Playing French:
Re-imagining the Nation at the 1998 World Cup
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Class of 2008

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in French Studies and the College of Social Studies

Middletown, Connecticut April, 2008
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Acknowledgments

This thesis could have very easily gone nowhere had I been left to my own devices. It is through the help of my amazing network of mentors, friends, and family members that I have not only completed it, but done so without sacrificing my mental well-being. Deep thanks to my thesis mentor, Typhaine Leservot, without whose attention to detail, love of deadlines, and unfaltering enthusiasm I would most certainly not have completed this work. It is because of her belief in my ability and her high expectations that I have pushed myself farther than I thought possible. Thanks also to my family for feigning interest when necessary and generally showing support of my efforts, even when I was less than thrilled with them. Finally, but of utmost importance, I offer my sincerest thanks to my network of friends here at Wesleyan. Without the long nights of tea and griping, the reassurance continually offered, and the elaborate constructed fantasies of post-thesis adventures, I would have been completely lost. After all, there was more to this thesis than watching YouTube videos of Zinedine Zidane (even if that was the best part). Thank you to everyone who helped me with this process.
Introduction

Children on the Champs-Elysées waved the French flag. Women and men of all ages enthusiastically greeted the passing parade of heroes. As the millions of French citizens crowding the street took up "La Marseillaise," it seemed to have meaning that it has never had before. This may have been a liberation of sorts, but it did not occur in 1944. And the enemies were Brazilian, not German. It was in 1998 and the celebration was for the French victory in the World Cup. Venturing a comparison between the 1998 event and the liberation of Paris from Nazi forces may seem hyperbolic, but commentators at the time made such allusions regularly. The student uprisings of 1968, the Liberation, and even the French Revolution were used frequently in an attempt to capture the outpouring of national unity and widespread enthusiasm that accompanied the event. The accuracy of such comparisons is certainly questionable, but their usage speaks to an event without real parallel. Facing middling expectations from the start and the continuing inferiority complex of French soccer\(^1\) in the international field, the band of players paraded from victory to victory, ultimately triumphing over powerhouse Brazil in the Stade de France. The athletic feat in itself, therefore, was unexpected, dramatic, and thrilling. The ecstatic celebrations throughout France after victory were, however, for more than that. The team itself, a combination of players from disparate backgrounds, races, and

\(^1\) Football is an umbrella term that originally could refer to either rugby football or association football, which is known in America in soccer. To avoid confusion and for simplicity’s sake, I will be using soccer to refer to the game.
religions, represented cohesion that French society had, in recent years, found so elusive.

The French national team, “les Bleus” to their fans, comprised players from Zinedine Zidane, of Algerian Kabyle origin, to Lilian Thuram, from Guadeloupe. Successful unity on this team quickly came to symbolize a new era of France, a “black, blanc, Beur” era that replaced the racism of the extreme right, the violence in the immigrant-populated suburbs, and the despair that many had begun to feel surrounding the prospect of national unity. Upon this symbolic team’s World Cup victory, the nation was euphoric. 1.5 million people filled the streets of Paris from the time of the victory until the early hours of the next morning. The celebrators were from all ages and walks of life. Reports tell of young Arab girls singing La Marseillaise at the Place de l’Etoile, African women playing the tam-tam on the streets of Marseille, and men and women of every age and racial background waving French flags. The festivities continued until the outpouring of national fervor on Bastille Day. Didier Deschamps, captain of les Bleus, received the cup from Chirac, and celebration overwhelmed the nation. Zinedine Zidane became a national hero and the French team represented a microcosm of French society. Rhetoric surrounding the event spoke of it as a landmark event, not only in French sport, but also for all of French society.

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2 “Beur” is a slang term for a descendant of immigrants of North African origin living in France, the word comes from a colloquial transformation of “Arabe.” It can be pejorative in certain circumstances, but was appropriated by the generation of the 1980s and remained in frequent usage until around the 1990s. “Black, blanc, Beur,” meaning “black, white, Beur” is a play on the red, white, and blue of the French flag (“bleu, blanc, rouge”), indicating a new kind of national composition.


Those who have written about the World Cup as a cultural phenomenon and as representation of French society have done so with several limitations. Some authors, like Philippe Carrard, have portrayed the event with only limited historical scope, thus focusing on the uniqueness of the World Cup instead of situating it in France’s sport tradition as well as its immigrant tradition. Others, like Hugh Dauncey and Geoff Hare, while recognizing the importance of situating the event historically, have focused only on the twentieth century professional soccer tradition. They do not go as far back as the nineteenth century’s gymnastics movement, for example, and thus operate without a complete background of sport in France. They further trivialize the cultural importance of the event by associating it with French society’s desperation for good news in the late 1990s. Most authors, looking back on the event, treat it cynically. They underline the absence of real change in immigration policy or integration attempts in the wake of what presented itself as a French rebirth. Philip Dine, for example, criticizes the event and state-sponsored sports integration as a smokescreen designed to conceal inequalities in housing and education for those of immigrant extraction. Such criticisms are well founded and should not be ignored. They remain, however, incomplete and shortsighted.

This thesis aims to build upon and nuance the attention that the World Cup event has received. Through a careful historical analysis of French sporting history, themes present in 1998 are given context. A continued theme proves to be the use of sport to control the body of the threatening “Other.” Scholars have previously underlined this notion, but their efforts are incomplete. Richard Holt, for example, notes the discrepancy in class between those who dominate the world of sport and
those who participate in it, suggesting that its message of citizenship education is insincere. Holt’s work, while duly influential, does not pay significant attention to the advent of North African immigrants in the late twentieth century, nor does he adequately expound upon the philosophical implications of sport in French society. Scholars who have taken similar approaches to Holt’s have faced similar limitations, generally with a view that is too limited in scope. This thesis will expand upon this body of knowledge, noting that the Other takes a variety of forms throughout the twentieth century, from the working class at the turn of the twentieth century to young men of North African extraction at the turn of the twenty-first. Using Foucault’s conception of “docile bodies,” French society’s attempts at discipline and control are given theoretical foundation. In this way, therefore, the World Cup represents a continuation of French sports policy and sports integration policy. The performance of the young men of immigrant origin on the French national team seems to be a celebration of discipline more than it is a genuine marker of citizenship. When viewed from this angle, the sincerity of sport as an integration tool and the World Cup as a symbol of integration is rightfully criticized.

To read the 1998 event as wholly insincere and without meaningful consequences, however, would be to ignore the novel portrayal of the French nation that it represented. The celebration of visible minorities in the World Cup event was, in a very real way, groundbreaking. A study of the trials of the North African community in France from the 1980s on reveals the traditional unwillingness of French society to recognize the visibility of minorities. When the media had previously portrayed minorities, they were typically associated with disruption and
violence, and therefore this visibility was a negative one. Furthermore, the portrayal of visible minority groups is associated with communitarianism, which is anathema to the French tradition. French policy towards national identity has always focused on the individual. Individuals have, since the French Revolution, had access to French citizenship by portraying their willingness to keep membership in other communities (cultural, ethnic, or religious) private. French republican thought contrasts with Anglo-American multiculturalism, which treats individuals as members of communities. Hence the proclivity of hyphenated identities in America and their absence in France. The “Marche des Beurs” in 1983 represented a challenge to French republicanism⁵, as the Beur community demanded visibility and concessions from the state. Then President François Mitterrand made promises to the Beur community, but the acknowledgement of a visible immigrant community was too incompatible with French republican thought to survive. The 1998 event represents a reworking of visibility, a fragile form of French multiculturalism that acknowledges minorities while retaining their individuality. Lilian Thuram was celebrated as “black” but was not qualified as a Franco-Guadeloupian or a black French man but remained, simply, French. Zinedine Zidane, similarly, was “Beur” without being Franco-Algerian. To criticize this event for not fulfilling Anglo-American

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⁵ Republicanism, often summed up as “liberty, equality, fraternity,” is an umbrella term that in this usage concerns approaches to French citizenship and integration into the state. It encompasses the French commitment to laïcité, a form of secularism that emphasizes the division between the public and private spheres of identity, as well as the French commitment to individualism over communitarianism. It does not, however, disregard France’s motto, which is part and parcel of the notion. Liberty and equality are encompassed within the division of the public from the private, because equality in the public sphere is contingent upon the free expression of individual identity in the private. Fraternity should be read as the brotherhood found in the nation for those who become citizens. Republicanism is also sometimes referred to as French universalism because of the idea that the application of individualism and laïcité opens citizenship to anyone and that these notions can therefore be considered universal.
multicultural expectations is to misjudge it. Instead, and putting aside multicultural bias, the World Cup represents a timid footstep towards a reworking of minority visibility in the French context.

Though the World Cup may not have been deserving of comparison to the French Revolution, it nevertheless remains an event in French history worthy of examination. Through its break with the past and its continuity with it, the 1998 event paints a compelling portrait of French society and the meaning of national identity. This study, however, is meaningless without situation in the larger context of national identity creation from the beginning of the twentieth century. To analyze this contribution to national identity formation, therefore, the careful analysis of nascent national identity in the late nineteenth century is worthy of mention.

**Gymnastics and Patriotic Performance**

In his 1881 satire, *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, Gustave Flaubert ridicules the two protagonists for their engagement in the fashionable exercise of gymnastics. The earnest lower-middle class characters dutifully march, beating their pectorals and chanting during the maneuvers. In the “Dictionary of Accepted Ideas,” Flaubert mockingly defines gymnastics: “One can never do enough. Wears children out.” His derision of the national obsession with patriotic physical performance paints a picture of one of France’s first truly national leisure activities. Born from the militaristic nationalism of revenge following the loss of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 and a desire to integrate the ‘troublesome’ working-class elements in an era of industrialization, gymnastics represents a transition from the localized rituals of the

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Middle Ages to the nationalized fascination with modern sport. Even more significantly, however, it is at the origins of the French attitude toward sport and identity. The rhetoric surrounding gymnastics in the nineteenth century, one of national coherence and social integration, performance and patriotism, condescension and control, finds parallels throughout French history, culminating in the great spectacle of the World Cup in 1998.

France “une et indivisible” is an idea that stretches back from before the French Revolution, but even as late as the early twentieth century, French national identity was far from truly realized. While the state itself may have been centralized, “with one code of law, valid across its entire territory and for all of its citizens,” identity itself certainly was not. The average rural dweller had a much more localized sense of identity, exemplified through regional dialects and pastimes. Until the passing of Jules Ferry’s “lois scolaires” in the 1880s, a move toward compulsory education that spread the French language, regional languages like Breton and Basque were predominant forms of communication in the provinces. Scholars emphasize the importance of certain phenomena like conscription for military service, the spread of the press, and the above-mentioned Ferry laws in the spread of the French national idea from its urban birthplace throughout the French nation. The growth and spread of the gymnastics craze, a spread that coincided with the consolidation of the Third Republic and increasing militarism, however, should not be overlooked. The birth of

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modern games marked the outset of their role in the conscious construction of French identity.

The origins of gymnastics in French culture are indecipherable without the context of the humiliating French military loss to Prussia in 1870. Coinciding as it did with the popular currents of social Darwinism, the loss of French national stature was associated with a physical decline in the populace. The result was a strongly militaristic movement laden with analogies of revenge. Although the form itself was adopted from F.L. Jahn of Prussia, many of the founders of the French gymnastics movement were themselves émigrés from the contested region of Alsace-Lorraine.\(^\text{10}\) The names of newly founded gymnastics clubs are unsubtle reminders of the espoused function of the movement: “La Revanche,” “La Patriote,” and “Halte-là!” are striking examples.\(^\text{11}\) The founders of the movement took patriotism to the level of religion, and militaristic revenge was thought possible only through the strengthening of the French nation that gymnastics could provide.

Notably, the fathers of French gymnastics were military men and men of the upper-middle class, bent on transmitting the love of nation to the masses. In its early years, however, the government itself still played a minimal role. It was the extreme nationalism of the movement and its support of General Boulanger in his attempted coup of 1889 that seems to have awakened the government itself to the power of gymnastics and the devotion of its members.\(^\text{12}\) Although the state did not explicitly direct the movement from this point on, financial support of gymnastics clubs became

\(^{10}\) Jean-Michel Fauré, “Forging a French Fighting Spirit: The Nation, Sport, Violence, and War.”
\(^{12}\) Holt, 48.
customary. On the whole, “the state chose to use its political influence through the offer of subsidies and moral support to various approved private bodies.”\(^{13}\) Political officials were additionally seen to attend the many republican pageants and gymnastics displays that popularized the movement, “a symbiotic relationship which served to enhance the legitimacy of both parties.”\(^{14}\) The gymnastics associations were seen as a powerful interest group, a group to be feared because of its intense discipline and dedication to a cause, but one to be harnessed for its enthusiastic patriotism. As a political official put it in the 1880s, “Gymnastics and military exercise are the moral education of a democracy.”\(^{15}\) Gymnastics was viewed in this way by the leaders of the movement and the government officials that they influenced: as a movement promoting discipline, dedication, and devotion to the French state and its republican ideals.

The participants themselves may have been less swayed. Richard Holt argues that the participants in the movement were largely ignorant of, or uninterested in, its larger ideology. The lofty goals of the directors, including “the consciousness of an identity and the sense of belonging to a national community,”\(^{16}\) may have been far from the minds of the average participants. By and large, those who took part in the gymnastics movement were young men from the lower classes, especially the burgeoning urban working class. Holt argues that the function for the participants was largely entertainment. After long working hours in straining jobs, they desired physical relief and entertainment, both of which were provided by the gymnastics associations.

\(^{13}\) Holt, 192.  
\(^{14}\) Dine, “Peasants into Sportsmen,” 3.  
\(^{15}\) Fauré, 79.  
\(^{16}\) Holt, 77.
trend. The “trend” aspect of gymnastics’ appeal, highlighted by Flaubert’s mockery, is another element to take into consideration. The nationalism of the participants was certainly less genuine than their desire to be seen performing what had become a national leisure activity.

Despite these qualms, however, the spread of gymnastics represented a real shift in the meaning and implications of leisure activity. From particularized local games and rituals, both urban dwellers and rural citizens became familiar with the same leisure activity and the same nationalistic, patriotic rhetoric. Through Republican pageants and patriotic displays, as well as gymnastics clubs and schools, the gymnastics movement and its attending rhetoric were inculcated throughout France. How deep it penetrated into the hearts and minds of French citizens is questioned by some, but others, like Philip Dine, assert that the teaching of gymnastics “directly contributed to the construction of a unified national identity, in much the same way as did the teaching of the French language itself.”\(^\text{17}\) One need not go this far to agree that the gymnastics movement was an important one. Regardless of its immediate success, it forged the ultimately significant connection between sport and national identity.

Bounding, enthusiastic patriotism was only one of the voiced goals and themes of the gymnastics movement. Another goal of equal importance was the integration of the new working class – a class often seen as dangerous, shiftless, and outside the bounds of “decent” middle-class society. Between the 1820s and 1850, France, like the majority of Western Europe, experienced a significant population

\(^{17}\) Dine, “Peasants into Sportsmen,” 3.
growth and demographic shift to urban residency. Increased industrialization in French urban areas led to a condensed and often impoverished working class. As the gap between the rich and poor grew in the late nineteenth century, urban degeneration became a threat to the upper class and working-class destitution was seen as a widespread and dangerous problem. The instinct and excesses of violence in the working class was seen at the heart of the crowd, “that barbaric, atavistic collectivity…sign of social degeneration.”¹⁸ The fear of an anti-social and dangerous group of outsiders contributed to the paternalistic overtones of the gymnastics movement; these considerations inspired the founders to integrate the working poor – at least from a certain distance.

By the late nineteenth century, gymnastics organizations were overwhelmingly popular with the lower classes. By 1900, gymnastics was the most important form of lower-class recreation.¹⁹ As the traditional affiliation with the commune weakened and movement to the cities became more common, traditional social activities like festivals and local games gradually disappeared. Simultaneously, the mechanization and industrialization of the workplace created a sharp divide between work and leisure. A peasant may not have known when his workday ended, but a factory worker certainly did, and the non-work time was seen as leisure. Gymnastics proved to be the leisure activity of choice for many members of the lower classes in the late nineteenth century, and not for its patriotic fervor. To the ordinary member, “gymnastics were the cheapest and most convenient form of physical

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¹⁸ Fauré, 79.
¹⁹ Holt, 40.
recreation available.”

Well suited to the pattern of the industrial working day, gymnastics clubs and associations were soon filled with lower-class men.

Not all the members of the gymnastics movement were lower class, however. The directors and ideologues of the movement were composed of military men and members of the upper-middle class who saw it as their duty to create a space of social and moral reform for the working class. Leaders of the movement like Charles Cazalet put contemporary ideas of social reform, that the working class should be given better conditions and taught to behave with the ‘decency’ of the middle-class, into practice. As the first permanent president of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Gymnastique (USFG), he “guided it along the twin paths of Republican defense and the promotion of social harmony.”

Gymnastics was a way to channel excess energy and violent tendencies into a socially productive venue. This productive use of free time would, it was thought, better integrate the working class, turning them from the “masses” into citizens. Notably, however, the sons of the upper-class directors of the movement rarely participated in the movement. Those who did were soon forced to leave because of their “social prestige in the locality.”

Though it was thought proper and patriotic for affluent older men to encourage the lower classes in this way (often receiving medals from the state for their service), the supposed integration of the classes did not go so far that it would have been fitting to let affluent youth be seen at the gym.

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20 Holt, 51.
21 Holt, 53.
22 Fauré, 79.
23 Holt, 187.
Clearly, this integration was meant to be an acceptance of the status quo. Though the concern for social reform by affluent patrons may have been genuine, it faced certain limitations. Tellingly, Charles Cazalet never suggested a reduction in work hours as a possible remedy for the lower classes’ plight. The integrating goal of the gymnastics movement was, therefore, real, but only to the extent that it did not threaten the lives and prestige of the affluent men in charge.

