the banlieue, is there a difference in the student population.

MADAME PARNAUD: Yes, there, 85% of the kids were recently-arrived immigrants.

TRAVIS: So, how does that change your daily work as a teacher?

MADAME PARNAUD: Relations are not the same, well not with this 2<sup>nd</sup>-5, they're from more modest social backgrounds and they expect/wait for ('attendent') something from their teachers. They come talk to us, when we encourage them, we see that it makes them happy. When you have students from higher social milieux, they're there for the classes and that's it. With the 2<sup>nd</sup>-5, they say 'hi', they're interested. Last year, there were students that said hi and didn't even take notes in class because outside of class, they had what they needed. That really surprised me because I wasn't used to it.

TRAVIS: Because in your old middle school, the students more easily came to you...

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, when they trust the teachers, they want more and we give them everything ('on leur emmene tout'). - *This is somewhat dismissive of parents but it's also true.*

TRAVIS: *I'm thinking that this is interesting given that earlier she said she had no idea who these students were.*

TRAVIS: (9:20) So, how does one develop this climate of confidence between teacher and student?

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know (laughs).

TRAVIS: (Laughing) But you do it; I've observed it.

MADAME PARNAUD: Everyone does what he can, trying to listen to the students. You've got to first listen to them. When something isn't going well, try to detect it, ask them what's up, not fuel the fire, ask them to come at the end of class.

TRAVIS: And they do it?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, but it depends on each person. This is how I do it.

TRAVIS: I understand.



TRAVIS: So, how long have you been teaching, 20 years?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, maybe more, I started in 1984. 25 years.

TRAVIS: Have you seen the profession evolve in comparison to when you started? What about the expectations of students?

MADAME PARNAUD: I've always taught in 'difficulty zones'; the expectations of students have always been the same.

TRAVIS: It's easy to become disgruntled, to lose patience with teenagers, to become stale, etc. I have noticed that you still enjoy teaching. How do you stay fresh?

MADAME PARNAUD: I like being in front of students; it's everything around it that I don't like, the institution, I have difficulty with. But it's true that when I'm in class with students, I like it a lot. I couldn't see myself doing anything else. But the profession of teaching has been degraded. Not because of anything students have done.

TRAVIS: Could you elaborate?

MADAME PARNAUD: We're required to do more and more things with less and less time. We have side duties that bog us down and keep us from our main duties. Guidance tasks, administrative paperwork, meetings that aren't very useful. All of this requires energy and in my mind, it's not what is most important.

TRAVIS: So, what's most important?

MADAME PARNAUD: (12:52) To have time to correctly prepare classes, to correctly grade papers. We can't do it anymore. I no longer correctly grade papers.

TRAVIS: What does that mean to 'correctly grade a paper'?

MADAME PARNAUD: To explain in detail what's wrong, to have time to re-teach things in front of the class that are common mistakes across papers. What I used to do, which we absolutely can't do here because we don't have our own classrooms and we're always running all over the place, is to ask students to come during an hour of down time to the class so that we can go over things.

MADAME PARNAUD: In this school and I think it's unique to this school, I feel like I'm going to the factory. It's a factory. I don't feel right in this school.

TRAVIS: What would you change?

MADAME PARNAUD: I can't leave because I lost all of my points (transferring here). So now I'm here for 10 years and I tell myself that it's impossible to work in such conditions. Maybe because before, I worked in good conditions.

MADAME PARNAUD: The middle school was smaller; here there are 2000 students. We don't have sufficient facilities; you arrive in a classroom that they say is equipped with information technology, you try two or three times and base your course on it, and it doesn't work. You then give up. In high school, you can get by a little easier but with middle school, you can't even project an image on the board. I'm waiting for an inspector to come.

TRAVIS: You haven't been inspected here?

MADAME PARNAUD: No, not here. So I'm waiting for him to come because I can't do anything.

TRAVIS: And what could that do for you, having an inspector come?

MADAME PARNAUD: It would just feel good to tell someone, that's it (laughs).

TRAVIS: And you think you would be heard?

MADAME PARNAUD: Not at all, of course not.

TRAVIS: (16:37) So what enables you to get through, to tolerate this atmosphere? Is it the time you spend with students?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yes. First of all, I like the subject matter. I really enjoy preparing lessons and figuring out how to get them to understand certain things. And the students, I like them a lot; well, I'm not here to like them but...it's not a problem for me; I work with young people...

TRAVIS: You are not here to like them? Why are you here? (laughs)

MADAME PARNAUD: I'm here to transmit knowledge to them, a savoir-faire, a behavior...that's more the case with middle schoolers.