The working-class members themselves played little active role in the ideological goal of social reform and were seemingly unaware of it. Though the directors paid lip service to the complete transformation of the working class into a citizenry, the actual disciplining of the working class did not seemingly require awareness, but obedience. Thus, though the stated goals of the movement were those of social cohesion and unity, the implicit though unstated goal was one of taming the unruly elements of society. Though the gymnastics associations were supposed havens of egalitarian social reform, this reform was directed at young working-class men – those seen as violent, dangerous, and threatening. The use of sport is thus a channeling of violent tendencies – a sort of “Taylorization of the body” that uses sport to transform the body of the threatening outsider from one of violence to one of productive discipline. Emphasizing practice, discipline, and a respect for hierarchy, the gymnastics clubs channeled “unproductive” violent activities into productive ones, tools for larger French society and a support of the status quo. In this way, the movement directed at the young male body created what Michel Foucault termed “docile bodies.” The associations and the social forces that they represented became a

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sort of “disciplinary coercion” that “establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination.”

Reaffirming the status quo, this disciplinary coercion is a strong overtone in the history of the gymnastics movement, and of the French use of sport that succeeded it. The integrating aspect of French sport, and gymnastics in general, is thus a complex web of sincere intentions of integration and a paternalistic reinforcement of the pre-existing hierarchies.

The struggle for social cohesion and the reinforcement of national identity thus may be the two overarching ideologies of the gymnastics movement, but they do not exist in isolation. Instead, they represent intertwining dreams and mantras held selectively by separate actors in this drama: the government, the affluent directors, and the working-class participants. The performance of identity through the use of sport in France may have changed in content and form since the late nineteenth century, but the fundamental questions of the integration of outsiders into a conception of what is “French” are more relevant than ever.

**Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis will broach the questions first raised by the gymnastics movement that continue throughout the twentieth century. In the first section, the history of French sport and its use and manipulation by different members of society will be examined. The changes in government policy and in historical context will be evident as the analysis progresses. Focus, however, will be placed upon the overarching themes of discipline and control. This chapter will therefore show the continuity between the World Cup event and sport integration policy throughout the twentieth century.

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century. The second section will focus on the integration of the North African immigrant community, specifically the Beur generation of the 1980s. The history of the integration of the Beur community is not only telling of the special challenges to French policy presented by this group, but also highlights traditional approaches to minority visibility against which the World Cup event is juxtaposed. The third chapter will focus on the World Cup itself, analyzing the metaphors and interpretations surrounding the cultural phenomenon as they both break with and reinforce the past. To conclude, a glimpse into the years after 1998 will highlight the meaning of the event as a cultural symbol and as the marker of a subtle but important shift in French national identity.
Chapter One
Discipline and Play

Albert Camus famously stated, “Everything I know about morality and the obligations of men, I owe to football.” The quote only becomes hyperbolic if the sport itself is disassociated from the cultural meanings that surround it. For, though the off sides rules or the measurements of the field may hold few citizenship lessons, the use of soccer in French society is founded upon the notion that sport is an integrating force and a socializing mechanism as much as it is an enjoyable pastime. Studying the history of soccer in France gives some insight into the established role that sport came to play in French society. It is through the analysis of the evolution of soccer that continuities become evident. The continuity of the cultural meanings of the sport, for example, is established from the outset. Vocabulary and rhetoric surrounding the game describes soccer as popular, socializing, republican, and virile, a set of assumptions that is not directly extrapolated from the game’s role in its native Britain. Instead, this set of cultural meanings sets French soccer apart from other interpretations of the game and makes the sport unique in this context.

Continuity in the sport may seem to be disrupted by the variety of actors who play a significant role in administration and participation. Certainly, bourgeois patrons, corporate sponsors, and the French government all had different approaches to the administration of the game, and the specifically targeted audience became subtly different in each case. What is remarkable about the use of the sport in the twentieth century is not, however, the changes between multiple actors and different
eras, but rather the continuity in sport policy. What can be underlined throughout the years is the juxtaposition between the stated goals of the administrators of French soccer and the underlying goals and effects of the sport. Administrators of the sport spoke enthusiastically of its power as an integrating tool and method of socialization, and targeted the working class or other elements that were, seemingly, outside of French society. Far from an equalizing method or creator of citizens, however, this disciplining method was an attempt to reinforce a deteriorating hierarchical relation of power. That soccer as an integrating tool became popular after strikes or riots, is, in this view, no accident. Its use as a disciplinary tool and its pertinence in a greater relation of power will, through use of Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, be further analyzed in this chapter.

**Making Soccer French**

The origins of soccer in France represent a transition from the adoption of a British leisure activity to the identification with a French sport. In the transition, the adjectives that would come to be associated with French soccer were solidified. French soccer became popular, socializing, republican, and virile, but none of these cultural meanings were directly imported along with the rules of the game.

Soccer was not, at its origins, a sport for the masses. Indeed, it was just the opposite. Developed in British elite boarding schools, both types of football (rugby and soccer) were games of the upper class. Christened in Eton and Rugby, it was the expansion of the middle classes, urbanization, and industrialization that spread the
nascent forms of football in the 1850s.¹ Clubs began to form in the late nineteenth century, and it was in the last years of the 1800s and the first years of the twentieth century that the twin sports (both soccer and rugby, both considered types of football) made their way to France. The very first soccer players in France were, unsurprisingly, British, and the French players were typically tagged with the twin labels of bourgeois and Anglophile. The early proponents of the sport were often brought to the sport by an admiration of British schooling and a fear of the economic and demographic upheavals of industrialization. Marveling at the amount of time English schools dedicated to sport and considering how Great Britain had matched economic growth with political stability, many French observers concluded that sport was an instrument of moral education that would breed “good competitors.”² Some Anglophiles even considered athletic sports integral to Imperial success.³ The sport, moreover, was dominated by the elites, spread through the country through the elite lycées of the period. Not only was football primarily practiced by the elite classes, some thought of it purposefully as a tool to keep troublesome working class elements in their place. Pierre de Coubertin, an early French sports enthusiast and the father of the modern Olympic games, noted that “les jeux sportifs pouvaient fournir des armes à l’élite et lui permettre de mieux défendre ses positions par l’acquisition d’un comportement distinctif dans une société plus ouverte.”⁴ British sport (both rugby

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² Holt, 63.
³ Holt, 194.
and soccer) remained thus the domain and purposeful tool of the upper crust in the 
early years of its existence on the continent.

It was not long, however, until the two forms of football bifurcated into 
different and unique identities serving different sections of the populace. From the 
start, soccer was less exclusive than rugby. By the early twentieth century, soccer had 
assumed a more popular character and was no longer the exclusive domain of the 
upper classes the way it had once been. The differing audiences soon became 
demarcated for the two forms of football. Rugby had become a staple of the upper 
class and petite bourgeoisie in the Midi and Southwest France, especially in the area 
around Bordeaux. The popular support for soccer, however, followed the geography 
of France’s Industrial Revolution. The industrialization of France first affected 
pockets of the population, including Northern, Northeastern, Central, and 
Southeastern France, as well as the cities of Marseille and Paris. French soccer clubs 
were correspondingly the most popular in major industrial conurbations including 
Strasbourg and Lille in addition to Marseille and Paris. The difference of 
geographical situation of the two types of football and their two target audiences says 
much about the development of the two sports. While rugby remained firmly popular 
in the largely homogeneous petite bourgeoisie of the Midi, soccer assumed a more 
cosmopolitan and diverse character. The working class of France, especially in areas 
like Marseille, traditionally inhabited by an immigrant population, was of a fairly 
heterogeneous nature. From its origins as an aristocratic sport, soccer was quickly

5 Holt, 66.
popularized and became the sport of choice for the working classes, whatever their country of origin.

The effect of World War I was to solidify soccer’s popularity and to increase the diversity of the population affected. In the compulsory military service that existed from the 1880s through World War I, soccer was a common form of recreation.\(^7\) It was this mingling of “peasant and proletariat in the same regiment, which did most to spread the gospel of modern sport.”\(^8\) At the front, the game was lauded as “le délassement de tout le corps, le retour, pour quelques instants à la vie que l’on menait avant, l’oubli de la menace toute proche.”\(^9\) The use of sport as a means of relaxing after a long and treacherous day at the trenches was translated into a way for the working class to relax after a long and treacherous day at the assembly line. Soccer became wildly popular among the lower classes, exhausted from the fatiguing rhythm of manual labor.\(^10\) Very early in the French adoption of the sport, therefore, soccer became associated with the masses, and it is this association of popularity that has, to a greater or lesser degree, endured ever since.

The radical change in the composition of soccer’s affected population changed its character from that of a bourgeois leisure pastime to that of popular game of the lower classes. This distinction was not complete, however, and many advocates promoted soccer and sport in general as a way of bridging the gap between the upper and lower class, of socializing the unruly or alienated workers. Soccer was thus a form of sociability, vaunted both for its prowess at integration and its ability to

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\(^7\) Holt, 18.  
\(^8\) Holt, 12.  
\(^9\) “The relaxation of the whole body, the return, for several instants, to the life lived before, the forgetting of the looming threat.” Wahl, 134.  
\(^10\) Wahl, 127.
control. Proponents of the integrating power of the sport noted the diversity of players of the sport. Geoff Hare adds that the sport had been “cosmopolitan from its conception,“\textsuperscript{11} though this “cosmopolitanism” represented, in fact, diversity that was less integrating and harmonious than the word suggests. Soccer clubs, whose numbers increased significantly with each passing year, were thought to enable a sort of communication between the classes. This integration, however, was limited and problematic. The president of one of the major associations, Dr. Michaux, was an enthusiastic supporter of the integrating power of sport, but his conception of the potential consequences of such integration speaks well to the limits of sport integration at that time. In 1910, Dr. Michaux “se réjouit du rapprochement des classes par le football. Mais dans sa bonne volonté, il n’imagine pas que celle-ci puisse aller au-delà d’une confrontation entre nobles, bourgeois, et artisans, car ‘il doit être conduit avec prudence.’”\textsuperscript{12} Much like the earlier form of physical recreation of gymnastics, soccer in its early years was an ‘integrating force’ that nevertheless differentiated between classes.

One of the significant differences between gymnastics and soccer as socializing forces is soccer’s status as a team sport. This proves significant because of the parallels often drawn between a team and a polity. Proponents of sports as integrating tools often point to the value of teamwork essential to play and how it translates to the formation of better citizens. The teamwork aspects of sport were of crucial importance in its use as a socializing tool. Employers at large factories, for

\textsuperscript{11} Hare, “Football in France,” 21.
\textsuperscript{12} “..rejoiced at the connection made between the classes through football. But in his good will, he did not imagine that this could go beyond a confrontation between nobles, bourgeois, and artisans, because ‘it must be led with caution.’” Wahl, 127.
example, built fields adjacent to their factories, believing that soccer fostered teamwork, leadership, and local pride.\textsuperscript{13} Entering a football association was seen as participating in a community, and belonging to a team was a model for belonging to the nation. “Entrer dans l’association sportive,” notes Alfred Wahl, “signifie faire partie d’une nouvelle communauté, conférant chaleur humaine et joie.”\textsuperscript{14} Wahl’s continued enthusiasm for the creation of community in sport represents well the ideology espoused by the administrators of soccer, but is too quick to gloss over its limitations.

Under this rosy portrait of soccer as a great unifier is found a more problematic reality. Much as in the gymnastics movement of the late nineteenth century, the gap between the rhetoric of the directors and the effects on the participants of sport was significant. A notable discrepancy between the rhetoric and the reality regarded the supposedly unifying power of sport. In Marseille, for example, where the working class was divided into the indigenous population and immigrant workers, there was little mixing on the recreational level. Teams were segregated both socially and by occupation.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, for each example used by organizers vaunting football’s ability to cross social boundaries, there is another one to show how it failed to do so. Furthermore, the rhetoric of integration meant little given the growing divergence between the directors of soccer (often businessmen) and the players (the working class). Though the use of sport pre-WWI carried with it the overtone of sport as a “social educator” and way of spreading “veritable equality,”

\textsuperscript{13} Hare, 19.
\textsuperscript{14} “Joining a sporting association signified belonging to a new community that provided human warmth and joy.” Wahl, 165.
\textsuperscript{15} Holt, 181.
in the years during and after the World War, the integrating effect of soccer took backseat to its power to control the unsettled and unruly working class.\textsuperscript{16}

The rhetoric of discipline was utilized by the upper-class directors of the sport in the years around World War I both in terms of disciplining the body and controlling the rampant vice of alcoholism. Initially this discipline was extended only so far as to require a certain sobriety from players on the field, but soon, following, the British example, sport became real work, an exercise to push “la machine humaine à son rendement maximal sur le terrain au moyen de l’entraînement et de l’hygiène de vie.”\textsuperscript{17} In the realm of physical control, combating alcoholism was not an insignificant problem. Soccer was seen as an alternative to left-wing politics and alcohol consumption. Sport’s role, and soccer’s in particular, was a socializing one: both in terms of integration and discipline.

Connected to the spirit of inclusion and sociability attributed to soccer was the association of soccer with traditionally republican values. Values like a commitment to freedom and equality coupled with “fraternité” are often thought of as French and are connected to a sense of French national identity. Of course, the promotion of republican values through sport was different than that seen in the nineteenth century gymnastics movement. The gymnastics movement placed high importance on republican-symbolic pageantry. Marches and demonstrations often involved singing patriotic songs and overt commitment to the French state.

This explicit performance of republican identity was unlike soccer in its early years in France. First of all, the competitive ethic of team sports added a new element

\textsuperscript{16} Holt, 202.
\textsuperscript{17} “…the human machine to its maximum performance on the field by using training and general hygiene.” Wahl, 140.
to the performance of republican values. The idea of solidarity and brotherhood was not exemplified through the same pageantry, but instead through the value of teamwork, which was rewarded through victory. In this way, sports in the early twentieth century, and soccer in particular, represented the melding of Republican values dating from the Revolution with the competitive ethic of a burgeoning capitalist class. Egalitarian values in sport were performed through the vision of inequality resulting “from a struggle between equals.”\(^\text{18}\) Rhetoric surrounding soccer identified it as a “democratic celebration of merit,”\(^\text{19}\) and thus became a truly French pursuit.

Nevertheless, the French government followed rather than led the development of sport in the early twentieth century. The tentative first steps towards greater involvement, however, are indicative of sport’s, and in particular soccer’s, use as a republican metaphor and social educator. Sport began to be seen as a public service requiring regulation in the time following World War I, as indicated by a 1920 law that obligated municipalities to offer facilities for sporting recreation.\(^\text{20}\) Despite these first few tentative steps towards government control, the use of soccer by the state retained a different character than that of the gymnastics movement in the nineteenth century. Gymnastics had been explicitly militaristic in ideology, a nationalistic expression of revenge and bellicose fervor. Soccer had a more complicated relationship with militarism, especially in the years surrounding the First


\(^{20}\) Hare, 29.
World War. For some, the exercise and discipline provided by soccer could be directly translated into military purposes, and “le football deven[a]it une arme au service de la victoire.”\textsuperscript{21} For others, though, soccer was a way to forget the sufferings that the war had caused. As one columnist writes in 1915, “C’est l’oubli complet des souffrances par lesquelles on vient de passer.”\textsuperscript{22} Though soccer became quickly associated with French values and, to some extent, the French state, the early years in soccer’s history were not, as gymnastics had been, an explicit military campaign.

The expression of nationalism, however, was very much present in the ideology surrounding soccer. French teams became expressions of particular national and local identities, and competition tested not only the athleticism of the team, but also the strength of French republican values. This became especially evident in international matches, where differences between teams were synonymous with differences between nations. Responding to a French victory in an international game, a contemporary writer proclaims, “Bravo, courageux petits Français, vous avez fait voir que ‘bon sang ne savait pas mentir.’”\textsuperscript{23} This nationalist sentiment shows the progression of the sport in France. From an Anglophone bourgeois preoccupation, soccer had become representative of a performance of republican values and, at heart, a performance of French identity for the participants.

This performance of French identity, however, was a purely virile and masculine one. From the introduction of sports like soccer to France, such sports were traditionally dominated by men. The masculine nature of soccer, however, was not unchallenged in its early years. Several efforts were made in the early twentieth

\textsuperscript{21} “Soccer became a weapon in service of victory.” Wahl,132.
\textsuperscript{22} “It’s the complete forgetting of the sufferings we just endured.” Wahl,134.
\textsuperscript{23} “Bravo, brave little Frenchmen, you let us know that ‘good blood doesn’t lie.’” Wahl,159.
century to include women in the world of soccer, which had become seemingly all encompassing of different social classes. Inspiration for a women’s soccer league in France came from the experience of British women’s sport during World War I. While the troops were gone, women in Britain had taken charge of English soccer. A team named the Dick Kerr Ladies had even become a sort of national soccer team in 1917. Following this inspiration in the 1920s, Alice Milliat founded a federation that governed the sport. She developed a particular “woman’s game,” judged by its own standards and criteria. Despite some initial successes, however, the popularity of women’s soccer waned by the mid-1920s, with many men decrying it as inappropriate for female leisure. It was this failure that confirmed the virile, masculine nature of the sport and the rhetoric surrounding it.

The masculinity of the sport is important in analysis of the game. In terms of its popularity, men were overwhelmingly dominant both in numbers of participants and spectators. As a socializing tool, soccer was notably limited by its inability to appeal to women. And as a performance of identity and republican values, it was decidedly one-sided. The sport and the dialogue that accompanied it became violent and virile, a primarily masculine projection of identity and solidarity. These four themes, all of which developed relatively early in the history of French soccer, remained continuous throughout the twentieth century, a backbone upon which the rest of the development of the sport was based.

Underlying and continuous with these growing cultural meanings was the development of soccer as a disciplinary force. Michel Foucault does not include sport

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25 Duke and Crolley, 134.
in his analysis of disciplinary institutions in “Docile Bodies,” focusing instead on the school, the prison, the hospital, the factory and the army barracks as locales of discipline. Nevertheless, examination of sport in the early twentieth century reveals a similar action upon the body of the participants. The sports field became, like the schoolroom or the marching grounds, a disciplinary space. The specification of the soccer field as a locale for play and the differentiation of players at given locations represents a partitioning of space that allowed the coaches and administrators to “be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits.”

Furthermore, the control of the time of the individual and the precise system of command over the forces of the body are represented well by the quote of a coach in 1914: “Mardi. Cinq minutes de mouvements respiratoires, quatre courses de cinquante mètres, puis une de cent mètres.” This time table is, in fact, strikingly similar to the rules for young prisoners quoted by Foucault in “The Body of the Condemned.” The rules state, “Rising. At the first drum-roll, the prisoners must rise and dress in silence, as the supervisor opens the cell doors. At the second drum-roll, they must be dressed and make their beds.”

Though the casual play of schoolboys at the turn of the twentieth century may not have conjured images of prison or a military barracks, the increasing systemization of play, and solidification of rules and established spaces transformed the sport into a disciplinary tool at the same time as it purported to play the role of unifier and integrator.

27 “Tuesday. Five minutes of respiratory movements, four laps of 50 meters, then one of 100 meters.” Wahl, 140.
The Corporation and the Laborer as Actors

In the years immediately following World War I, soccer and other team sports became the domain of corporations. Traveling through a factory area would reveal a field next to each building. Athletic clubs like the Cercles Athlétiques de la Société Générale (CASG) grew in Paris, Marseille, Toulon, Orleans, and Saint-Malo. This phenomenon continued to grow with the expansion of the railroads. Typically, the owner of the firm, factory, or railroad became the director of the corporate soccer club, and the composition of the club almost exactly reproduced the hierarchy of the business. Corporate clubs became even more prevalent and popular than local ones, traditionally affiliated only with an area or city.

The rapid growth and popularity of corporate soccer was not by chance, but was instead a deliberately planned phenomenon engineered by large enterprise. The industrial businessmen of France, men like Peugeot, who created soccer clubs like US Valenlgey and le FC Sochaux in 1930, used the sport for specific theoretical purposes. They saw the sport not only as a means of promoting and valorizing their firms, but “developper le sens collectif” in their workers. Much like the generals and upper-middle class directors of the gymnastics movement, the directors lauded sport as a means of facilitating social inclusion. Soccer symbolized both “la performance et ‘la necessaire solidarité dans le travail.’” Even more so than the gymnastics movement, however, corporate soccer was a means of quieting unrest.

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29 Wahl, 190.
After the long, bitter, industrial strikes of the 1920s, directors of industry saw sport as an alternative to left-wing politics and alcohol consumption. In the official newspaper of the Berliet factory, a journalist writes, “C’est là le meilleur réactif contre les distractions funestes et particulièrement contre le cabaret.” Soccer became an outlet for otherwise violent and counter-productive tendencies.

The impact that industrialists had on soccer was not, however, purely theoretical. The very setup of the sport itself was transformed by the influence of the corporate world. Soccer became a model of the industrial landscape, with the industrialists’ vision of social order projected onto the sport itself. Although the rhetoric of the importance of social hygiene, valorizing the spirit of solidarity, and purporting to remedy social tensions left a mark on corporate soccer, the practical models of organization were more enduring. Soccer became imbued with the disciplinary and paternalist social ordering of industrial France. Both in the training and practice of the players, industrial rigor became the norm. A strict hierarchy reigned, both on and off of the field. One of the most enduring influences of corporate soccer, therefore, was its transformation of the player of sport into “la machine humaine” who both had a specific place in the social hierarchy and was obligated to push himself to his optimal performance.

The dynamic of corporate sport, therefore, was a far cry from the leisurely sporting unity that the initial rhetoric of the directors might have suggested. In the first place, “unity” and the rhetoric of solidarity are misleading. They might imply that unity between classes was a possibility, but the reality of the situation was that

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32 Holt, 203.
33 “It’s the best remedy to harmful distractions and especially to the cabaret.” Bromberger, “Le Match de Football,” 181.
the working classes were playing for the glory and gratification of the upper-class directors, while under their supervision and fitting into their vision of social order. Furthermore, the degree to which the participation in sport was voluntary is also questionable. On more than one occasion, workers were fired for inadequate or unsatisfactory participation on the factory football team.  

Corporate soccer, however, was not merely a minor subcategory of French sport. It came to dominate the world of soccer in France and became the primary forum for performance in and practice of the sport. Therefore, the rhetoric and structure of corporate soccer influenced participants and spectators beyond the factory towns, and became deeply imbued in soccer culture as a whole. Additionally, the promotion of soccer and industry dictated where soccer’s popularity would peak, namely, in primarily industrial regions like the North and Northeast and around major cities. The dynamic of corporate sport in the 1920s and 1930s thus left a significant imprint on soccer in France.

The corporate soccer trend did not, however, go unopposed. Labor groups and communist organizations warned that corporate sports “will undermine the critical spirit and foster a climate of discipline and respect vis-à-vis bourgeois chaos and its institutions.” In the 1920s, the formation of the Federation Sportif de Travail represented an attempt to form a sports association with a socialist orientation. This sports association found itself in opposition both to corporate leagues and regional clubs, the latter out of the fear that any potential mixing of classes on the football field might lead to the dilution of class consciousness. The FST opposed “le football capitaliste des exploiteurs qui excitent leurs ouvriers sur le terrain comme ils poussent

34 Wahl, 193.
35 Holt, 204.
à augmenter la cadence dans leurs usines.”36 The labor soccer movement thus showed the existence of considerable skepticism in the working class of the intentions and ideology of corporate soccer and the businessmen who directed it.

Working-class soccer suffered from internal schisms throughout the 1920s and 1930s, however, and never achieved the unity and efficiency of its opposition. Both communist and socialist organizations found themselves frustrated by the lack of ideological passion of the workers who played the sport. Though the passionate labor organizers attempted to make soccer a coherent expression of a unified working class, workers were frustratingly prone to ignore the ideology and enjoy the leisure time. Additionally, schisms within the labor movements of the day prevented a coherent picture of what workers’ sport should look like. Opposing views of the Soviet Union, among other sources of contention, split many organizations apart. By 1933, ideological sport ceded its place to sport with a neutral ideological stance.37 Nevertheless, this was not the death of socialist sport. Unity among socialist proponents of sport was at least partially achieved in 1934 with the birth of the Federation Sportive et Gymnique du Travail (FSGT). Furthermore, in the late 1930s, the spread of working-class socialist sports clubs was roughly commensurate with general growth in other working-class institutions such as trade unions.38 The use of sport to promote socialist ideology was thus not without its successes, but was also plagued by failures.

36 “The capitalist soccer of the exploiters who work their laborers on the field just like they push them to increase the speed in their factories.” Bromberger, “Le Match de Football,” 181.
37 Wahl, 194.
38 Holt, 206.
The mixed success of working-class sport seems to represent a larger failure of sport as an ideological tool. Just as the theoretical goals of socialist organizers were of only limited success at the time, the ideological goals of the directors of industry seemed not to enter consciously into the minds of the participants in the sport. Soccer players, largely participating for recreation, seemed unwilling to consciously associate play and an espoused ideology. Nevertheless, the solidification of an organizational hierarchy of soccer was a significant legacy of the corporate years. The replication of the hierarchy of the factory on the soccer field and the continued codification and systemization of play represented a disciplinary force that built upon the tradition of the early twentieth century. The strikes of the 1920s and the rise of the Labor movement at the same time represented a real threat to the established power relationship of the factory, a set of rules and coded behavior that placed the factory-owner in a position of command. The threat of a disruption to this hierarchy, through the riots of the 1920s and 30s, was enough to convince corporations of a need for further control of the dangerous body of the worker. The rhetoric of integration and cooperation is therefore less meaningful than the physical manifestations of discipline, represented by the soccer field in the shadow of the factory.

**Soccer and the State**

At the same time as Peugeot ran his corporate soccer teams in France, sport began to take on an ominous significance in the country’s fascist neighboring states. As early as 1925, Mussolini was already aiming to transform the Italian population
into a sporting nation with fascist politics oriented towards youth and the masses.\textsuperscript{39}

Sport was seen as an important tool in creating a fascist “new man.” Clearly, however, Italy was not the only country using sport as a political tool. As \textit{Le Miroir des Sports} comments in 1924, “Le Français qui séjourne en Allemagne ne peut manquer d’être frappé par l’ardeur et l’enthousiasme avec lesquels la jeunesse d’outre-Rhin s’entraîne à la pratique des sports par devoir patriotique.”\textsuperscript{40} French response to this rise in sporting fervor was both admiration and inquietude, leading to the conviction that something must be done and that this action should be taken by the state itself.

From the turn of the twentieth century, the French government had been closer to the English tradition of laissez-faire sports policy than that of Germany, where sport was explicitly and directly under the control of the state.\textsuperscript{41} French sports policy was seen as liberal and republican, where the state’s role was to do little other than offer some minimal monetary support and encourage the valorization of French ideals. World War I was the first blow to this policy, since it shook the very foundations of the liberal state. With total war had come a display of efficaciousness by the government in organizing production. Though the war ended, the expanded reach of the state did not. Furthermore, the exhaustion of the French population, demographically, economically, and psychologically, led to portrayal of sport and physical education as means to revitalize the populace. Nevertheless, the fascist threat

\textsuperscript{40} “The Frenchman who travels to Germany cannot help but be struck by the ardor and enthusiasm with which the youth of the Rhine practice their sports by patriotic duty.” Clastres and Dietschy, 119.
was clearly a prime and significant catalyst. By 1934, even working-class sports organizations like the FST had abandoned “la tactique ‘classe contre classe’ au profit d’une politique de main tendue et de front commun contre le fascisme.”\footnote{42} The French nation remained exhausted, divided, and threatened, and had come to look to the state for a solution.

Léon Blum’s socialist government, after its electoral victory in 1936, had promised just that. Blum’s government was the first to put the French state in the position of a central actor in sporting life, breaking with the liberal tradition. This was exemplified by the creation of the Conseil Supérieur des Sports and by the work of Léo Lagrange, the Undersecretary of the State for Sports and Leisure. It was Lagrange that influenced the significant budgetary increase in sports spending. Under his direction, the budget increased from 4 million francs in 1935 to 24 million in 1936 and 39 million in 1937, all despite a significant economic downturn.\footnote{43} The ideology of socialist sport was promoted both as a counter to fascist movements and as a significant break from right-leaning nationalist rhetoric used by French sport in the past. In a challenge to the fascist right, Lagrange commented, “Nous ne songeons pas à embrigader la jeunesse de France. Non, nous voulons que le sport permette à la jeunesse de former elle-même sa propre conscience et de gagner chaque jour dans la conquête de la dignité.”\footnote{44} Socialistic sport policy saw itself, instead, as part of a new tradition that followed a slogan promoted by the Parti Communiste Français: “le pain,
la paix, la liberté.” As Léo Lagrange elaborated, sports policy had three goals:

“Compenser la dureté des années de crise qui a vu la baisse de niveau de vie des classes populaires, combattre les séductions du sport et des loisirs fascistes, et inviter la jeunesse ouvrière à l’épanouissement personnel et collectif.”

Sport policy, therefore, promised unity and cohesion, but outwardly rejected the agenda of control used by France’s fascist neighbors.

Despite this vociferous rejection of fascist ideology, however, use of sport by the Blum government was not without a significant rhetoric of control, especially of French youth. For while the French state was promoting unity and self-development, it also strongly encouraged the development of a strong, nationalistic youth that represented a strengthening of the French “race.” A strong, sporting, youth population was, according to Lagrange, “la sauvegarde de la race, par l’affirmation de sa santé et sa vigueur.”

Also significant was the rhetoric of dedication to the nation, a rhetoric of duty and obligation that sounds notably similar to fascism. Lagrange insisted, for example, that “l’organisation sportive du territoire soit considérée comme un des grands services généraux qui intéressent l’avenir du pays.” In this way it seems that the socialist state did not represent as much of a break in ideology as it pretended, and instead represented a continuation of an emphasis on cohesion and control, despite arguments to the contrary.

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45 “To compensate for the difficulty of the years of crisis that affected the working classes, to combat the seductions of fascist sport and leisure, and to invite the working youth to personal and collective fulfillment.” Clastres and Dietschy, 122.

46 “…the defense of the race, by the establishment of its health and vigor.” Caillat, 52.

47 “Sport organization in the country should be considered one of the large public services that concerns the future of the country.” Caillat, 52.
The Vichy regime of 1940 to 1944, while representing an obvious break from the socialist government of Léon Blum that preceded it, also displayed surprising continuities in sports policy. On June 13, 1940, three days after the vote to give full executive power to Maréchal Pétain, Jean Borotra was named the General Commissary of Physical Education and Sports. Sports policy was to be an important component of Pétain’s “revolution nationale,” a term used to designate a project of national reform and youth morality. Pétain’s government presented itself as a break from the past, a rebirth, and sports policy was to facilitate this new moral and patriotic focus that had as a motto: “travail, famille, patrie.” In practice, however, the sports policy of the Vichy regime could, in many ways, be seen as a continuation of the groundwork laid by the Front populaire. “La Charte des Sports” of 1940, for example, codified and made official the government’s control of sport, ending definitively the liberal phase of French sports policy.48 The Charte gave significant aid to the struggling sports federations and most sports saw a significant increase in participants, even during the Second World War. The Football Federation, for one, saw an increase from 188,664 enrolled participants in 1938 to 294,183 in 1943.49 Funding, furthermore, continued to increase. In 1940, 1.9 billion francs were given to construct sports facilities nationally.50 Had the necessities of the war and the presence of the Germans not interfered, it is likely that this budget would have continued to rise.

49 Gay-Lescot, 70.
50 Clastres and Dietschy, 135.
The significance increase in the funding and codification of sports policy does represent a continuation of the trend started by Blum’s government and so too, in many ways, does the ideology behind Vichy sports policy. Borotra, for example, vaunted the cohesive properties of sport, just as the socialists, the corporate heads, and the middle-class sports leaders before them had, stating in 1942, “Lorsqu’un travailleur manuel et un intellectuel ont pratiqué ensemble un sport et porte les mêmes couleurs…ils ont appris à se connaître vraiment et, par suite, s’ils le méritent, à s’estimer.”

Vichy sports ideology also represented a continuation of the idea that sport could provide a means to rejuvenate a troubled “race.” Pétain emphasized the rebirth of French youth as a means towards cohesion and growth, stating, “A tous, je demanderai les mêmes efforts, ceux qui feront de la jeunesse française une jeunesse forte, saine de corps et d’esprit, préparée aux taches qui élèveront leur âme de Français et de Françaises.”

The Vichy motto of “travail, famille, patrie,” thus to a large extent translated to a motto of unity, cohesion, and dedication to the nation, in the government’s sport policy. In this way, though the government itself may have been far from the socialist left, the sports policy that Pétain’s government followed was, in large part, a continuation of that initiated by the Front populaire.

Nonetheless, the overarching politics and fascist slant of the Vichy regime certainly influenced sports policy at this time, giving it a distinctly different tone than that of its predecessor. Especially after Jean Borotra was replaced by Joseph Pascot in 1942, sport was significantly more authoritarian. Though the emphasis was still on

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51 “When a manual laborer and an intellectual have practiced a sport together and wear the same colors…they learn to really know each other, and, if they deserve it, to value each other,” Caillat, 109.
52 “To all, I ask the same effort, those who make the French youth strong, healthy in body and mind, prepared for tasks that will elevate the souls of French men and women.” Caillat, 43.
unity and cohesion, the tone was more explicitly one of exacting obedience. Team sports, for example, were not only thought of as socializing tools, but as having “le rare mérite d’obliger l’enfant a se plier, a se soumettre, a obéir.” Furthermore, the collectivism of the Vichy regime extended farther than that of the governments before it. As Pétain argued, “Cet individualisme dont nous nous vantoions comme d’un privilège, est à l’origine de maux dont nous avons failli périr.” In addition, sports policy of the time was tainted with the same anti-Semitism as the rest of the regime under the Occupation. Though most sports policy was implicitly rather than explicitly anti-Semitic, German ordinances such as that of July 8th 1942 that stated that Jews could not participate in public sporting events or use public sports facilities were not unheard of. These breaks in continuity between one government and the next are not, however, surprising given the extreme differences in the governments themselves. What is more surprising is that two governments on two such different ends of the political spectrum would experience such continuity in policy, even taking some nuances and gaps into account.

It was with the ascension of the Fifth Republic under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle that sport again reached a place of prominence and an ideological reinterpretation. In 1958 the High Commission of Youth and Sports was created and directed by Maurice Herzog, who later became the Minister of Youth and Sports in 1963. Under the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, the French state had become

53 “The rare merit of obligating the child to bend, submit, obey.” Caillat, 44.
54 “This individualism that we vaunt like a privilege is at the origin of the evils from which we have almost perished.” Gay-Lescot, 23.
55 Clastres and Dietschy, 142.
highly centralized, and this centralization facilitated an expansion of the
government’s powers in sports policy. From 1958 to 1966, Herzog created 15
specialized commissions in the realm of sport, signifying the State’s ambition to exert
full control over sport and leisure. It was not, however, until 1964 that a definition of
sport was agreed upon and an explication of the appropriate role of the state was
elaborated. The sports “Doctrine,” the result of a two-year committee spearheaded by
former Pétainiste Jean Borotra, enunciated a definition of sport that followed the
continuities of its use in France. “Le sport,” stated the Doctrine, “Par la discipline
qu’il impose, découvre la nécessité de la règle, les bienfaits de l’effort gratuit et
organisé. Par la vie en équipe qu’il implique souvent, il donne le respect de la
hiérarchie loyalement établie, le sens de l’égalité, celui de la solidarité et de
l’interdépendance.” It further specified that sport was a “lieu de formation
civique.” The Gaullist conception of sport, therefore, represented in some way a
continuation and combination of the uses of sport by the Front populaire and Vichy
France. The sense of cohesion and solidarity through sport remained, as did a strong
sense of hierarchy and obedience. Gone are the references to the French “race,”
although the idea of sport for the glory of France in some ways reached its fullest
expression in the Gaullist era. In sum, the conception of sport had fully and expressly
become the domain and tool of the state. It was not only a way to create citizens or to
facilitate cohesion, it was, as the Gaullist government emphasized, a “right” that the
government was obligated to provide.