TRAVIS: You talked about your passion for the subject matter. In your opinion, what should students learn in a history/geography class? What should they get out of it?

MADAME PARNAUD: An opening of the mind, curiosity about what surrounds them, I don't claim to do anything else. To get them to have specific knowledge, that only minimally interests me.

TRAVIS: How does one cultivate this curiosity?

MADAME PARNAUD: With curricula, studying how different societies function at different time periods, that maybe leads one to ask questions about the importance of human diversity.

TRAVIS: And how do they show you that they're curious? How do you know at the end of the day that you've done your job and that they've shown that they're intellectually curious or open-minded?

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know. When they ask questions. And sometimes even questions that aren't related to what we're doing, it's caused them to think about something else...

TRAVIS: You spoke about the curriculum. Does the curriculum in place allow you to do what you want to do with students, what you see as necessary?

MADAME PARNAUD: Within the program, there's room, there's flexibility...

TRAVIS: Can you explain to me how the curriculum works for you? Do you see it as a tool, as a constraint, as an obligation?

MADAME PARNAUD: It's a constraint that you have to respect, but within it, you can take whatever supporting document you see fit. You don't have lessons that are pre-prepared. I can even sometimes deviate from the curriculum.

TRAVIS: Can you think of an example when you did this?

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know, when you get in to more depth, for example in the Première (Junior) curriculum where you talk about establishing the (5<sup>th</sup>) Republic, you can talk about grave crises within the Republic. Voila. Within what is imposed, you can show other things.

TRAVIS: (21:10) I'm a former history teacher; I don't have a lot of experience, only a few years. I was wondering if you talk about 'what is history.'

MADAME PARNAUD: We used to do it, we don't anymore. Yeah, we don't do it anymore.

TRAVIS: So, it's no longer necessary...?

MADAME PARNAUD: Reflecting on what history is, yes, it's helpful. In middle school, often, students ask why we study it.

MADAME PARNAUD: Before, we did it in 6<sup>th</sup> but it was maybe too early, 6<sup>th</sup>. What is history? What are the documents that we use? I guess that worked too. We talk about it when we say that there's not a (singular) truth, when we contrast documents from different perspectives...

TRAVIS: So, it's indirect?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yes, indirectly. Before, there was a lesson on it, but it was really theoretical. And with young students, so it was removed from the curriculum. 20 years ago, we started in 6<sup>th</sup> with 'what is history,' 'what is geography'...

TRAVIS: I've noticed that there are often changes in curricula, political changes, reforms, etc. How does one follow? And do these changes really change your day-to-day work and the profession itself?

MADAME PARNAUD: We have a new reform that is coming; we don't have the official curriculum yet. *Reforms seem to slide off her back.*

Maybe they'll tell us to teach something different or do something different. Each Minister and each cabinet has his reforms. I'm a little blaisée about that.

TRAVIS: So, the impression that I get is that this doesn't change much. Even if there are reforms...

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know. I don't know what they're going to ask of us. Are we going to emphasize skills? I don't know much.

TRAVIS: Yeah, but with the flexibility inside the curriculum, maybe each teacher can bring his/her own approach to the table.

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, each teacher has his/her own personal approach.

TRAVIS: (25:15) I'd like to talk about Civics Education

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't do it.

TRAVIS: And why? And how you came to that decision?

MADAME PARNAUD: It bothers me.

TRAVIS: I'm curious to know why.

MADAME PARNAUD: It bothers me because I don't have the intellectual knowledge, at least at the high school level. I see that the ECJS curriculum is really well done and it's done by teachers who teach social science and economics. They've studied economics and sociology and law and I have done absolutely none of that. When I see my colleagues teach themes like 'the family,' they have knowledge, they have the foundation, ways to approach the subject that I don't. I never studied those disciplines, so I consider myself inept and unable to correctly teach them. That was not part of my training.

TRAVIS: I understand.

TRAVIS: It's interesting because I just came from a curricular intervention that was done in a school setting by SOS Racisme. It occurred because a young French teacher, who was responsible for teaching ECJS at her school, remarked certain lacunae in her knowledge and called upon them to come.

TRAVIS: So, how does this work? Anybody can teach ECJS? It can be paired with any subject? It just has to be taught?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yes. Often, it's give to history/geography teachers because we do civic education in middle school. But it can be done by other teachers.

TRAVIS: At any rate, there's going to be nothing on the BAC from ECJS?

MADAME PARNAUD: No.

TRAVIS: So that can justify one's choice to limit time spent on ECJS?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yes, yes. Of course. But there are colleagues that still do it. I know I have a history colleague that does veritable lessons in ECJS; he organizes debates but it's not my thing. Voila.

TRAVIS: That answers my question very well.