57 “By the discipline that it imposes, sport reveals the necessity of rules and the benefit of willing and
organized effort. By the life in a team that it often implies, it creates respect for an established
hierarchy, the sense of equality, and that of solidarity and interdependence.” Caillat, 45.
58 “Locale of civic formation.” Arnaud and Augustin, 57.
The state’s focus at this point was twofold: maintaining the glory of France, often through elite sports competitions, and democratizing access to sport. Though, as stated before, references to the French “race” had lost favor, the larger conception of sport as connected to the glory of the French nation had not. The marked failures of the French national team in the 1960 Olympic games in Rome were seen as a disappointment not only to de Gaulle or the Gaullist state, but also to the French nation itself. A government official lamented, “Les jeux Olympiques de Rome ont humilié notre jeunesse à la face du monde.”

Elite competitions, thus, were of considerable importance to maintain prestige, but the Gaullist government was quick to specify that elite performers did not come from the ranks of the elite, but from the masses. Only through democratized access to sport could the glory of France be truly celebrated. Democratization of sport resulted in an increase in sports facilities in cities, around schools, and near factories. Sport was used to create elite performers and to ease social tension, encouraging cohesion between classes. Between 1959 and 1967, the budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports increased from .27% of the national budget to .8%. Clearly, the enthusiasm for and perceived importance of sport only increased with the passing years.

The increased spending and considerable enthusiasm did not, however, change the fact that the state was not receiving the response it desired from the youth. The youth of the 1960s were perceived as “matérialiste, désabusée, déchristianisée, désilluminée.”

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59 “The Olympic Games in Rome humiliated our youth in front of the world.” Caillat, 71.
60 Arnaud and Augustin, 59.
61 Clastres and Dietschy, 161.
démoralisée, amorale, et détachée,“ all of which seemingly made their inclusion through sport all the more urgent and necessary. Maurice Herzog proposed that delinquent youth needed “virile” sports to reform their characters. This thinking, however, was decidedly out of touch with the youth population. The youth population remained disaffected, discontented, and disinclined to participate in government-directed sporting events. As François Missoffle, Minister of Youth and Sports in 1967, confessed, “Je n’ai pas toujours compris les griefs de ceux qui reprochent à ‘leur vieux’ de ne rien comprendre au monde nouveau, à la licence des moeurs et à la haine de l’ordre ancien qu’il inspire.” Despite this fundamental misunderstanding, the Ministry continued to reassure the Gaullist government that the youth remained contented. In 1967, a survey pronounced: “Etes-vous heureux de vivre à notre époque? Il y a eu 96% p. 100 de oui!” Within the next year, the obvious ludicrousness of this statement would become clear.

Though the uprisings of May 1968 rarely targeted sports policy in particular, the ramifications of the event were significant. Radical critique of sport, especially in a Marxist vein, became popular at this time. Such critique denounced the alienating effect of sport, denouncing sporting spectacle as “un opium du peuple” and sporting institutions as little more than ways to inculcate “l’idéologie du rendement physique.” The rejection of Gaullist sporting policy was thus largely part of a larger rejection of the mechanism of the state. Nevertheless, students and Marxist thinkers

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62 “Materialistic, disenchanted, unchristian, demoralized, amoral, and detached.” Clastres and Dietschy, 162.
63 Clastres and Dietschy,162.
64 “I’ve never understood the complaints of those who reproach their ‘elders’ for not understanding anything of the modern world, the freedom of morals, or the hatred that the old order inspires.” Caillat, 45.
65 “Are you happy to live in our time? 96% said yes!” Caillat, 45.
66 “the ideology of physical training” Arnaud and Augustin, 62-63.
were not the only ones to rebel against the federal authority. Professional soccer players, journalists, and amateurs joined the ranks of those on strike, demanding “Football aux footballeurs.” This movement represented an unlikely alliance between soccer amateurs and professionals against federal authority, and, though it was short-lived, manifested displeasure with the Gaullist state. The protestors of 1968 turned upside-down the notions of hierarchy, obedience, and loyalty to the nation that the Gaullist state had so actively promoted and made the obsolescence of such sporting policy seem imminent.

A troubling question was raised by 1968: how would the French state cope with a loss of control? The youth of 1968 had demanded visibility and inclusion in governance. The anger of the 1960s soon became the malaise of the 1970s, and the youth of 1968 grew into the governing positions that they had once decried. The lessons of protest were not soon forgotten, however, and would again be used in the 1980s, as the next chapter will attest. The question of national identity and belonging, continually raised, would not be resolved quietly.

**Beneath the Rhetoric**

The rhetoric surrounding soccer in France in the twentieth century may have been laden with the vocabulary of socialization and republican values, but the reality of the sport’s use is most clearly and obviously seen in its physical manifestation. The division of a player’s day into a strict timetable, the image of a soccer field dwarfed by an automobile factory, and the construction of sports facilities in cities troubled by social tension, speak to the underlying motivation of the use of sport. In this way, the

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67 Clastres and Dietschy, 166.
sports field does not seem fundamentally different from Foucault’s description of the army barracks, in which time was precisely divided, as was the cellular partitioning of the disciplinary space. As Foucault asks in “Panopticism,” “Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?” That the obvious answer is “no” underlines the fundamental similarities in all these disciplinary spaces and these similarities can be extended to the sports field. As the criticisms made by communist labor organizers attested, for example, corporate soccer was designed and organized to replicate a factory. And as the comparison between the timetable of the prison and that of a soccer player’s training schedule highlights, the discipline of the prison resembles that of the soccer field.

As the overview of French soccer history has shown, however, this locale of discipline has been utilized by a variety of agents. At first co-opted by the upper-middle class at the turn of the century, then by factory-owners in the 1930s, and finally by the state, sport differentiates itself from Foucault’s other disciplining institutions. Unlike the factory, run by the capitalist, or the barracks, directed by the military and ultimately the state, the sports field has not been associated with one particular agent. It is perhaps the mutability of sport that has made the discipline imposed more surreptitious. With such a discontinuity in actors, the continuity of intent and meaning is easy to ignore. As French soccer became more closely aligned with the state in the mid-twentieth century, sport as a disciplining institution resembled more clearly the steady relationship between agent and locale evidenced in the prison or the factory. Nevertheless, that the use of sport should be so coherently

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68 The element of surveillance inherent in any discussion of “Panopticism” will be further addressed in chapter three. Foucault, “Discipline and Punish,” 228.
tied to discipline and control throughout the twentieth century is not only too often overlooked, but is also crucial to any understanding of sport as a cultural phenomenon and, later, to analysis of the 1998 World Cup.
Chapter Two
As Individuals, As a Nation

The demands of the Beur community in 1983 were grand in scope. When several hundred thousand Beurs and their supporters reached Paris after a march that stretched from Marseille, they approached President François Mitterrand with complaints of social exclusion and discrimination. He vaguely but assuredly promised greater inclusion in the French nation. That this promise was largely unfulfilled had less to do with the earnestness of Mitterrand than it had to do with its inherent conflict with French republican values. Republicanism, bolstered by the twin pillars of individualism and laïcité,\(^1\) assures individuals inclusion in the French nation assuming that they forgo religious, ethnic, and familial identity in the public sphere. Eschewing favoritism of certain religions or ethnicities, the French government refuses to acknowledge communities. Anglo-American multiculturalism, which addresses the disadvantages of certain groups with policies like affirmative action, is often used in contrast to the French theory. It is for this reason that the demands of the Beurs were so revolutionary. The traditional French response to inclusion in national identity is typified by Clermont-Tonnerre’s rejoinder: “For the Jews as individuals everything, and nothing as a nation.”\(^2\) That Mitterrand did not reply to the Beurs in

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\(^1\) Though directly translated as “secularism,” the French interpretation of the term is stricter than the American notion of the division of church and state. It is best explained as a division between public and private. All elements of belonging to communities (like religions, ethnic groups, etc.) are relegated to the private sphere. The public sphere is limited to expressions of citizenship and belonging to the French nation.

\(^2\) Though this remark was made regarding the Jewish community, considered “inassimilable” by some in the nineteenth century, it is revelatory of a mindset that rejects communitarianism.
such a way, however, is telling of awareness in France of the need to be more flexible in its integration policy.

Analysis of the evolution of republicanism and integration policy in the twentieth century can help to contextualize the demands of the Beur community. Prior to the 1970s, “assimilation” was the public policy watchword for the immigrant policy, and implied the surrender of a previous identity and the complete adoption of a new French identity.³ Assimilation, it should be noted, could be voluntary or forced.⁴ In 1974, during the presidency of V. Giscard d’Estaing, “integration” became the accepted term and vaguely suggested a less complete surrender of individual identity. Integration, unlike assimilation, encompasses the idea that it is not only the immigrant who must surrender or suppress personal identity. In addition, the state and its agencies must help to facilitate adjustment to citizenship and belonging. What is vague in this definition is the degree to which the responsibility falls upon the individual and the degree to which it falls upon the state. The idea of integration was replaced, in the early 1980s, by a new idea. By the time of Mitterrand’s early campaigning, the phrase “le droit à la différence” had come into vogue, and the idea of “insertion” was a complete switch from early assimilationist theory. “Insertion,” popular among many of the Beur associations of the 1980s, was close to Anglo-American multiculturalism and suggested that those concerned could be inserted into

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the French social fabric while retaining the uniqueness of their individual identities.\textsuperscript{5}

With the growth of the Front National and the fear of an American-style “segregated and sectarian” society, “integration” theory re-emerged to replace insertion. The concept, as mentioned above, is notably ambiguous. Integration asks immigrants to “limit the expression of their identities in the public sphere.”\textsuperscript{6} The integration that emerged after the 1980s was largely a reaction against the policy of insertion and the French attempt at multiculturalism. It would seem, therefore, that the Beur movement had been ineffectual at developing a more multicultural France. Examination of the transformations of republicanism in the twentieth century, however, suggests that the Beurs laid the groundwork for the fragile French version of multiculturalism that would emerge in 1998.

\textit{Assimilating the Foreigner in French Sport}

French soccer, diverse since its inception, made the assimilation of immigrants highly visible. Soccer teams with diverse rosters and successful records were often used as examples of the success of assimilation. Within each team, specific players were models of “good immigrants,” willing to set aside personal identity and enthusiastic to accept French citizenship. From the 1930s to the 1980s, 20\% of French professional soccer players were foreign.\textsuperscript{7} With this high percentage of foreign players came a self-cultivated image of France as cosmopolitan but highly unified. Though players may have been foreign, the success of assimilation was their


willingness to renounce previous identities in favor of new French identities.

Christian Bromberger writes, “Qui voudrait se donner une vision exemplaire et rapide du melting-pot à la française, de la tradition républicaine d’intégration n’aurait de meilleur moyen que de consulter la composition des équipes…” The professional French soccer teams therefore represented a successful unified nation and a successful assimilation policy.

Underlining the success of assimilation were stories of the rise of foreign players, used to demonstrate the merits of an egalitarian society and the ease of social mobility. Raymond Kopa, for example, a French citizen of Polish parents, was used to represent an assimilated immigrant. A star soccer player in the 1950s, Kopa was originally a miner with his Polish family. Kopa, however, was eager to renounce his Polish identity, and denied that he even spoke the language. He was equally eager to adopt a French identity, serving enthusiastically in his country’s military when he turned 21. His ability to lead the French national team to a third-place finish in the 1958 World Cup solidified his image as the ultimate socially mobile example of successful assimilation. Kopa made no demands for the Polish community in France, nor was he vocal about his origins. By reinforcing the notion that personal identity was to be kept in the private sphere, Kopa remained an example of assimilation.

Problems with assimilation policy, however, were also evident on the soccer field. Raymond Kopa and his parents were members of a wave of white, European,

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8 “To glimpse a quick and effective model of the French melting pot, of the republican integration tradition, there is no better way than to see the composition of [soccer] teams…” Bromberger, “Le Match de Football,” 156.

Catholic immigrants who benefited from France’s labor shortage after World War II. Assimilation was, for this group, more accessible than for Rachid Mekloufi, a French soccer star in the 1950s and 1960s of Algerian origin. Differentiated by race, religion, and by the beginnings of a war between France and the colony that was his country of origin, he was not always to renounce his personal identity with the enthusiasm of Raymond Kopa. Although as the captain of the St. Etienne team in 1968 he received the French Cup from Charles de Gaulle, who congratulated the players with the words, “La France, c’est vous,” his “Frenchness” was often in question. The French star joined players of Algerian origin to help form the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) team in 1958. Joining the FLN, a revolutionary body that led Algeria’s fight for independence against France, represented a real departure from affiliation with a French identity. By abandoning the French national team as it prepared for the World Cup in Sweden to join the FLN team, Mekloufi’s loyalty to the French state was called into question.

Though Mekloufi was a soccer player, not a combatant, his defection was meaningful as the sport became a symbol of a larger defiance. In Algeria, soccer had traditionally been a sport of the colonist and one that was limited in its diffusion and play for the French. The rise of soccer among Algerians was therefore connected to the rise of anticolonial nationalism, and soccer became a “phenomenon of appropriation.” Throughout the Algerian War, soccer was used by the FLN as a form of protest, and the world-wide tour of the Algerian FLN team in 1958 also included many former French players, undermining the notion of unified and satisfied

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10 Lanfranchi and Wahl, 119.
11 Guttman, 69.
immigrants in the French nation. Prior to 1958, Mekloufi had been portrayed as the “model of the fraternal and successful integration of the indigenous Arabic population.” Clearly, this unabashed manipulation of the sporting world was complicated by reality. When Algeria became independent in 1962, Mekloufi resumed play in France, and “just as the reality of the war in Algeria was fading in the national mind, the exploits of Mekloufi kept the conflict alive.” The identity struggles of the immigrant community, and above all the community from North Africa, had begun to diverge from the idealized portrayal of a unified collectivity in France. The struggle for identity experienced by Rachid Mekloufi was certainly not responsible for making assimilation policy obsolete, but it did serve to magnify the problems within it.

Assimilation, in its insistence that outsiders renounce all elements of personal identity in the public sphere, placed the burden of “becoming French” solely on the non-national. Furthermore, it was uncompromising in its conception that individual identity be erased from the public lives of French citizens. By the 1970s, however, assimilation seemed increasingly outdated in the face of the challenges raised by immigrants from different ethnicities and religions, like Rachid Mekloufi. “Integration” was adopted in 1974, and although the term is vague, it suggested a greater sense of compromise than assimilation had. Integration policy intimated that the state was willing to adapt to its immigrant community. The collectivity, in this conception, would accommodate the immigrant just as the immigrant was expected to adapt to the demands of the collectivity. Although becoming French remained a

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13 Lanfranchi and Wahl, 119.
14 Lanfranchi and Wahl, 119.
question of the relegation of personal identity to the private sphere, the effort, it seemed, was significantly less one-sided.

**Discrimination and Integration’s “Blindness”**

Even after the redefinition of integration policy, however, systematic problems remained. The concept of “setting aside” individual identity becomes problematic when individual identity is unavoidably visible. Race and gender, to name two obvious examples, are impossible to renounce in the schoolroom or on the street. Furthermore, the idea that the French state does not see communities ignores the realities of racism, sexism, and all types of discrimination. The French state may not officially have prevented black citizens from purchasing houses, but by ignoring rampant housing discrimination, it tacitly consented to such racism. Integration policy may have represented a concession from earlier assimilation policy, but the prevalence of discrimination presented a real barrier to national unity.

A pertinent example of such inequality was the public education system. Since the nineteenth century, education has been the French republic’s primary means of socializing its citizens and it has traditionally placed a high value on citizenship education. Youth of Maghrebi\(^\text{15}\) origin, however, were systematically unsuccessful in the French public education system. For example, youth of Algerian origin were much more likely to have to repeat a year and were least likely to graduate from advanced schooling. In a survey conducted by Michele Tribalat in 1995, 1.4% of youth of Algerian origin had to repeat a year, as compared to the national average of

\(^{15}\) The Maghreb is composed of countries in North Africa with historical colonial ties to France, specifically Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.
1.08% for boys and .96% for girls.\textsuperscript{16} Linguistic or cultural diversity was treated as a handicap, and students that fell behind were placed in special education classes and often failed out of school.\textsuperscript{17} It is unsurprising, therefore, that some of the most troubled areas in the French public school system coincided with those typically populated by the largest concentration of children of immigrant origin.

Acknowledging the dearth in resources faced by schools in the banlieues,\textsuperscript{18} the French government created a program called the ZEP (Zones d’Education Prioritaire) in 1982, channeling additional resources to schools in disadvantaged areas and encouraging new teaching projects.\textsuperscript{19} This program to target specific schools in specific areas was considered highly controversial. Many critics argued that the provision of special advantages to certain community violate the country’s aversion to treating individuals as members of specific communities. Since ethnic, religious, and even racial identities are considered elements of the private sphere, any acknowledgement of such identity in the public sphere is polemic. Because of the fear of further marginalizing the immigrant population and the traditional French rejection of anything smacking of affirmative action, the ZEP program was seen as temporary.

The execution of the ZEP program was, in all, poorly managed. The budget of the program was not well determined or clearly directed at a specific area, and the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[18] Although literally translated as “suburbs,” the “banlieues” of France carry none of the middle-class connotations that their American counterparts do. These low-income areas on the outskirts of French cities are typically inhabited by a large population of immigrant origin who often live in government-sponsored housing projects. It is for this reason that I will continue to use the term “banlieue” instead of its English equivalent.
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designation of an area as ZEP actually had the effect of deterring teachers and students from more privileged backgrounds. No systematic evaluation of these priority education zones was ever fully undertaken by the French central government, and the budget remained mismanaged and was used ineffectually. The French government’s attempt at reform remained a paltry one, as it seemed unwilling to commit the resources or direct them appropriately, perhaps given the controversial nature of the program. The gross discrepancy in levels of scholastic achievement between the average French citizen and the citizen of immigrant origins demonstrated the reality of social exclusion in that community. This example of education inequality and the ZEP program does show an acknowledgement by the state of its responsibility to work for the successful inclusion of outsiders. However, the conflict between anti-discrimination policies and French republicanism (especially its aversion to affirmative action) resulted in continuing and endemic inequalities.