TRAVIS: (28:36) Can we talk about the BAC? We don't have an equivalent in the US. How present is the BAC in your lesson planning, in your grading, in the activities you give?

MADAME PARNAUD: There are well-defined types of exercises on the Baccalauréat and you have to teach them how to do an "exploitation d'un document", "explication d'une étude documentaire", a "croquis", a "dissertation". You start this in 2<sup>nd</sup>, continue in 1<sup>st</sup> and in Terminale. It's mostly methodology.

TRAVIS: Do you find these methods to be useful? If you didn't have this constraint of the BAC, would you use the same methods?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, in spite of it all, because you have to be able to "commenter un document" in history/geography, it's useful...to compare/contrast documents in a group of documents...even though I'm against this final examination.

TRAVIS: Oh really? Can you talk about this?

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know...what is asked of the students in History/Geography, and in the majority of subjects...what is asked in terms of theory is very difficult, excessively difficult...many of them can't do it and so all of a sudden, we're asked to boost scores; it doesn't make any sense. In general, it's too difficult. I consider that what we ask of our students, from 6<sup>th</sup>, even from primary school up through Terminale, is too hard. So, we find ourselves with many students who are in a situation of failure, some quit. I think the French system is based on discouraging students, some quit, some get help elsewhere but overall, it's too difficult. When we're asked to 'problematize' a lesson, starting in 6<sup>th</sup> grade...I don't know, I first saw the word 'problematique' in my bachelors degree or even after that. Now, everything has to be 'problematized'. Some things I correct are just simple questions and not 'problematiques.' The students can't problematize and I can't penalize them for this. When the demands are too high, we have to grade them in a lax or generous way. They even tell us in grading meetings for the Bac that we're to grade generously because otherwise we wouldn't have enough students passing. It becomes absurd and loses any value. And the students know it.

TRAVIS: (33:10) Well, my research is on educating for citizenship in a broad sense. School is supposed to form future citizens, what role do you see for teachers or for the school in general in the formation of future citizens?

MADAME PARNAUD: *(laughs a bit and repeats my question in a somewhat questioning manner, takes a long pause)*. I don't know. It's a question...for me, it's problematic. Notably, in terms of the subject matter, in history/geography, what is the purpose of studying history? First of all, the answer is political because the curricula are made by politicians. Should all citizens know certain moments in the history of the nation, and should these moments be the same for everybody? I'm very critical of this. For me, history is not there (in the curriculum) to make citizens. What is a citizen? We can very easily be a good citizen without having ever studied history/geography. It's a very difficult question and to answer it, school, if it succeeds in enabling students to better understand the society in which they live, and give them keys to be able to understand what surrounds them, it's in this way that the school can form responsible future citizens.

TRAVIS: I completely agree with you...

MADAME PARNAUD: Our curricula are a bit more open now, especially in terms of Europe. Before, the curricula were very French. But societies outside of Europe are almost completely absent.

*A colleague walks in and will be in room for remainder of interview.*

TRAVIS: I completely agree with what you said, but if in order to be good citizens, students need to understand the society in which they live and it's not talked about in class...

MADAME PARNAUD: We talk about it, we talk about different political models...

TRAVIS: But does it remain abstract? Is it not distant? Are they able to link what they learn and what they live?

MADAME PARNAUD: I think that it remains very abstract.

MADAME PARNAUD: (37:27) I'll give you a very personal example. I've always taught about dictatorship. I had the opportunity to go live in a dictatorship. When I went and lived it, that's when I understood what I was teaching. I was teaching, but if you will, it's just words, it's ideas. After...

TRAVIS: So, there are things that you have to live through to understand?

MADAME PARNAUD: I think so.

TRAVIS: I imagine that this influenced your teaching afterwards, so when you teach a lesson today on dictatorships, it must not be the same lesson you taught before.

MADAME PARNAUD: No, because experience takes precedent of a purely theoretical reflection. It's through their lived experience that they're going to become citizens.

TRAVIS: Or maybe because of your lived experience? If you've lived through something that they haven't and you succeed in transmitting it...

MADAME PARNAUD: I'm not sure, I'm not convinced.

TRAVIS: Really?

TRAVIS: (38:54) I'm trying a bit to develop my own theory, well, to ask questions about the role of the school...about cultivating and promoting solidarity amongst students, how school can create or facilitate a spirit of solidarity amongst students, between students, parents, teachers, the community...do have ideas on this?

MADAME PARNAUD: Solidarity between students, I don't know. (*awkward silence*) I see that my 2nds (sophomores) this year, this specific class, there's solidarity between them.

TRAVIS: How does one learn about this notion of solidarity?

MADAME PARNAUD: (*after matter-of-factly, but somewhat puzzled repeating the question*) I never asked myself that question. I don't know (*laughter*).

TRAVIS: Because I think, having an outside perspective, being American, I think that our experiences in school are very different in relationship to this idea. There's, I don't know, a real sense of solidarity, of community; one is proud of his school, one proudly wears the colors of the high school, it stays with us until our death and I'm not exaggerating. So, I'm trying to understand why and how this feeling is developed or not in France. And if it's not in school, where is it cultivated? Where do they have a feeling of belonging, where do they belong to something? Voila.

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know. You'll have to ask them that question.

MADAME PARNAUD: I just arrived in this school. I'm just here, just like that. I don't feel involved and don't know what the school can or cannot do.

TRAVIS: And before, in your old middle school, moreso?

MADAME PARNAUD: No. That's not my vision. I work with human beings that are in front of me. The reputation of a school or another...

TRAVIS: It's not a question or reputation

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, but you talked of being proud of your school...

TRAVIS: I meant that it's a place where you feel comfortable, that it leaves a trace or a mark...I remember where I used to teach in Chicago, you had to chase kids away at the end of the day because they didn't want to go home. They felt safe and secure, protected; they felt good at school. Why?

MADAME PARNAUD: I felt that where I worked before, before long breaks, there were certain young girls who didn't want to leave. It was so difficult at home that they did feel safe and protected at school. But it was a safe place; any safe place would have had the same effect.

TRAVIS: Of course.

MADAME PARNAUD: In France, we don't have this school culture. Maybe in the prestigious Parisian high schools where there is a certain elite, but I don't sense it here. But I've also only been here a short while. I don't know. There are student organizations, there's one called 'DELETED', maybe you could talk to them.

TRAVIS: What do they do?

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know. I know it's an organization here. I don't know what they do; they were supposed to come by class, but they never came.

TRAVIS: I already went to talk to kids who are active in the FIDL, the student union, in order to figure out how things worked inside the organization and what kind of activities they took on, etc. I felt a feeling of solidarity, at least within the union but maybe it's because they share the same ideals, the same experiences. But I think this must be learned somewhere, and if it's not done at school, I don't know where it would be done.

MADAME PARNAUD: Maybe in sporting organizations, I don't know. I don't know (*seemingly a bit frustrated by my line of questioning*).

TRAVIS: I'm not sure either. I'm just here as a colleague that would like to collectively think about these questions with you.

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know. In associations, in those movements, probably.

COLLEAGUE: (The colleague who entered a few minutes earlier intervenes) DELETED, if I might intervene, is a group of alumni and what they do, I think, is help finance outings for students. Each student that's a member pays a small amount of dues and with that money, they organize outings to the movies, to expositions, things like that...essentially cultural activities. They do a little bit of help with guidance too because they contact alumni working in different fields and they come to talk about their professional path. So, I think this type of work is also done by the association.

MADAME PARNAUD: Okay.

COLLEAGUE: But otherwise, there have been outings financed by them and that's all I know.

TRAVIS: Thank you, that's very helpful.

TRAVIS: Another line of questioning in my research is to see if they believe in the political process, if they think that their participation is useful. And I wonder how we teach these lessons. How, as teachers, can we encourage them to participate in community life, in civic life, in politics. Or is this even our role? What do you think?

MADAME PARNAUD: (46:36) I explain to them...I'm not here (laughing) to tell them 'get involved' or not. I think that in my lessons, they sense some of my values but then, they do with it what they want.

TRAVIS: So if it's not us, who is it? In your opinion?

MADAME PARNAUD: In my classes, I show them certain things. They understand or that don't. After that, I don't know, they're free.

TRAVIS: Of course, I'm not saying that we're here to preach or push them in a certain direction but still to talk about this idea.

MADAME PARNAUD: We talk a little about it in middle school, in 3<sup>rd</sup>, when we teach about politics and community organizations ('associations'), but for older students, most of them have already chosen their path and they're not going to ask us our opinions. It's amongst themselves that they're going to reflect.

MADAME PARNAUD: There are lessons on the right to vote, on universal suffrage; you transmit quite a bit.

TRAVIS: Of course.

MADAME PARNAUD: But it's true, that I'm not going to go outside of the curriculum to address these questions.

TRAVIS: (*after a pause*) I don't know if I have other questions. Do you have anything else you want to add?

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know, unless there are other things you want to talk about.

TRAVIS: This must seem strange to you, what I'm doing or the types of questions that I'm asking...

MADAME PARNAUD: No, it's just that I don't see how, in your work, you are going to integrate this into a larger study.

TRAVIS: This conversation?