Another visible example of inequality was the image of the violent and lawless banlieues. In the 1970s and 1980s, these communities on the outskirts of major cities often became synonymous with cyclical unemployment and violence in the immigrant population. The segregation of large portions of the immigrant populace in low-income residences reinforced their social exclusion. Furthermore, the urban situation crystallized pre-existing tension and violence between French society and these “outsiders.” The national heterogeneity of the immigrant populations in the suburbs led to fragmentation and the creation of the distinct populations; the families were isolated from one another within the housing projects, which were, in turn,

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20 Benabou, Kramarz and Prost, 22.
isolated from larger society. This isolation was reinforced and systematized by discrimination in the housing market, which prevented mobility for the residents of the banlieues.

Discrimination became especially prevalent in immigrant housing as the central government became more decentralized. Starting in 1981, when the left introduced a policy of decentralization, mayors often used their increased powers to refuse construction permits for new social housing. Authorities were not obliged to make reasons for accepting or refusing individual housing applications, and discrimination by landlords and estate agents therefore ensured that the people of immigrant origin remain limited in their housing options. The lack of documentation or need for justification regarding the refusal of housing applications also ensured that proof of discrimination could only rarely be brought before the courts. The decentralization of the French government gave the central government an easy way to avoid the larger issue, but its silent compliance suggests hesitancy to follow through on its espoused plans of integration.

Discrimination in housing was paralleled by discrimination in employment practices. The lack of social mobility among the immigrant community, the real reason behind the stagnancy of the banlieues, can be traced to chronic unemployment faced by immigrants and those of immigrant origins starting in the 1970s and peaking in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1990, unemployment in France was at 10.4%, the highest in Europe. Even higher, however, was the rate of unemployment for non-nationals, of 19.5%, and even higher was the unemployment rate among those of Algerian origin,

21 Kastoryano, 71.
22 Kastoryano, 199.
of 27.5%.\textsuperscript{23} Certainly the reasons for this chronic unemployment are diverse. For example, youth across France were plagued by unemployment partially because of the existence of inflexible hiring contracts that made it nearly impossible for employers to fire employees during their first two years, and thus disincentivized hiring. Furthermore, the poor education often characteristic of the banlieues made the candidates of immigrant origin likely to be less qualified than those who benefited from a less troubled background. Nevertheless, it is easy to identify chronic discrimination as of the primary reasons behind the unemployment of youth of Maghrebi origins. In the 1995 survey conducted by Tribalat, 75% of children of Franco-Algerian couples believed in the existence of hiring discrimination, as did 80% of children from two Algerian parents.\textsuperscript{24} Furthermore, 75% of the French in general suggested that Arabs were the primary victims of hiring discrimination, thus confirming the widespread problem that exists.\textsuperscript{25} While long identified as a problem, little practical action has been taken to prevent it.

The 1972 Anti-Discrimination Law, which made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, or religion, led to few prosecutions. Employers, like landlords, could choose to reject or accept an application without justification. Furthermore, France’s aversion to the expression of identity in the public sphere and desire to treat individuals as such, and not as members of communities, made effective tools to measure inequalities rare. Discrimination on the labor market, therefore, could go

\textsuperscript{23} Hargreaves,41.
\textsuperscript{24} Tribalat,179.
\textsuperscript{25} Tribalat,181.
unchecked, and companies could ask for “bleu-blanc-rouge” candidates. A “foreign-sounding” name or an address in the banlieues was often enough to prevent the hiring of someone of immigrant origins. Anti-discrimination measures were difficult to implement in France because of the focus on formal political rights and the aversion to asking questions about racial or ethnic identity. The absence of action taken by the central government both reinforced the unemployment cycle for the banlieues and encouraged distrust of the government and its institutions. Though the French state decried discrimination, it did little to prosecute it and seemed to turn a blind eye to its existence.

Discrimination and racism were compounded by circumstances like an inflexible job market and economic fluctuations and the 1970s and 1980s represented a real challenge to those of immigrant origin. Even more problematically, the reality of discrimination was not addressed by the French state, which remained bound by the unwillingness to see communities in the public sphere. The promise of integration in 1974, which had hinted at a more accommodating state, seemed illusory. There became a growing sense in the 1980s that something needed to change.

**“Marche des Beurs” and the “Insertion” Experiment**

François Mitterrand’s campaign for President reflected a shift in public opinion. Racism, discrimination, and the accompanying conflict between those of immigrant origin and the rest of French society led to the desire for something new. Throughout his campaign, Mitterrand advocated “le droit à la différence,” and the idea of “insertion” was characteristic of his position and that of the left at the time.

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27 De Wenden, 44.
“Insertion” was notably close to Anglo-American multiculturalism and suggested that those concerned could be inserted into the French social fabric while retaining cultural identity.\textsuperscript{28} The position of Mitterrand in the early 1980s therefore represented a real break from traditional republican theory and experimentation with something much different.

The platform of Mitterrand was a timely one, for it was during his campaign for president that a growing movement of those of immigrant origin began. Referring to themselves as “Beurs” (a colloquial re-appropriation of the word “Arabe”), the youth of the second generation began to mobilize against the unemployment and discrimination that they faced. The beginnings of the Beur movement quickly took a national dimension. A hunger strike in Lyon protesting the unfair expulsion of young Algerians started on April 2, 1981, and was quickly mediatized and discussed across the country. An outpouring of support for the protesters seemed to come from all sides, including a manifesto written and signed by more than 100 intellectuals titled “Non à la France de l’apartheid.”\textsuperscript{29} Nor was this strike ignored by the French government. Mitterrand made an effort to visit the strikers in Lyon and gave them his clear support, adding that such injustices would be halted were he to be victorious.\textsuperscript{30} Within a month, the hunger strike was judged a success. On April 29, Prime Minister Raymond Barre suspended expulsions from the country for three months and agreed to negotiations with the protesters. The first action of the Beur movement provided hope to the generation that it represented.

\textsuperscript{28} Hargreaves, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{30} Gastaut, 413.
Capitalizing on this, the Beur movement became more organized, and by 1983 an antiracist march had been planned. Officially titled the “Marche pour l’égalité et contre le racisme,” the march spanned from Marseille to Paris from October to December 1983. Taking Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. as models, the marchers projected an image of peace and acceptance, encouraging immigrants from all backgrounds to participate. In reality, however, the march itself was dominated by the youth of Maghrebi origins, and the march was soon rechristened by the media the “Marche des Beurs.” 700 of their well-known supporters signed a text affirming their solidarity with a multicultural France. With their arrival in Paris on December 3, 1983, the marchers received a gallant welcome. 100,000 Parisians filled the streets and a sense of French solidarity was echoed in the headlines of the local newspapers --- “Paris-sur-beur,” “Coup de Coeur pour les beurs,” “Marche de la main tendue.” The “Marche des Beurs” was a large step for the Beur community, both by increasing their visibility and hope of success. Notably, this visibility was not one of a collection of individuals, but a united community that demanded recognition from the state.

Mitterrand’s reception of the marchers in the Elysée Palace reinforced the sense of hope within the Beur community at the time. His promises continued to reflect the justice, antiracism, and policy coherence desired by the marchers. Insertion policy was certainly advocated and accepted by the Beur community, but it was doubtful whether the rest of France would be so willing to break from French republicanism. The visibility of the Beur community had not only made it a source of

31 “March for equality and against racism.”
32 Gastaut, 414.
33 “Falling for the Beurs,” “March of the Outstretched Hand.” Gastaut, 415.
debate, but also a ready scapegoat. By 1983, unemployment had continued to increase, and with unemployment had accompanied a significant xenophobia and racist attacks. When such violence was on the increase, the government tightened its controls and stepped up its campaigns against the “clandestins,” or illegal immigrants.\(^3\) By 1982, these severe restrictions had caused such a large number of foreigners to be refused entry that President Chadli of Algeria lodged a formal protest.\(^4\) Mitterrand, however, continued to assert that his antiracist stance and strict immigration restrictions could be seen as logically consistent and part of a coherent immigration policy, to the increasing skepticism of many Beur campaigners and those who asserted immigrant rights.

Despite hints of inconsistency in Mitterrand’s policy, the growth of highly successful antiracist associations suggested that the French public at large welcomed the “insertion” experiment. For example, SOS Racisme, a theoretically broad movement dominated by Beurs, was created in 1984.\(^5\) The association was created with the objective of “lutter en faveur d’une France multiculturelle intégrant les immigrés et leurs enfants.”\(^6\) A 1985 survey showed that the movement had gained the sympathy of 35% of the French.\(^7\) Both this association and others, like France-Plus, were highly successful in the mid-1980s, and gained the recognition and support of much of French society through highly publicized protests, marches, and campaigns. This success suggests that the French populace was willing to negotiate

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\(^4\) Silverman, 60.

\(^5\) Hargreaves, 143.

\(^6\) "To fight for a multicultural France integrating immigrants and their children.” Gastaut, 185.

\(^7\) Gastaut, 186.
the concept of individualism and French republican ideology for the sake of greater inclusion.

The success of the Beur movement at this time was countered by the growing theme of insecurity and danger connected to foreigners, and, specifically, youth from the Maghreb. The increasing visibility of the community through anti-racism groups was connected with the highly publicized visibility of criminal behavior in the banlieues. Between 1981 and 1983, significant rioting took place in the Lyon region. On the outskirts of Lyon, violence and rioting dominated the summer months. From July to August 1981 in the banlieues of Les Minguettes, 250 cars were burned, 7 policemen injured, and around 20 youths imprisoned. The interpretation of this incident by the media was fairly consistent: the image of an armed conflict between the delinquent Beurs and the forces of order. Politicians like Jacques Chirac began to reinforce the image of the dangerous outsider, stating that he refused to “laisser Paris devenir le Chicago des années 30.” Perhaps most troubling was the impetus that this fear of the outsider gave to the parties of the extreme right, parties like the Front National. With postering campaigns with mottos like “Immigré = Délinquant” and “Immigration = Insécurité,” the Front National was quick to cultivate the latent xenophobia of the early 1980s. Jean-Marie LePen and the Front National were especially adept at equating immigration, Maghrebis, and social problems, and continued to reproduce the stereotype of the uncivilized, violent Arab. Using unemployment and violence as catalysts for racism and xenophobia, the effect of

39 Gastaut, 488.
40 “Let Paris become like Chicago in the 1930s.” Gastaut, 483.
41 “Immigrant=Delinquent,” “Immigration=Insecurity,” Gastaut, 483.
extreme right parties was to effectively combat the work done by the Beur movement in the direction of insertion.

The success of the extreme right did not go unnoticed by the socialist government or Mitterrand himself. The discrepancy between his promises to combat racism and his desire to appeal to the average Front National voter became more blatant, and the alleged coherency of his immigration policy became laughable. Problematically, “défenseur des droits de l’homme, François Mitterrand se voulait aussi défenseur du travail des Français.” This contradiction led the socialist president to move closer and closer to the extreme right. The president began to backtrack on the proposed policies of “insertion,” much to the dismay of the Beur community. One of his earliest broken promises was his violation of a pledge to give immigrants the vote in municipal elections, but many more were to follow. In a survey in 1991 regarding the actions of Mitterrand, 44% found his actions mostly positive regarding the fight against racism (vs. 40% who found them mostly negative), whereas 66% found his view of immigration to be mostly negative (vs. 21% who found it mostly positive). By the late 1980s, the left was reneging on its earlier multicultural stance, and left the Beur movement stripped of one of its most significant allies.

By this time, concessions to the extreme right had begun to suggest not only an abandonment of insertion, but even a reversion to assimilation. This reversion was represented by the “headscarf affair” that began in 1989. Three young Muslim girls in

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43 “Defender of the rights of man, François Mitterrand also wanted to be the defender of French jobs.” Gastaut, 242.
44 Silverman, 60.
45 Gastaut, 242.
the town of Creil were warned to remove the traditional Islamic headscarves before entering the public school. After refusing to do so, they were expelled.\textsuperscript{46} This incident set off debate regarding minorities in the public space and, inevitably, returned to the notion of assimilation contrasted with that of insertion. Insertion was increasingly associated with fractured national identity and conflict. This re-interpretation of assimilation, however, was not purely the reflection of a desire for unity, but was also pointedly targeted at the Beur community. At this time, there was a surfacing of a sort of “new racism,” or the idea that certain cultures and certain immigrants can simply never find a place in the French nation.\textsuperscript{47} The debate was almost completely focused on immigrants from the Maghreb and the Beur generation, the vast majority of whom were either practicing Muslims or associated themselves in some way with Islam. Even the Beur community was split on the issue, however. Within the Muslim community in France, more than half reported being against the public wearing of the foulard, or headscarf.\textsuperscript{48} Above all, the headscarf affair symbolized the continuing controversy regarding the ability or inability of the immigrant community to blend into the French landscape, and the future of integration began to look increasingly bleak.

The disintegration of the “insertion” idea was evident by the late 1980s, but its cause was not solely the campaigning of the extreme right. By 1989, SOS Racisme and France-Plus began to fall apart. Both organizations were torn apart by the

\textsuperscript{47} Kastoryano, 67.
\textsuperscript{48} Remy Leveau, "Maghrebi Immigration to Europe: Double Insertion or Double Exclusion?" \textit{The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science} 524 (1992): 170-180, 173.
inability to define a long-term multicultural project. As multiculturalism fell out of favor in France and came more clearly to be associated with the violence and failed integration symbolized by the American ghettos, no clear theory emerged to take its place. By the early 1990s, surveys revealed the absence of motivation among the French to engage in any action against racism. In one survey, 67-74% said they would not participate in antiracist rally, 69-72% said that they would not wear a badge, and 73-77% said they would not participate in an antiracist association. The disintegration of the Beur associations reflected a growing disillusionment with Beur activism and a discouragement that the position of immigrants was, seemingly, not improving.

The Beur movement certainly faced more than one obstacle to success. The growing employment crisis accompanied by xenophobic sentiments made its campaign nearly impossible. Beneath these obstacles, however, it seems that there is a deeper and more theoretical problem. The very inconsistency of the idea of “insertion” with the longstanding traditions of individualism and laïcité in the French state doomed the movement from the start. Such a radical shift, accompanied with the entrenched negative view that the French harbor towards Anglo-American multiculturalism, made the project ambitious at best and impossible at worse. Disappointment in the failure of the Beur idea, however, was meaningful in a very real way that transgressed theoretical disputes. The increasing hostility of the government towards the Beur and immigrant communities led to an increasing distrust of and anger towards the state.

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49 Gastaut, 187.
50 Gastaut, 187.
The beginning of the 1990s reflected this progressive disillusionment. Between 1990 and 1991 the Parisian area saw near-constant violence between the youth from the banlieues and the police. The press treated this violence with an alarmist tone, and all with the same fear: that the cities had begun to resemble certain parts of Los Angeles and Chicago.\footnote{Gastaut, 490.} More than at any time in its recent history, France was confronted by a disillusioned and alienated section of its populace that seemed “outside” the French nation. The Beur movement, hopeful at the outset and disillusioned only a few years later, had seemed ineffectual. By the early 1990s, the youth of immigrant origin faced even graver unemployment, lived in banlieues plagued by violence, and shied away from the associations that just a few years before they had embraced.

**Sports Integration and Assimilation’s Awakening**

By the 1990s, terms like ‘anomie’ and ‘disillusionment’ were not uncommon in descriptions of the social exclusion of inhabitants of the banlieues. Politicians spoke frequently of the need to ‘repair the social tie’ and to ‘re-socialize’ the youth of the cités. Several statistical studies seemed to reinforce this perception. Tribalat’s survey in 1995 found that the youth of immigrant origins were especially loath to join associations of any kind. Associations, a Tocquevillian marker of an active citizenry, are often seen as a crucial socializing tool. In 1995, 42% of French men and 29% of French women throughout the country participated in some sort of club or association.\footnote{Tribalat, 130.} In the immigrant community, however, participation was less than one
out of ten. Notably, in both cases, the clubs and associations most frequented were those affiliated with sports. In both a continuation of earlier sports policies and a re-imagination of integration policy, sports integration became a highly publicized and well-financed project of the French government.

Indeed, few other projects or attempts at integration were promoted with such enthusiasm. By the early 1990s, “le sport est considéré comme un solution miracle, voire la panacée, pour résorber tous les maux dont souffrait cette jeunesse en difficulté.” The solution was embraced by intellectuals and politicians, who praised the perceived successes of such sport programs in the past and the sure efficaciousness of sports integration in the future. Furthermore, the building of sports clubs and encouraging youth participation was a far more visible and glamorous form of integration than the slow and unwieldy projects of education and housing. The presentation of such programs were “orgies médiatiques” where politicians rushed to “vanter les mérites du sport-insertion.” Sports funding in many communes skyrocketed, aided by the decentralization of the 1980s which had left sports budgets unclear and to the discretion of the localities. Sports socialization, as has been previously discussed, was not a new concept in the French state. Despite the fact that this re-imagining of sports integration represented the first time that an immigrant population was directly targeted, the groundwork for such a program had been laid

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53 Tribalat, 131.
54 “Sport was thought of as a miracle solution, even a cure-all, to diminish all the problems that the youth in difficulty suffer from.” Fethi Sakouhi, Jeunes des banlieues en difficulté: Conditions socioculturelles. insertion par le sport: Chimère où réalité? Le cas des jeunes d'origine maghrébine. Villeneuve D'Ascq: Presses Universitaires Du Septentrion, 2002, 139.
55 “Media orgy.” “Flaunt the merits of sport-insertion.” Sakouhi, 139.
earlier in the twentieth century with similar programs directed at the delinquency of working-class youth.

Moreover, the espoused goals of sports integration programs were not far from those of Coubertin in the 1890s or Léo Lagrange in the 1930s. In fact, the renewal of excitement for sports integration represented the reversion towards assimilation. The sporting field represented a locale where personal identity must be set aside for the purpose of play. Looking backwards toward the Raymond Kopa model of the 1950s, sports integration in the 1990s exemplified an attempt to revamp and reuse assimilation policy. The athlete embodied, as ever, a unitary and universal citizenship and the sporting spectacle represented just competition and merit. Anyone could compete and succeed on the field, an idealized representation of French social mobility. With the same paternalism that the middle class had preached their values in the gymnastics club to the unruly workers, the French state now used sporting clubs in an effort to “teach citizenship” to the uncontrolled immigrant youth. Regarding the “J Sports” program, one politician commented in 1991, “En voulant que les jeunes s’approprient ces terrains, je pense que cette démarche constituera pour eux un apprentissage de la responsabilité qui est la première des qualités du citoyen.”

Teaching responsibility, promoting good sportsmanship, and reinforcing the merit of hard work was seen as the role of sport. Building local sports terrains, for example, was a way for youth in the banlieues to take more pride in their locality, and to

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57 “By willing the youth to appropriate the sports fields, I think that this approach will constitute a lesson in responsibility which is the first in citizenship qualities.” Pascal Chantelat, Michel Fodimbi, and Jean Camy. Sports de la cité: Anthropologie de la jeunesse sportive. Montreal: L’Harmattan, 1996, 111.
increase a sense of responsibility towards it.\textsuperscript{58} By proxy, it was hoped, this localized identity and civic responsibility would translate into loyal and connected French citizens with a greater sense of belonging to the state.

Beneath and commingled with this goal of citizenship creation was also a hope that the sports programs would calm the youths of the banlieue and combat their violent tendencies. Many of the local politicians at the time described the sports integration program as a way to combat “the want of something to do,”\textsuperscript{59} implying that idle hands had caused the violence in the banlieues and the disillusionment of the Beur generation. Many hoped that sport would become “un exutoire à la violence des jeunes des banlieues.”\textsuperscript{60} The discipline of training, the occupation of spare hours, and the sheer exhaustion of competition would be used as a sort of outlet for spare energy. The sports integration of the 1990s, it seemed, was popular for just this reason. It promised inclusion and integration without insecurity.

One of the first programs launched by the central government was in 1982, in response to the urban disorders in Les Minguettes.\textsuperscript{61} “Les Opérations Préventions Eté” (OPE) was started in eleven different departments based on the criteria of a sufficiently high youth unemployment rate, the amount of delinquency, and the density of the youth population. The program offered a wide variety of summer sports activities to occupy the youth, ostensibly with the goal of keeping them out of trouble. By 1984, the program had been declared an “incontestable success” with the

\begin{footnotes}
58 Chantelat, Fodimbi, and Camy, 111.
59 Henry, 19.
60 “An outlet for the violence of the youth of the banlieues.” Sakouhi, 148.
61 Henry, 18.
\end{footnotes}
participation of 500,000 young people.\textsuperscript{62} In 1995, the project was rechristened “Ville, Vie, Vacances,” and was extended to 39 departments and ran throughout the year. The budget of the program also expanded considerably with the passing years. In 1992, the central government allocated 36.05 million francs towards the project and by 1995 the budget had reached 57.15 million francs.\textsuperscript{63} Despite its “incontestable success,” however, the program was not without its limitations. A primary concern was that the female population was relatively untouched by the program. In 1994, 73\% of participants were male and only 27\% were female.\textsuperscript{64} Given the initial objective of the program, this fact is perhaps unsurprising. Targeting the potential participants in urban disorder typically led the government to focus on young men. If the program is considered, though, as an emergency response to urban disorder, it seemed to fail. From 1983 to the late 1990s, periodic riots and disturbances in the cités continued seemingly unaffected by the government’s new sports program. If the program is considered as an integration tool, its success seems even more dubious. Though the program was popular, there is little evidence to show that it provided the socialization and citizenship education that politicians had espoused.

Another sports integration program, “J Sports,” was organized in the early 1990s. This project, again, was prompted by violence. The continuous riots in the banlieues around Paris in 1990 through 1991 inspired another attempt at socialization. The objective was to provide small-scale local sports facilities as a means of fostering sports participation by those who were unlikely to join formal sporting

\textsuperscript{62} Sakouhi, 170.  
\textsuperscript{63} Sakouhi, 173.  
\textsuperscript{64} Sakouhi, 171.
organizations.\textsuperscript{65} 373 million francs were directed towards the construction of around 1,500 sports facilities between 1991 and 1993, with about half of these built in lower-income neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{66} The goal for this project, as for the others, was to reconstruct the social tie by preventing the banlieues from social exclusion, organizing inter-neighborhood tournaments and creating intermediary spaces between the street and the traditional sports club.\textsuperscript{67} The Minister of Youth and Sports at that time, F. Bredin, hoped that the direct control of the facilities would be taken over by the youth of the cités, and that this would provide “un apprentissage de la responsabilité.”\textsuperscript{68} Critics denounced the program for several reasons. Some argued that the money had gone to simply refinishing old sports facilities instead of building new ones, and that the directors of these facilities were unqualified. A more damning critique, however, was that the sports installations actually did the opposite of their declared intent. Instead of combating social exclusion, this program reinforced it by encouraging youth of the banlieues to frequent only their space and not to leave it.\textsuperscript{69} The French government, vocally encouraging the inclusion of its population of immigrant origins, did, in practical terms, little but reinforce its isolation. The concept of fostering local pride, when expressed through the “J Sports” program, became, in actuality, the quarantine of a dangerous group. Though politicians continued to tout the success of the program, it provided paltry evidence to support this conclusion.

A third sports integration program, “Tickets-Sports,” was organized differently than OPE or “J Sports.” Rather than create a new forum for sporting

\textsuperscript{65} Henry, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{66} Chantelat, Fodimbi, and Camy, 120.
\textsuperscript{67} Chantelat, Fodimbi, and Camy, 121.
\textsuperscript{68} “A lesson in responsibility.” Sakouhi, 175.
\textsuperscript{69} Sakouhi, 177.
activity among youth or build new facilities, “Tickets-Sports” relied upon the socializing properties of the sports club, which had existed since the era of the gymnastics movement. Started in 1992, the program provided vouchers that allowed free access for underprivileged youth to sports clubs that typically required an adherence fee. The idea behind the “Tickets-Sports” program was not dissimilar to those that had accompanied sports associations since the turn of the twentieth century. The sports club was seen as a locale of citizenship development, a polity in miniature in which the “universality of sports values transcend social and cultural particularities,” creating a form of citizenship like that of national citizenship, that is “unitary and indivisible.” Like the gymnastics clubs of the 1890s, however, the clubs in the “Tickets-Sports” program suffered from internal division. The young people targeted by the program were, for the most part, ineligible for governing positions within the sports club and thus could take no ownership in the model polity. Instead, the sports club was divided between those who had paid their membership fee and were of age to take a leading role in the club and the disenfranchised youth, who were eligible to be taught citizenship lessons but not, evidently, to be treated as citizens. Despite the continued enthusiasm of the French government for programs like “Tickets-Sports,” such programs seemed far from reaching their espoused goals of integration and the creation of a responsible citizenry.

In fact, the inherent problems with sports integration loom larger than its alleged successes. Of primary concern, as mentioned before, is the issue of gender.

70 Sakouhi, 178.
71 Chantelat, Fodimbi, and Camy, 138.
72 Chantelat, Fodimbi, and Camy, 139.
Sporting practices were almost solely masculine.\(^{73}\) Participation in the OPE, almost 75% male, reflects this gender divide. As Fethi Sakouhi mentions in his study of immigrant youth, even informal games undertaken in public spaces in the banlieues were almost exclusively male.\(^{74}\) If, as asserted, sports integration’s main goal was the socialization of citizens, the exclusion from women from this socialization seems a drastic oversight. The argument that young women were less in need of integration, furthermore, offers no viable explanation. As evidenced by the Headscarf Affair, young women, especially young Muslim women, were symbols of visible exclusion. The significant difference in the visibility of young men and young women of immigrant origin was the association of young men with rioting and violence. Young women, rarely portrayed as the perpetrators of such violence, were not the targets of sports integration because the policy was based more in fear and a desire for control than magnanimity and an extension of welcome to the ostracized Beur community.

Furthermore, as alluded to above, young people were the primary targets of these programs. Although these programs encouraged the teaching of citizenship to youth, however, there was no sense of a progressive and continuous process once they reached adulthood. When the target audience of sports integration programs, young men from the banlieues, is considered in conjunction with the timing of such programs, “des opérations-pompiers, prises en urgence sous la pression de conjonctures spéciales,”\(^{75}\) their intention seems far from integration or socialization. Instead, the clear intent becomes one of controlling the dangerous and restless section

\(^{73}\) Chantelat, Fodimbi, and Camy, 50.
\(^{74}\) Sakouhi, 152.
\(^{75}\) “Band-aid fixes, used in situations of emergency under the pressure of a specific conjunction of forces.” Sakouhi, 123.
of the populace rather than providing a sincere commitment to their socialization in French society.

The nature of the programs themselves supports this conclusion. Supposing that the participants had “learned” citizenship skills from the sports integration programs, there was no real outlet for them to participate. Youth of immigrant background were not encouraged to participate more fully in politics, and the apparent failure of organizations like SOS Racisme had discouraged most youth from more active participation in associations. What seemed to be lacking, “c’est moins la volonté de discuter, de débattre, que l’existence même d’espaces de débat.”76 With the demise of the organizations of the 1980s, Beurs and residents of the banlieues had little forum to express their grievances, or even to more fully exercise their rights as citizens. Sports integration purported to teach the youth of the banlieues citizenship skills, but the French government made no guarantee that it would treat them like citizens.

The perception of such programs was, moreover, largely negative. In riots in 1993 in Bron and Vaulx-en-Velin, rioters from the cités set fire to government-built sports halls.77 Even in cases where youth were prone to participate in a given activity, the French themselves, as reflected in surveys of Maghrebi youth, were still thought of as “pénibles” and “durs.”78 The attempts of the government in the realm of sports integration were seen, it seems, as insincere. The disillusionment that affected the Beur generation had not been stemmed by the government’s programs and projects.

76 “It’s less the will to discuss, to debate, than the lack of a forum in which to do so.” Chantelat, Fodimbi, and Camy, 114.
77 Henry, 19.
78 “trying,” “harsh.” Sakouhi, 103.
This rejection of a reinterpretation of assimilation suggests that assimilation could not truly function in post-“Marche des Beurs” France. The immigrant community had, for one, been promised a space to express their cultural identity in the public sphere, and a suppression of it would not be accepted easily. Furthermore, distrust of the government had coincided with the disintegration of the Beur movement and few government initiatives would be readily tolerated. Finally, with the growth of the extreme right and racism, notions of assimilation became linked with the idea that certain religions, ethnicities, or races were incompatible with French nationality. Assimilation could not be a successful policy in itself in the integration and unification of the French nation.

**Conclusions and Approaching 1998**

The changes in integration policy and French republicanism throughout the twentieth century highlight two major themes. First, they underline the tenacity of individualism, laïcité, and the major tenets of French republicanism. This theory seems so deeply ingrained in French policy and society itself that what is surprising is not that the Beur movement was a failure, but rather that it experienced as much success as it did. Second and of equal importance, however, is the change that occurred throughout the twentieth century. The Beur movement and the disillusionment of the 1990s suggest strongly the need for a serious reform of the conception of French national identity. As the 1998 World Cup approached, therefore, it did so in the complicated context of disillusionment, ingrained republicanism, and a need for change.
Chapter Three  
A Spectacle of Nationhood

Zinedine Zidane clutched the national trophy as he tearfully sang “La Marseillaise.” It was played on French television, talked about on French radio, and even superimposed on the Arc de Triomphe on Bastille Day of 1998. This image encapsulated French dreams about the event. The Beur who sacrificed for his country, who loved it as it loved him, was a more real symbol of the 1998 World Cup than any mascot. Les Bleus, the victorious French team, had, by the time of their victory, become an idealized nation in miniature. They had come to represent a unity among difference that the larger French nation had found elusive. Countless reporters, commentators, and theorists had interpretations of the event as a representation of reality or a vision for the future. Upon further inspection of the event, and taking into account its historical underpinnings, the World Cup should be interpreted as both problematic and promising. Problematic in its continuation of the discipline-wrought past of French sports integration. Promising in its presentation of a new, visible diversity. This event is thus to be seen as more than a sporting event, but as a cultural marker. This cultural marker is telling not only of the past of French integration, but also and more importantly, its future.

This, of course, could not have been foreseen in 1996, as the French state prepared to host the World Cup. The French Organizing Committee (CFO), co-presided by former soccer star Michel Platini, set about laying the groundwork for the event. Given the French state’s traditional devotion to sport as a public service, the government’s involvement and support were not surprising and were clear from the
start. Moreover, the attraction of corporate sponsors, of whom the larger portion were subsidiaries of ISL International and included Adidas, Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, Anheuser-Busch, was easily done. The successful attraction of sponsors and a huge demand for tickets allowed the CFO’s budget to reach 2.4 billion francs in 1997.\(^1\) The enormous budget permitted the construction of the Stade de France, a new national stadium located in Saint-Denis, outside Paris.

Meanwhile, the formation of the team itself gradually began to take shape. Aimé Jacquet, the hard-working coach from central France, set the tone for the team, emphasizing methodical, homogenized, and determined play over the “champagne football” of the Platini years, renowned both for its beauty and its unpredictability. As the World Cup approached, Jacquet was increasingly criticized, especially by sports magazine \textit{L’Equipe}, for this methodic attitude and for stifling the creativity of talented players.\(^2\) The coach was not the only one that faced early criticism, however. As early as 1996, the nascent French national team was reproached by the extreme right and LePen for being an inauthentic, artificial representation of France.\(^3\) The criticism clearly stemmed from the diversity of the players themselves. Though the team was required to be composed of French nationals, they came from a variety of different backgrounds and origins. The 1998 team was composed of players like Lilian Thuram, from Guadeloupe, Zinedine Zidane, a Marseillais of Algerian Kabyle origin, Ghanaian Marcel Desailly, and Emmanuel Petit, a native of Normandy.

Though French professional football had historically been diverse, this national team was noted early on for its representation of Beurs and blacks. This should not suggest, however, that the French team was highly controversial before the 1998 World Cup.

In the lead up to the Cup, France seemed comparatively tepid about its national team, and willing to support it only upon the condition of a promised victory. Few expected France to be among the top teams, and sports magazines like *L’Equipe* predicted early failure as a result of Jacquet’s coaching.

Les Bleus, however, proved themselves to be more than able to stand up to the challenge of internationally renowned teams. The French swept through the first and second rounds in part thanks to a stellar defense headed by Thuram and Desailly, who conceded only two goals in seven matches. The continuing success of les Bleus was only marred by the ejection of Zinedine Zidane for two games, after receiving a red card during the game against Saudi Arabia. As France continued to succeed, the enthusiasm and support of the French audience grew significantly. Most fans watched on their home televisions or on large public screens provided by the CFO in parks and squares. Internationally, the 64 matches cumulatively attracted 40 billion viewers, and within France the enthusiasm was correspondingly high.4 In France the event even attracted female viewers to the traditionally masculine activity, representing 32% of the viewing public.5 Advertisers like Adidas responded to the increasing hope and enthusiasm for the French dream team as they continued to advance. After a hotly contested victory over Italy in the quarterfinals, television advertisements that

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included grey realist images of the French national team playing in the banlieues
inserted the phrase “Maintenant tout est possible.” Politicians were quick to associate
themselves with the successful and diverse French team. Jacques Chirac and Lionel
Jospin, the President and Prime Minister, diligently supported the team, with Chirac
even donning a French national jersey given by the players.

The French media played with the notion of a “black, blanc, Beur” national
team that could be successful even after tepid support and uninspired predictions.
Each successive victory seemed to unify the country, and the symbol of a victorious
French team translated easily into the analysis of the nation itself. As les Bleus beat
Croatia in a thrilling and contested bout to enter the finals, more seemed to ride on the
victory than a trophy. In interviews, French men and women connected the successes
of the team to their sense of identity. One woman interviewed in Le Monde added,
“Honnêtement, pendant toutes ces victoires, c’est la première fois de ma vie que je
me suis sentie française, et pourtant je suis née ici.” As July 12 approached, the
French national team prepared to face veteran victor and international powerhouse
Brazil in the finals. Though Zinedine Zidane played in this bout, the team had to face
lethal (though injured) Brazilian star Ronaldo. Les Bleus played a triumphant game,
beating Brazil 3-0. Zidane was the clear star of the game, scoring two of the goals
through well-placed headers. The crowd, and the nation, went wild.

The representations and metaphors surrounding the World Cup victory were
plentiful. Overall, however, the majority of actors used the event as a symbol of a

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6 “Now, anything is possible.” Florence Amalou, “Adidas a déjà (presque) gagné sa coupe.” Le Monde

7 “Honestly, through all the victories, it has been the first time in my life that I have felt French,
although I was born here.” Dominique Le Guilledoux, “Si le mélange réussit au football, il peut se
cohesive, unified France that could overcome and succeed both despite and even because of difference. The use of sport to achieve this unity does, in many respects, represent a continuation of the French government’s use of sport throughout the twentieth century. Symbolically, the team represented the success of disciplined assimilation. Though the team was composed of players of varied ethnicities and religions, it was through the suppression of these individual identities and the disciplining of their bodies on the field that they were successful. Aimé Jacquet, as the homogenizing force that had suppressed the individual playing styles of the players but had utilized the team effectively, represented a sort of integration (that was not, in essence, far from assimilation) that could unify France as it had unified the team. The event itself was not solely symbolic, however. The team and the event itself were also actors, showing the use of sport as an active integrating force. Sport, in this vision, had not only actively unified the team, it had unified all of France. Furthermore, organized events like “Cités-Sports” that brought children of the banlieues to play in their own Coupe du Monde used the event to facilitate a continuation of the sports integration that had been in the banlieues earlier in the 1990s. In this view, the 1998 World Cup was a verification of the success of sports integration, despite the only mediocre achievements of the integrating attempts of the 1990s.