MADAME PARNAUD: This conversation and the fact that you came to observe the students. I can't see what you're going to be able to do with this. Plus, I'd like to have some feedback/returns.

TRAVIS: Of course; it's my obligation to share my thoughts and conclusions with you. Don't worry, I would like to share with you and continue this work together.

TRAVIS: (50:31) I'm working from a theoretical framework that promotes the humanization of the student, the individuality of the student and I'm trying to see what place this might have in the French system.

MADAME PARNAUD: What is this that you're calling 'humanization'?

TRAVIS: Knowing where he comes from, to help him/her found his/her own path, so that he is fulfilled and that he participates fully in society. Otherwise, I think we might be in a period of political crisis where youth no longer trust and this is not necessarily a good thing...

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know if young people have lost trust. I don't know. When there are important events, they're there. When LePen made it to the second round of the presidential election, they voted. I don't know. I don't think this is a problem.

TRAVIS: Ok, so my question is: if they participate, what pushes them to participate. Because for those who participate, there's an influence, they learn to participate. But it's not the case for everybody; not everybody is influenced, not every one learns how to participate. So if I can close in on what makes someone participate, try to understand how it works...

MADAME PARNAUD: Participate in what?

TRAVIS: In protests, in voting, in community organizations, in reading about politics in the press, etc. What incites them to do this? Is it the school, can the school do it better, is it the parents? I'm trying to put my finger on it.

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't think they're as disengaged as one might say. Maybe they engage themselves differently, but they think. I'm not pessimistic, not at all.

TRAVIS: (54:00) Another question I wonder about is about changing demographics and the make-up of society in France and to what extent differences can or should be recognized.

TRAVIS: Because I find that a French approach that is very 'universalist', liberal, very 'assimilationist' can be a disservice in some cases.

MADAME PARNAUD: Oh yeah?

TRAVIS: But it can also be beneficial. There are advantages and disadvantages and I'm trying to look at this question too.

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah. I was very surprised that in the questionnaire, that students didn't say anything when you talked about 'race'. And when you asked them if they were shocked by anything and they weren't shocked, I was rather surprised. For me, it's shocking.

TRAVIS: How so?

MADAME PARNAUD: Well, because, we don't define, or I don't define a human being by his race.

TRAVIS: But if society does...

MADAME PARNAUD: Okay, if society does it, then at that point, I put quotation marks around 'race'.

TRAVIS: I realize now that I should have explicitly addressed this point with them before distributing the questionnaires. But I find that ignoring this question in France does a disservice especially when we don't recognize that a white person and a black person don't have the same day-to-day experiences in this society. That I, for example, can easily walk into a nice store and not be expected to be a thief, for example; that I can send in application and CV with my photo without fearing being a victim of racial discrimination.

MADAME PARNAUD: It depends on your economic situation.

TRAVIS: Meaning?

MADAME PARNAUD: Already, a black American here would not be perceived like someone from Mali.

TRAVIS: I agree with you.

MADAME PARNAUD: I don't know, a black person with a lot of money would not have any problems. So one must be very careful.

TRAVIS: I completely agree that there are many variables at play that have an impact. But it's also not social a question of social class, either.

MADAME PARNAUD: Not solely, but it plays a large role.

MADAME PARNAUD: And affirmative action ('discrimination positive'), I'm deeply against it. Really, deeply against it.

TRAVIS: How and why?

MADAME PARNAUD: Mentalities start to change a bit with a population that is more and more mixed. But mentalities change more slowly than...

TRAVIS: But could that change more quickly if we spoke openly and frankly?

MADAME PARNAUD: I think that we talk about it. We talk about discrimination in the workplace, discrimination in finding housing. We have the entire judicial arsenal that we need to fight this discrimination. We must work in this direction.

TRAVIS: So, it's really in an anti-discrimination framework that we should work?

MADAME PARNAUD: Yes.



TRAVIS: This takes us to a question of 'communautarisme' that for us doesn't even exist. For us, this can't exist.

MADAME PARNAUD: How is that?

TRAVIS: Because we contend that a minority, even gathered together, even affirming their membership in a minority, cannot threaten a majority, cannot question the Republic, cannot question democracy. In France, it can; this is the definition.

MADAME PARNAUD: I think that no black American would say that he's not American.

TRAVIS: Maybe not, but his black identity might be more important to him than his American identity and we don't find this shocking or if he puts this black identity out front first before his American identity.

MADAME PARNAUD: This, I don't know about. I don't know. You'll have to ask me another question. I don't know anything about it.

TRAVIS: What I'm trying to figure out is if this can be source of strength, if this feeling of belonging can help in the larger context because in France, it's really seen as something that is negative.