It would, however, be doing a disservice to the event to analyze it as presenting little that was new. In fact, the presence of images like that of Zinedine Zidane represented a positive visibility that minorities had rarely achieved in France. This visibility was, however, different from that of the “Marche des Beurs.” Unlike a
cohesive community that demanded recognition as such, the players on the French team were visibly different, but notably French. The Beur generation had demanded to be recognized as Beurs, a step that had directly violated the sanctity of individualism and French republican values. The French national team, however, while clearly and unapologetically different, were only demanding to be recognized as French. In this respect, the World Cup was an acknowledgment of difference without an acknowledgement of community. Zinedine Zidane was a Beur, but was not celebrated as such. Zinedine Zidane did not become Franco-Maghrebi, but remained and was embraced as French. The event thus symbolizes a tentative new attempt at the visibility of diversity in France. It should be noted here that the two interpretations of the event, both as a continuation and a break from the past, should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Instead, these coexisting and sometimes conflicting interpretations show the duality of the event. Simultaneously attempting discipline and equality, visibility and control, manipulation and inclusion, the French state and society at large exhibits both a continued fear of the immigrant population and a desire to embrace it.

*Aimé Jacquet and Sporting Discipline*

Provincial and methodical coach Aimé Jacquet was not an immediate icon. In fact, early critics skewered everything from his coaching style to his fashion sense. By the finals, however, Jacquet and his team had transformed into a prototype for an idealized France. The coach was seen as representative of the republican values of integration. His coaching style, once seen as repressive of individual characteristics, was reinterpreted. He became the disciplinary ideal of the French state. The method
of play, once seen as dull and methodical, was seen as highly efficient and effective. The players were no longer stars whose individuality had been suppressed, but good French citizens whose energies and bodies had been channeled to the benefit of the state. Furthermore, they had shown that they could be both Algerian or Guadeloupean or Muslim and French by keeping those other identities off the playing field, both literally and symbolically. The victory exemplified the successes of sports integration and, in a larger sense, the success of a French society in which discipline and the strict division of public and private are paramount.

In this interpretation of the World Cup’s symbolism, the print media were crucial. Newspapers across the political divide, from socialist Libération, to centrist Le Monde, to right-wing Le Figaro argued, though to a greater or lesser extent, that the French national team exemplified an ideal version of the nation. Whether or not the journalists and commentators saw the transformation of France into the realization, on a larger scale, of les Bleus’ mini-society as inevitable, likely, or nearly impossible, they seemed to agree that it was desirable. In Le Monde, Jean-Marie Colombani writes that Aimé Jacquet simultaneously incarnated the secular teacher, the provincial curate, and the factory worker, three embodiments of integration in their division of public and private, faith in the work of a group, and valorization of cohesion, respectively.⁸ Notably, therefore, though les Bleus are the models for a new era, the “années Jacquet” in Colombani’s prose, they do not introduce anything new to the integration debate. Rather, they represent a renaissance of traditional republican values applied to the Beur generation and its younger counterparts. The disciplinary model of Jacquet is praised and taken as a model for the French state. A journalist for

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Libération, Michel Chemin, took a similar positive view towards the model of les Bleus, though admitted a more skeptical view towards its accomplishment, adding, “L’Histoire n’a rien de linéaire. Et si aucun politique ne met en place des trampolines, le rebond ne sera que chute.”¹⁹ Even this more cynical view towards the achievement of the goals set by les Bleus does not, however, assert that something fundamental in the approach of the French state should be changed. Instead, it represented the verification of the interpretation of the republican model in the late 1980s – that is, an integration-assimilation model that both reacted against the insertion theory of Mitterrand and resulted from the growth of the extreme right. The praise of one journalist for Zinedine Zidane exemplifies this assimilationist slant. Gilles van Kote of Le Monde characterizes the player as a “joueur vedette aux qualités individuelles reconnues, [qui] aime se fondre dans la collectivité.”¹⁰ Instead of suggesting that the World Cup should be a catalyst for a new method of integration, the media offered the notion that the national team verified the success of the assimilation model and its strict relegation of personal identity to the private sphere. Interestingly, in putting forward this interpretation of the World Cup event, the print media was rarely self-aware and self-critical. Though writers and newspapers varied to the degree they thought the model would be followed, there was little debate that les Bleus should be imitated. In this way, therefore, the media interpretation reaffirmed a continuation of government policy that had existed in sports integration throughout the twentieth century.

¹⁹ “History is not linear. And if no policy provides trampolines, the rebound from this event will just be a fall.” Michel Chemin “Le Moment Zidane. La France rompt avec son autoflagellation. Pour longtemps?” Libération 14 July 1998: 3.
Like the media, members of the French government were quick to use and interpret the World Cup event, though the government often did so as a way to continue the programs of the 1990s. Ministers who worked with integration programs for youth used the metaphor of the World Cup as a model to encourage further support for their organizations. Marie-George Buffet, Minister of Youth and Sports in 1998, drew explicit connections between les Bleus and the future of the youth of the banlieues. “Cette équipe montre qu’au-delà des différences on peut construire ensemble,” stated Marie-George Buffet after one of her multiple trips to the banlieues during the World Cup.\textsuperscript{11} By implying that successful integration was possible and simply required greater commitment or a larger budget, government officials used the World Cup event to further the pre-existing trajectory of integration. This analysis of the event also clearly supported the continuing relegation of personal and religious identity to the private sphere. Zidane was portrayed, in a way, as the positive antithesis to the Muslim girls involved in the Headscarf Affair, a debate over wearing the Muslim veil at a public school that did not fully resolve itself until 2003. He was portrayed as able to successfully integrate by relegating such expressions of personal identity to the private sphere. Zidane was criticized by members of the Muslim community as a “Beur de service,” allowing himself to be used against the Beur community as the “good Arab” against whom all other members of the Beur community – male or female – would be contrasted.\textsuperscript{12} These criticisms were certainly unfair, since Zidane only played the role of model citizen clumsily and unwittingly,


when at all, but the interpretation of the national team did certainly reinforce the
traditional differentiation between public and private and, by proxy, the
assimilationist-integrationist model with which it was affiliated.

Not only symbolic, however, the matches of the 1998 World Cup were also
used as a tool to integrate and include the youth of the banlieues. The city of St.
Denis, for example, organized the “Coupe de Monde des Banlieues” from the second
to the twelfth of July. The program assembled 36 teams of young people from 15 to
18 years old who came from French and international cities.13 The program made an
effort to appeal to “pas seulement les plus performants, mais les jeunes venant de
milieux défavorisés et qui sont les plus passionnés.”14 This commitment expresses
well the continued attitude of the French state towards sport, which saw it as a public
service that the government was obligated to provide to its citizens. Though the
program appealed to international youth as well as though from France, it underlined
the continued relevance of sports participation as a primary means to seek inclusion
in a larger identity. In addition to this program, the CFO offered television rights and
large screens to 800 low-income quarters across France.15 This effort shows an active
attempt to include all of France, even those often seen as outside of French identity,
in a potentially socializing event. The effect of the World Cup was to continue the
government funding of sports integration. The Ministry of Youth and Sports began at
least three new initiatives in the wake of the 1998 event: “Coupon Sport,” which,
similar to “Tickets Sport,” paid the regular fee of children to join sports clubs, funds

14 “Not only the best players, but the youth from low-income neighborhoods and who are the most
passionate.” Labesse, 8.
set aside to support local sporting events and projects in the banlieues, and a reduction of ticket prices for soccer games. The World Cup was thus used to forward the funding of and enthusiasm for sports integration. The effect of the World Cup was not only to exemplify the pinnacle of sports integration, but also to continue its funding and enthusiasm for it in the government.

The French state was not the only actor who used the World Cup in 1998 as a socializing tool, however. Interestingly, corporations were also active in the use of sport as a way to mold the youth of France. Though the intent was certainly to mold consumers, not citizens, the programs that the corporations sponsored were remarkably similar. One such program, “Cités Foot,” began in 1997. Sponsored by Danone, McDonald’s, and Adidas, the program assembled more than 300 teams of low-income youth from around the world. This program, though strikingly similar to the “Coupe du Monde des Banlieues,” was nevertheless much more international in tone. Though the program was certainly an attempt to appeal to consumers and to create an international market for their project, the initiative carefully avoided the gritty reality of the lives of the low-income children involved. In a publicity campaign, Danone used the slogan “Il faut croire en ses rêves.” Notably, however, the slogan was not used in tandem with a picture of the actual event, but a purchased photo of two young boys on an African coast. To defend the choice, a Danone representative stated, “Nous voulions mettre des enfants de Cités Foot, mais leurs prenoms anglo-saxons ou imprononcables ne collaient pas à l’image que nous

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16 Dauncey and Hare, 207.
voulions donner.”¹⁹ The corporations involved in the 1998 World Cup, therefore, clearly used sport as a tool to mold consumers, but the use of sport did not extend so far as to push the boundaries of acceptance. Corporations carefully constructed a certain image of their consumers and their charitable behavior, reinforcing stereotypes instead of using sport as a chance to change them.

Though both the French government and multi-national corporations used sport as an integrating tool in the 1998 World Cup, their motives should not be conflated. The French government used sports integration in 1998 as a way to mold citizens, while the corporations used sports integration to mold consumers. Both actors found a remarkable success in their initiatives. The government benefited from a rise of patriotism and unity, while corporations benefited monetarily from their involvement with the World Cup. For both, it seemed to reinforce the efficaciousness of such use of sport. For the French government in particular, the World Cup served to reinforce the efficiency of sports integration to the point that funding was increased to the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The similarity in behavior from the two actors, however, underlines the true nature of sports integration. Sports integration continued to represent a means of control and shaping of the behavior of young men. The continued use of and enthusiasm for sports integration thus speaks to a continued fear of and stigmatization of the immigrant community.

The use of the World Cup as a symbol of successful integration can be seen, in this way, as inherently problematic. To begin, the players on the French team were exclusively male. The application of this team as a model for larger society therefore

¹⁹ “We wanted to use children from the program, but their anglo-saxon or unpronounceable names didn’t fit with the image we wanted to portray.” Amalou, “Cités Foot,” _Le Monde_.

misrepresents the difficulties with integration faced by many members of the Beur community. Muslims, especially Muslim women, were struggling to comply with a French republican vision of identity. The Headscarf Affair, just one pertinent example, shows how France’s “universalism” in its vision of laïcité (secularism) conflicted directly with the tenets of Islam. By using as a model a sports team in which individual identities and personal affiliations are suppressed by a republican government (represented by Jacquet), this model advocates an assimilationist vision. That is to say, it continues a policy of suppressing personal identity to fully gain citizenship. Like the players, Muslims will be fully accepted if they sacrifice for the greater good of the “team.” What the metaphor embodies is a French state not unlike the methodical and demanding Aimé Jacquet, who was willing to bench players who did not comply with his vision. This model is thus an implicit reproach towards the Muslim community, implying that it is the unwillingness of Muslims to set aside their personal affiliations that prevents successful integration.

The masculinity of this metaphor is additionally problematic for its representation of a very certain group. Young men of immigrant origins, the very same who were so frequently publicized as violent and insubordinate, were represented as victorious when under the strict management of a white, traditionally French disciplinarian. Far from a representation of a well-integrated team, this spectacle celebrates instead the subjection described in Foucault’s “Docile Bodies.” Instead of a sportsman, Foucault describes a seventeenth-century soldier. This soldier is taught to compose himself in a very exact manner, to march in step, and has, in short, been transformed from peasant to soldier. The discipline inherent in modern
sport is analogous in its transformation of the sportsman’s body. The rigor of training, the exactitude of hours, and the special comportment of a sportsman’s body shows the extent to which this discipline is analogous. One need only look at the visible difference between the body of a professional swimmer, that of a professional (American) football player, and that of a professional soccer player to see how an athlete’s body is “subjected, used, transformed, and improved.”

Aimé Jacquet’s team represented an even clearer embodiment of this discipline, however. Players on Jacquet’s team surrendered their individual styles of play to the methodical direction of their coach.

This surrender embodies well the Foucauldian notion of a disassociation of power from the body. “On the one hand,” Foucault writes, “it turns it into an ‘aptitude,’ a ‘capacity,’ which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection.”

Aimé Jacquet molded the bodies of his players and increased their capacity for victory but reduced their autonomy. The use of this team as a model suggests a French state that desires, not the integration of an immigrant community as equals, but rather the control and subjection of this community. This metaphor seems especially directed towards the “dangerous” elements of the Beur community, which it seeks to tame under the guise of integration.

An additional problem with the use of the World Cup as a model is the nature of the event itself. Though the team seemed to be a representation of the nation, the players themselves were imperfect symbols of the reality of integration. Unlike many

Beurs, for example, the members of the team did not face economic insecurity, they were not competing with the average Frenchman for employment, and they did not live in the banlieues. The players of the team were, thus, far easier for the average French person to accept as a model for the future. Distancing the notion of integration from a problematic reality made integration more palatable, but also made it unrealistic. Furthermore, the nature of the spectacle itself may have done more to distance the average French person from the team and the communities that it represented than to humanize them. Zidane, for example, though held up as an example of the Beur community, was treated more as a god than an average human being. Though he was well known, he also became more distant. As Guy Debord writes in *The Society of the Spectacle*, the spectacle “appears at once as society itself, as a part of society, and as a means of unification. As a part of society, it is that sector where all attention, all consciousness converges. Being isolated – and precisely for that reason – this sector is the locus of illusion and false consciousness; the unity it imposes is merely the official language of generalized separation.”

By focusing all attention on immigrants and the descendants of recent immigrants, the spectacle thus gave the illusion of unity but actually created a deeper divide.

The simultaneous reference to Foucault’s discipline and surveillance and the “society of the spectacle” of Debord may seem to be at odds. As Foucault writes in “Panopticism,” “Our society is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance.” Spectacle, he asserts, was an event of antiquity, when “society found new vigour and formed for

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a moment a single great body.”^24 The object of spectacle, “to render accessible to a multitude of men the inspection of a small number of objects,” contrasts in Foucault’s writing with that of the panopticon of the modern age. The goal of the panopticon is to “'procure for a small number, or even for a single individual, the instantaneous view of a great multitude.' In a society in which the principal elements are no longer the community and public life, but, on the one hand, private individuals and, on the other, the state, relations can be regulated only in a form that is the exact reverse of the spectacle.”^25 By using Debord’s analysis of the spectacle, however, the spectacle and the panopticon can be resolved in this interpretation. The 1998 World Cup represents the coexistence of the panopticon and the spectacle in French society. For, in some respects, the individuals on the French national team were not a “small number of objects,” but symbols of society. The members of the team were, in this way, representations and symbols of the French nation, validating Debord’s assertion that “the individual who is in the service of the spectacle is placed in stardom’s spotlight is in fact the opposite of an individual.”^26 Individuals like Zidane and Thuram were not individuals, but symbols of a part of society. Though the French national team was in fact a “small number of objects,” it represented “a great multitude,” creating a hybrid between a society of surveillance and spectacle.

Furthermore, the event represents a commingling of spectacle and surveillance in the use of the event by the French state. Foucault asserted that the principal elements of modern society are “one the one hand, private individuals and, on the other, the state.” In many ways, the sporting spectacle was used to reinforce this

^26 Debord, 39.
notion. The symbol of Aimé Jacquet as a representation of the French state that
devalued communities and treated players as individuals shows the importance of the
relationship between individuals and the state. This use of the spectacle also
contrasted with the communitarian notions that the “Marche des Beurs” represented
and therefore reinforces Foucault’s idea that modern society is no longer one of
“communities.” However, the presence of a spectacle, that involved a large number of
viewers, suggests that public life is perhaps not as dead as Foucault asserts. Chirac,
Jospin, and other members of government were quick to associate themselves with
the event. Members of government used the popularity of the event to push for
additional funding. Most significantly, the blatant use of the event to create a feeling
of national unity suggests that the use of spectacle in which “society found new
vigour and formed for a moment a single great body” is not, perhaps, to be
completely relegated to antiquity. Instead, the event should be most usefully
interpreted as both panopticon and spectacle, reaffirming the surveillance and
discipline that connected the French state to the individual without invalidating the
importance of a cohesive society and a thriving public life.

In sum, the World Cup event, in a very significant way, represented a
culmination of sports integration and immigration policy in the twentieth century.
Like the corporate soccer of Peugeot in the 1930s, the World Cup was an example of
discipline and socialization. Like Gaullist policies of the 1960s, the World Cup
targeted males who forfeited personal identity for the glory of France. Like the
integration policy in the 1990s, the team encouraged replacement of community
identity with French identity. 1998 was, in this respect, premeditated, a victory that
was determined by the events that came before it. It was a victory, therefore, for preexisting notions, and not one for the solution of preexisting problems.

**“Black, Blanc, Beur” – A French Multiculturalism?**

The 1998 World Cup cannot and should not be disregarded as a mere continuation of previous policy, however. Though it did, on the one hand, reaffirm the disciplinary use of sports integration that was prevalent in the twentieth century, it also introduced something very new. It was an event that celebrated the visibility of minorities. Zidane and Thuram, for example, were noted as “Beur” and “black” while being celebrated as French. In a nation that traditionally attempted to relegate even visible representations of personal identity to the private sphere, this acknowledgement of ethnic and racial identity in the public sphere represents a large step. This event contrasts with the multicultural attempts of the “Marche des Beurs” of 1983, which demanded acceptance not as French individuals who were Beurs, but as a Beur community. The World Cup represents, instead, a tentative attempt at a more individualistic multiculturalism, acknowledging individuals as minorities without acknowledging the communities as a whole.

The print media, for example, were eager to underline the multiethnic composition of the team, all the while reaffirming that the players were, first and foremost, French. Newspapers like *Libération* highlighted not only the unity of the French nation, but also its diversity, writing titles like, “L’exploit des Bleus convertit la France au culte du ballon. Hommes, femmes, blancs, blacks, Beurs…”27 This title invoked first the idea of a unified France and then the celebration of its diversity. It

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was not only papers with socialist slants that celebrated this diversity, however. Even right-wing journals like *Le Figaro* often made reference to the diversity of the team. One journalist for *Le Figaro* wrote, “Sur les Champs-Élysées envahis par la foule, l’unité nationale se reforge autour des Bleus, symboles de modernité, d’efficacité, et d’intégration réussie.”