MADAME PARNAUD: We function under the idea of assimilation, so each time there was a great immigration, say with the Italians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were pointed out and people threw stones at them during recess at school. Then, they were assimilated. These 'visible minorities', it's certain that... I think that, they're achieving it, they're part of the French nation.

TRAVIS: Sure, I agree but it's through assimilation. And I'm not sure that that's necessary to...

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, but that's our way, our historical way, of assimilating peoples. It's two different models.

TRAVIS: Yes, this is at the heart of my research. Accepting that two models exist, should both societies continue down the same paths or is there going to be some sort of convergence.

MADAME PARNAUD: Maybe, yeah.

TRAVIS: This is at the heart of my research.

MADAME PARNAUD: Okay.

TRAVIS: (1:01:48) For example, in one of the questionnaires...they all said that race wasn't important, in terms who they were friends with, etc. and I expected this. It's very mixed, very heterogeneous. They don't seem to look at or even notice racial differences. But one student, and this caught my eye, said in the questionnaire that she'd prefer to have friends of a different race and a certain feeling of shame came across in her other answers. So, what do I do with this?

MADAME PARNAUD: Last year, some students were doing CPE and research on internet dating and it was interesting to see that this reinforced community identifications because you looked for a partner from within your community. So, the internet, which is supposed to allow for a certain openness, actually was a place in which minorities looked for partners within their own communities.

TRAVIS: I was at another intervention this week done by SOS Racisme in a middle school in (a neighboring) arrondissement and the young man who led the intervention was black, born in France to French parents and at the end of the program, a teacher came over to him and said 'it's great that you're here and speaking to kids because they see that there are black people that speak good French.' I was really shocked by this and saw it as plain and simple racism when she thought she was actually complimenting him.

TRAVIS: I'm wondering too if this assimilationist model isn't considered to be a way of 'taming the beast'...

MADAME PARNAUD: You have to be careful because in many 'banlieues' where there's a high percentage of immigrants, the role model is the football star and that's it. So, success for many African families comes from football. When I was in my other middle school, I did presentations to show that black people succeeded in ways other than football. In these communities, they aren't aware of other paths to success.

TRAVIS: Do they hesitate to buy into this because it's too unfamiliar, too much of a break from their daily life, too much of a sacrifice of their culture of origin?

MADAME PARNAUD: (1:06:40) No, because they no longer have a culture of origin. These milieux no longer have a culture of origin. You have students who can't even correctly pronounce their last names.

TRAVIS: But isn't this a culture of its own, this intermediate space...

MADAME PARNAUD: Yes, yes it is, but we can't speak of 'culture of origin', then (*laughs*). They don't know Africa.

TRAVIS: Okay, it may not be the culture of origin, but does this intermediate space, in and of itself, have its own value?

MADAME PARNAUD: Of course, and at any rate, we're going to have to take this into consideration because it's a particular culture. But just like each group in society. I worked in a rural middle school in the middle of nowhere and when we read about rushing to avoid getting the metro doors stuck on you, they didn't understand. Everybody has their own culture. What is 'culture' with a capital 'c', I don't know.

MADAME PARNAUD: But I agree that we can't shun cultures of origin and I've always fought for l'Education Nationale to recognize this. I don't consider this to be well done because certain people are getting devalued.

TRAVIS: And having a conversation like this, like the one we've been having, do they have the opportunity to have such conversations with informed adults?

MADAME PARNAUD: What do you mean?

TRAVIS: I mean, does this happen in the high school or in middle school, having discussions like the one we just had?

MADAME PARNAUD: I have no idea. I don't have this type of discussion with students. I don't.

TRAVIS: Could this be beneficial?

MADAME PARNAUD: Oh no, you can't put this in a curriculum. These are human relationships that you can establish. I see it this way anyway; you can't institutionalize this. These are relationships you build with certain students.

TRAVIS: Does that mean that a teacher with her class doesn't have a human relationship?

MADAME PARNAUD: You don't talk like that with students. I can't have a conversation like I just had with you with a student. I wouldn't be doing my job. I have lessons to transmit to them, knowledge to transmit. From these lessons and these notions, I try to get across certain values, but I can't abuse the situation and talk them like this without subject matter underlying it.

TRAVIS: Even if you have 10 minutes left at the end of class?

MADAME PARNAUD: No. No. Here, that's not possible. In other schools, one can. Not here, not at 'the factory.'

TRAVIS: So, I'm just trying to understand? It's the time, it's...?

MADAME PARNAUD: It's material. For me, that's a handicap.

TRAVIS: Okay, so in other contexts, you could imagine such discussions or such moments.

MADAME PARNAUD: Of course, but here, you don't have a physical space in which to meet with students. Where are you going to meet with them?

MADAME PARNAUD: If you have a student that wants to continue a discussion after class or ask you a question, you talk to him while you're walking down the hallway or going down the stairs, but that's it.

TRAVIS: (1:12:45) I'm sorry, I realize this isn't all straightened out, but I'm in the middle of collecting data and I'm going to have to sort through it and then organize my thoughts.

MADAME PARNAUD: I know.

TRAVIS: In any case, it's very stimulating. I consider myself to be pretty spoiled to have this time to reflect on these questions and to read.

MADAME PARNAUD: For sure.

TRAVIS: So, thank you for your time, your candor and your openness.

MADAME PARNAUD: So far, what are the differences you've seen?

TRAVIS: Well, on the surface, it seems like the established curriculum carries more weight here. I understand that you have flexibility, but we seem to have more. When I was teaching history, I started every class period with a current events question or a social question of the day. We spent 10 minutes on that and then went into the history lesson of the day. But it's also because in the US, we call it 'social studies' and history is a part of that. We're social studies teachers, so even if we're teaching a history course, it's our role to examine social questions.

MADAME PARNAUD: I'm very rigid, so you might have teachers who teach differently.

TRAVIS: Sure, but we also don't have the Bac exam. So, if there are notions that they don't master at the end of the year, it's not that big of a deal. If they want to do university studies later, of course they have to have a foundation, but...

MADAME PARNAUD: So, if a student wants to go on to major in history, how does it work? Is there make-up work or a bridge for those who don't have the foundation?

TRAVIS: Well, first off, a student will go to a university that's at his/her level. The universities in the US are at different levels in how demanding they are. A student who has mediocre grades in history isn't going to end up at Harvard. He'll go to a school that's at a lower level.

MADAME PARNAUD: That's exactly the type of model that we're fighting against. We don't want that model, that American model that's being imposed.

TRAVIS: It has its advantages and disadvantages.

MADAME PARNAUD: We really see the disadvantages.

TRAVIS: You also have to admit that the prestigious American universities are considered to be the best in the world.

MADAME PARNAUD: That's true.

TRAVIS: But there are really weak schools too. And if equality and equity are our goals, it's true that we're far from achieving them. And it's important that all students be able to access quality studies.

MADAME PARNAUD: Do you work on this too? Social mobility through education?

TRAVIS: Indirectly. You've got to focus on something, but underlying it, yes. That's why there's a need to recognize individual needs because some need an extra push. If there's no flexibility in the system or in the curriculum to recognize individual needs, I don't know how it can succeed, how social mobility is possible.

MADAME PARNAUD: Like I told you, you have to adapt. You don't have the same expectations.

TRAVIS: Differentiated instruction is difficult to do.

MADAME PARNAUD: Yeah, but teachers have to; otherwise, they wouldn't make it.

TRAVIS: Yeah, but there are different approaches, some simply lower the academic level for everyone, some really try to focus on the individual needs of students but it's not easy to do.

MADAME PARNAUD: It's not easy to do. Everyone tries but there's not a cookie cutter for it. Each teacher does the best he can.

TRAVIS: It's very individual and that's what I realize from my study is that the educational system is very dynamic and made up of individual students and teachers and families that it's hard to pin down and grasp. But I think that's also the value of a study like mine. It may not be representative but it likes reading a story; you still get something out of it.

Final pleasantries.

## Appendix G – Reflection on FIDL Conference as it appeared in SSCE Newsletter



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### **Bouncing Back** BY: TRAVIS NESBITT 4TH-YEAR PHD CANDIDATE

A few weeks ago, as the Alpine snow melted in the distance signaling the arrival of spring, I sat in a community center in Lyon, France filled with 500 high school students and felt my dissertation slip from a state of apparent solidity to that of a scattering and uncontainable liquid. It was a low and frustrating moment. Ironically, I had begun the weekend on an incredible high note, feeling as if I had found the key to my research riddle in this gathering of diverse, dynamic and engaged teenagers. Such is the life of a researcher, I have discovered: a veritable roller coaster of insight and deception, confidence and uncertainty. Luckily, I worked my way back from my letdown in Lyon and endeavor here to share my thoughts on resilience.

A bit of back story is necessary before getting to my reflections on bouncing back. Studying the civic understandings and practices of high schoolers in France, I had grown increasingly frustrated with outdated curriculum and pedagogy that did not critically examine the values upon which they were based, did not reflect the diversifying population that I observed in the classroom and that did not give voice to the lived experiences of young people. The result amongst young

people, in my understanding, was a deepening mistrust of the state and of the political process, and a desperate search for identity and purpose elsewhere. Accordingly, I hypothesized—with some hope—that I could find spaces outside formal schools in which students were challenging inequality, cultivating multiple identities and affiliations, developing cosmopolitan values and creating just and democratic multicultural communities. In essence, I was looking for students who were participating in what Banks (2008) calls “transformative citizenship education”. I heard the siren song of the FIDL, a national student union called the “Independent and Democratic High School Federation”, and followed it to the syndicate’s biannual conference in Lyon. My first field notes from the weekend read as if I had found El Dorado, remarking the incredible social, ethnic, cultural, geographic, gender and sexual diversity of the gathered bunch and praising the union for tackling issues that are important and relevant to students’ lives such as violence in schools, diversity, immigration, health, citizenship and sexuality. Although well-intentioned, the conference organizers stumbled in a number of areas and what began with great promise ended with

## Bouncing Back *continued...*

me leaving in tears. You see, the final panel, the end of a vertiginous downward spiral, attempted to facilitate discussion on the topic of homophobia but ended up dividing the room into two camps whose diverging viewpoints escalated into a shouting match and ended with forced physical separation for fear of violence. Some students overtly and proudly announced their homophobia, saying things like "I don't like gays" and "I'd rather grow up alone than have gay parents"; they asserted that homosexuality is a "sin" and "unnatural." Others stood up to say that their religion preached against homosexuality but that the most important value was tolerance. And others promoted values of secularism and living together in diverse communities. None, ironically, shared their own personal, lived experiences. The problem with the panel and with most of the activities throughout the weekend was that they were poorly facilitated by individuals who had no training. They were either kids themselves or adults who were involved in politics but had no experience dealing with teenagers. The students had the potential to engage in a rich educational opportunity but were disserved pedagogically. "Pedagogy" comes from the Greek, meaning "to lead a child." These children were not led.

Although I literally felt unsafe and was terribly disappointed at the end of the conference, I eventually found inspiration and purpose in my disappointment. This was lesson number one in bouncing back. Failure is opportunity. I had normative expectations coming in and these were not met. In this case, I must first revisit these expectations and then ponder how they or revised ones can be met. What was I hoping for and why? Should I continue advocating for the original expectations that I laid out? If so, what is a better way of getting there? If not, where should my new normative path lead?

On my way to answering these questions, I discovered lesson number two. Go back to your foundational texts for insight and purpose. Each of us as researchers has a couple of books that have uniquely shaped our vision and our work. They are the foundation upon which our production, identity and sanity rest. In trying to understand the revolting homophobic interjections of some of the students, I was reminded by Freire (ed. 2007) that these youth, oppressed themselves, "prefer gregariousness to authentic comradeship; they prefer the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom to the creative communion produced by freedom and even the very pursuit of freedom" and that for them to engage in

the solidarity that I call for, they "must enter into the situation of those with whom (they) are in solidarity." Again, for this to be achieved, the process must be facilitated. bell hooks (2003) reminds us of the power of dislocation, of shaking up how we look at things and of deconstructing our own socialization. Wisely, she says, "to build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination." Yet after my reading, I realized that while such wisdom emanating from scholarly work can provide clarity and inspiration, it does not allow for the engagement of back-and-forth exchange.

Lesson three fills this void. Seek support in your academic and non-academic communities. My weekly phone call to Christine Malsbary, a fellow SSCE student and editor of this newsletter, is a powerful lifeline that provides grounding, support, insight, ideas and love. Rooted in a shared past and common struggle, our exchanges fuel our fires and power us to move forward. Such valuable interactions extend to the amazing cohort of individuals with whom I engaged in this process of becoming an educational researcher. Not to be undervalued are the individual friends and family members outside of academia who provide perspective and remind us that research that often becomes all-consuming is only one facet of our existence.

In short, the ultimate lesson that I have learned is shamelessly self-promoting: educational research is uniquely valuable. Coming from a background in political science and international relations and benefiting from the strongly-developed social science orientation of SSCE, I could easily give in to society's dismissal of educational research and promote myself with the more acceptable moniker of "social scientist." But what I learned in Lyon that weekend is that we have our place at the table and that it is an important place to fill. The social scientists and politicians that presented their reflections on the FIDL panels were not able to translate their ideas into learning opportunities for students. As I mentioned in my introduction, teachers in the formal school setting also fall short. The teachers whose classes I observed throughout my year of fieldwork in France did not visibly tap into the philosophical and theoretical debates stemming from educational research to inform their practice. Enter the educational researcher. We are unique bridges whose work, if done rigorously with humanity and humility, can truly lead children, as "pedagogy" calls us to do. This is if we are resilient enough to bounce back from obstacles that constantly pop up on our paths.

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