Like *Libération*, the writer from *Le Figaro* emphasized first the unity of the nation and then the diversity of the team. What is significant about this representation, however, is the outright acknowledgement and celebration of visible minorities. The press had, it should be noted, been equally enthusiastic about the “Marche des Beurs,” but the imagery surrounding the World Cup was subtly but crucially different. Unlike the image of a waiting Paris that celebrated the entrance of the Beur community onto its streets, this portrayal was one of a unified but diverse France that did not break down into communities.

The spectators themselves, an enormous swath of the population encompassing nearly every resident of France, held predictably varied interpretations of the event. Nevertheless, the simultaneous visibility of minorities and creation of national unity was a prevalent theme commented upon by those interviewed by *Le Monde*. In Poissy, a 23 year old teacher named Touinsia commented that the World Cup was “la première fois de ma vie que je me suis sentie française, et pourtant je suis née ici.”

This comment underlines the unifying power of the event, and the identification with the individuals playing not as representations of the Beur community or the black community, but as French. Another resident of Poissy

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29 “The first time in my life that I have felt French, although I was born here.” Le Guilledoux, “Si le mélange reussit”, *Le Monde*, 18.
verbalized, “Que Zidane soit le leader, ça traduit un espoir. Ça valorise les Beurs, les blacks. Si on transposait cela du football au pays tout entier, les énergies que ça libérait!”

This acknowledgment of diversity in the public sphere goes even farther, showing that diversity could also be strength in a unified French nation. Certainly, these interpretations of the event were not homogeneous. Racist sentiments that identified the minorities as members of larger and problematic communities also permeated the interpretation of the event. A café-owner from Haute-Savoie commented, “S’ils étaient tous comme lui [Zidane], c’est sur qu’il n’y aurait pas de racisme en France.”

Though the reactions of the spectators were varied, the presence of a simultaneous unity and difference suggests a changing conception of visibility of minorities in the public sphere.

Equally telling of the enthusiasm for visible French minorities was the advertising of the time. The two major corporations that competed for market shares at the World Cup were Adidas and Nike, a competition that ultimately came to a head with the final, a match of Nike-sponsored Brazil and Adidas-sponsored France. The successes and failures of their respective campaigns exemplify a certain interpretation of the World Cup and its meanings. The Nike campaign initially modeled itself on propaganda posters, including slogans like “Jouez, entrainez-vous, progressez” that seemed strikingly similar to the “Travail, famille, patrie” of the Vichy regime.

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30 “The fact that Zidane is the leader translates a hope. It valorizes blacks and Beurs. If we could take that and translate it to the rest of the country, think of the positive energy that would release!” Le Guilledoux, “Si le mélange réussi”, Le Monde, 18.
31 “If they were all like him [Zidane], surely there would be no racism in France.” Luc Rosenzweig, “Le Zidane de la boulangerie.” Le Monde 9 July 1998.
32 “Play, train, improve” and “Work, family, country.” Silverstein, 39.
groups. A campaign more fitting with the nation’s mood was that of Adidas, which featured a selection of the French team specifically chosen to highlight its diversity, including Marcel Desailly, Christian Karembeu, and Zinedine Zidane. The images were gritty and black-and-white, indicating realism, and often showed images of French cities and the banlieues. Furthermore, the images were attached to inspiring slogans, like “Maintenant, tout est possible,” and ones that indicated national unity, like “Merci d’avoir cru en nous.”

Though corporations like Adidas certainly promoted an optimistic and patriotic image of France solely to target their consumers, they nevertheless played a significant role in forwarding a very specific interpretation of the World Cup event. By creating a visual connection between a gritty reality and an inspiring and diverse team, these advertisements reinforced the idea that France was, in actuality, both cohesive and diverse.

By associating themselves with a notably diverse team, politicians and members of government promoted French unity accompanied by minority visibility. Major politicians were eager to affiliate themselves with the event, as Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin, the French president and prime minister, respectively, both saw their approval ratings improve by around ten percentage points. This increased popularity, termed the “World Cup effect,” stemmed from little other than diligent and public support of the team, including Chirac’s donning of national jersey at the final matches. In a more explicit attempt to affiliate himself with the team’s success, Chirac created a parallel between the successful harmony of les Bleus and the successful harmony of the opposing political parties who were, at that time, ruling in

33 “Now, anything is possible” and “Thank you for believing in us.” Amalou, “Adidas,” Le Monde, 17.
tandem. In a speech on Bastille Day, however, his political analogies were soon competing with boisterous chanting of “Zizou president!” and “Allez les Bleus!” from the crowd. The most successful manipulation of World Cup metaphors by Chirac and Jospin were vague comments on the unity of France that allowed them to rise with the tidal wave of patriotism without taking real action. The use of this optimistic characterization was politically successful because it allowed the president and prime minister to lay claim to the successes of the team and, by extrapolation, transform them into the successes of France. The connection between the French state and visible minorities forwarded this changing idea of visibility in the public sphere by affirming it as a visibility that was, first and foremost, French.

The World Cup should not be seen, therefore, as the birth of multiculturalism in France. Unlike the Anglo-American model, which identifies individuals as members of larger communities, the French did not go so far as to identify the individual players as community members. That is to say that though the French team was “black,” “blanc,” and “Beur,” it was, above all, the French team. Though Zinedine Zidane was noted for his origins as a son of Algerian parents, he was not referred to as Franco-Maghrebi or Franco-Algerian. This differentiation is significant because it reinforces the individualism of the French republican model. Nevertheless, the celebration of the “black, blanc, Beur” team was novel in its own way. The French state has traditionally refused to see race, ethnicity, or any personal affiliation in the public sphere. This reticence has manifested itself in various ways. The French census, for example, neither asks for nor reports upon ethnicity or race. It has also

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affected French public health policy, where the refusal to acknowledge minorities prevented the identification of minorities more prone to diseases like HIV/AIDS.\textsuperscript{36} The acknowledgement of minorities in the public sphere and the celebration of this visibility do, therefore, represent a change in this traditional view. The World Cup highlighted a change to republicanism. Though it did not go so far as to embrace multiculturalism, it represented a tentative attempt towards a changing policy that was founded upon individualism but not blind to difference.

This celebration of visible minorities also changed the “imagined community” that is the French nation. A nation, using Benedict Anderson’s definition of an “imagined political community both inherently limited and sovereign,” is an abstract entity that requires reinforcement of its communal ties to continue a unified existence.\textsuperscript{37} Anderson uses the example of a national anthem to show a method of such reinforcement. “At precisely such moments,” Anderson writes, “people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance.”\textsuperscript{38} Such moments of simultaneity and unisonance reinforce a nation’s common ties and common destiny. In the 1980s and 1990s, the French flag, “La Marseillaise,” and the pride in being French had become dangerously intertwined with the growth of the extreme right. Parties like the Front National, with their pervasive nationalistic and xenophobic rhetoric, had come close to co-opting patriotism. The World Cup, however, changed this notion of an “imagined community” from one that was exclusive to one that inclusive of visible minorities. The common experience of watching and supporting the French soccer team served,

\textsuperscript{36} Fassin, 7.  
\textsuperscript{37} Anderson, 15.  
\textsuperscript{38} Anderson, 132.
in an analogous way to singing the national anthem, to reinforce commonality between all members of the French nation, regardless of race, gender, or country of origin. In doing so, and by looking to the team as a model for the future, the event reinforced the notion of a unified French nation in which people of all races and countries of origin shared a common destiny by virtue of their French citizenship.

**World Cup 1998: The Final Score**

Laden with dual symbolism and often contradictory meanings, the 1998 World Cup was more than a sporting event. A continuation of the twentieth century while simultaneously at the birth of the twenty-first, the event was a spectacle of citizenship and nationhood. It both exhibited a continued fear of the Other and a new celebration of visible difference. It both disciplined the unruly outsider and noted his belonging in the French state. It both tamed and welcomed. To analyze this complex event is to analyze the complexity of French society’s relationship with those of immigrant origin. The continued fear of the outsider should not be ignored. Indeed, the World Cup does in a real way further sports integration, which is a manifestation of a desire for control and “security.” Nevertheless, the celebration of difference should be appreciated for the significant change that it was. This French step towards an individualistic yet in some ways multicultural attitude hints at a changing relationship between France and those of immigrant origin.
Conclusion

As “La Marseillaise” was sung in Marseille in October 2001, the mood was noticeably different from that of 1998. Flags were not waving. There were no tears of joy. Tension had replaced unity at the France-Algeria match of October 6. Though Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin were present, their proud enthusiasm for the national anthem battled with the taunts of teenagers of North African background. As the crowd became more violent, the “friendly” match between France and its former colony was disrupted by a pitch invasion. Sports Minister Marie-George Buffet asked supporters to avoid clashes while leaving the stadium, but the crowd soon degenerated into a riotous mob.\(^1\) The event highlights the ephemeral nature of the 1998 World Cup’s unity. But it also calls into question the legacy of the event as a cultural phenomenon. It would be tempting, based on the disillusionment and division that the 2001 France-Algeria game shows, to disregard the lasting impact of the 1998 World Cup. Many scholars, like Philip Dine, have done so. Dine refers to the time period between 1998 and 2002 as “the end of an idyll,” a “fall from grace” after the unifying effect of the World Cup.\(^2\) To be sure, the 2001 game’s disunity is a stark contrast with the display of nationhood in 1998. To be sure, the hyperbolic reporters who had heralded a “new era” in 1998 were disappointed to see that national unity was more fleeting than it had seemed. To write off the event as a dream deferred, however, is to misinterpret it.

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As this thesis has shown, the World Cup can only be meaningfully analyzed as part of a historical continuum. As part of a long sports tradition in France, the World Cup was a continuation of policy that disciplined the body of the unruly Other. A break from a long republican tradition in France, the World Cup was a new foray into positive minority visibility that had long been associated with communitarianism. The complex and dualistic nature of the event cannot be easily summarized as a promise of unity that was unfulfilled. It is for this reason that the 2001 France-Algeria game does not do justice to the meaning of the World Cup.

To find the legacy of the event and to analyze its cultural relevance, it is necessary move past 2001 to the government of Nicolas Sarkozy. After a notable term as Interior Minister during which Sarkozy emphasized the strictest security, his explicit attempts at control and discipline of the immigrant body have been unparalleled. During the six-week long riots in the banlieues in 2005, Sarkozy’s harsh rhetoric against the “racaille” (scum) that needed to be cleaned up was reinforced by his increased police presence and emphasis on “security.” His presidency is, in this way, an embodiment of and reaction to a continued fear within French society of immigrant youth. The extensive riots of 2005 and the strong police reaction have only reinforced this fear. More attention has been spent increasing the police force in the banlieues than on genuine integration attempts. A desire to control an unruly section of the populace remains present in policy, and a continued fear of the outsider remains in French society.

At the same time, however, Sarkozy has also made an effort at visible diversity within his cabinet, with women of immigrant origins in high governmental
positions. Fadela Amara, a woman of Algerian origin who began her political life as an advocate for women in the banlieues and founder of the organization, “Ni putes ni soumises,” is the current Secretary of State for Urban Policies. Rama Yade, a Senegalese Muslim woman, is the Secretary of State in charge of foreign affairs and human rights. Rachida Dati, who holds double citizenship in France and Morocco, is the current Minister of Justice. Notably, these women are not only visible minorities, but are integrated into cabinet positions beyond those limited to “immigrant issues.” As Sarkozy has commented regarding his cabinet members, “Ce sont les visages de la nouvelle France, la vraie France, la France de la diversité.” These three women, who Marie-Hélène Koffi-Tessio of Bard College terms the new faces of Marianne, represent a changing idea of visible diversity. Instead of being seen as representatives of their immigrant communities or individual backgrounds (as above stated, they are not relegated to “immigrant issues”), they are French. Their diversity, however, is not hidden, but celebrated, most notably by the president of the Republic himself.

Certainly this celebration of diversity is controversial. As Bruno Jeudy writes in Le Figaro, “Ce n’est plus un gouvernement, c’est ‘United Colors of Sarkozy.’” Sarkozy has often been criticized for being too close to America, and this criticism underlines the skepticism with which the French continue to treat Anglo-American multiculturalism. However, Sarkozy’s policy is a continuation of the minority

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3 “These are the faces of a new France, a real France, a diverse France.” Bruno Jeudy, “Le president en campagne pour sa ‘nouvelle France’; Nicolas Sarkozy a vanté aux Americains la diversité de son gouvernement qui montre les ‘nouveaux visages’ de la France.” Le Figaro 8 November 2007: 3.


5 “It’s no longer a government, it’s the ‘United Colors of Sarkozy.’” Jeudy, 3.
visibility highlighted by the 1998 World Cup, not a leap into multiculturalism. Like Zidane, Thuram, and Desailly, Amara, Yade, and Dati do not have hyphenated identities. Their diversity is celebrated, but it is in service of the nation, “la France de la diversité.”

These two policies, “security” and “diversity,” may seem to be at odds, but they exemplify well the ever-changing relationship between the French state and the population of those of immigrant origin. The roots of these twin attempts are based historically as far back as the turn of the twentieth century. As this thesis has shown, the relationship between France and sport has been dominated by republican rhetoric and discipline. The sports field has been used by a variety of agents, from the upper-middle class of the early twentieth century to the factory owners of the 1930s to the French state in second half of the twentieth century until today. These agents, despite the variety of time periods and contexts in which they acted, were remarkably similar in both their stated goals and in the manifestation of these goals. They were clear in their use of sport as a socializing tool and creator of citizens, but by targeting groups that were considered dangerous (young working class men in the aftermath of bitter industrial strikes, for example) and drawing a strict division between those who participated and those who regulated and controlled, the dynamic of sport was one of discipline.

Using and updating Foucault is therefore crucial to understanding French sport history. Like the prison or the hospital, the soccer field has been a locale of discipline, in which the manipulation of the body of the participant has channeled energies, compartmentalized them, and harnessed them towards more productive,
goal-oriented behavior. Unlike locales that are associated with specific agents, however, like the army barracks or the hospital, the sports field has been used by a variety of actors towards a variety of targets. The versatility of this locale and its later widespread adoption by the state makes it an important and overlooked area of discipline. By highlighting the use of sport to discipline the unruly outsider, this historical perspective has traced the relationship between French society and those considered threatening, dangerous, and outside of society. The fear and need to control the outsider, embodied most recently by the young man of North African origins, is historically contextualized in sport and remains present in Sarkozy’s policy to this day.

At the same time, examining the French republican idea and its integration of immigrants of North African origin also lays the foundation for the “diversity” of Sarkozy’s cabinet. A close examination of the “Marche des Beurs” revealed the promise and limitations of the movement. Fleetingly supported by French public opinion, the Beur movement’s campaign against discrimination was temporarily well received. The visibility of the Beur movement, however, was contemporaneous with the visible violence of the banlieues. The extreme right skillfully connected the two, identifying immigrants with insecurity and raising fears in the minds of the French populace. Visibility of this minority was fleetingly accepted, but ultimately negative. The true flaw within the Beur movement, however, was not the threat of the Front National, but its inability to work within French republican ideals, including laïcité and individualism. This strict division between public and private that prevented the visible celebration of communities was at odds with the stated purpose of the Beur
movement, which sought recognition as an ethnic, racial, and sometimes religious community. The movement sought Anglo-American multiculturalism and clashed with French republicanism.

Both the history of sport and the struggle for identity recognition were manifested in the 1998 World Cup, an icon of duality. Simultaneously controlling the immigrant body and celebrating France’s diversity, the World Cup is a cultural marker whose reflection of society has been borne out in Sarkozy’s government. Like Sarkozy’s measures to ensure “security,” the 1998 event symbolized a desire to control those issued from immigration. Targeting young males, the World Cup was a spectacle of discipline, a presentation of the control of a traditionally French authority (Aimé Jacquet) over a diverse group that succeeded through control, and the suppression of personal identity in the public sphere. Like Sarkozy’s measures to define “diversity,” however, the World Cup also presented something novel in French culture. Its glorification and celebration of diversity was shown in advertising, interviews, and political rallies. Imagining a new community that was “black, blanc, Beur,” may not have fundamentally changed the problems of discrimination and acceptance, but it made minorities visible without being “communitarian.” They were French, they were individuals, they were unapologetically different.

The 1998 World Cup revealed, therefore, that while a fear of the Other has certainly not disappeared, a re-imagining of France is a simultaneous reality. Though visible icons of acceptance, whether Zinedine Zidane or Rachida Dati, may not solve realities of employment discrimination in the short term, they permit a reconstruction of French national identity. In the 1980s and 1990s, the pride in being French had
become dangerously intertwined with the growth of the extreme right. Parties like the Front National, with their pervasive nationalistic and xenophobic rhetoric, had come close to co-opting patriotism and nationalism. By affiliating national pride with, instead of xenophobia and racism, a sense of unity and celebration of difference, the nation becomes accessible to those who are visibly different. Re-imagining the French community permits national unity and accepts the reality of France’s diversity. In sociologist Richard Rorty’s conception, to regain social hope, a nation must be able to “tell itself a story” and “see no insuperable obstacles to this story’s coming true.”

To integrate immigrants and those considered outsiders to the French nation, therefore, it must first be possible to envision their harmonious integration. Visible diversity changes the typical image of the immigrant community as destructive and violent by offering a competing image of French diversity.

The co-existence of continued fear and violence in the banlieues, however, prevents a rosy and neat conclusion. Just as Sarkozy’s government hints at a re-imagining of nationhood, his drive for “security” in the French nation creates a division between those in control and those in need of discipline and surveillance. The drive for control compartmentalizes young men of immigrant origin and separates them even further than they have already been separated from belonging in the French nation. An end to violence and isolation in the banlieues does not seem promising, and the state’s manifested desire to control is therefore likely to continue, both through and outside of sport.

This analysis does not lend itself to easy resolution and, perhaps, raises more questions than it answers about the future of the French state and integration into the

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6 Carrard, 74.
nation. What the cultural phenomenon of the World Cup has suggested, however, is that neither despair for a fractured nation nor hyperbolic claims of unity are warranted. Instead, French society is better examined as a community searching for an identity, struggling between the exclusionary patriotism of the extreme right and the demands of multiculturalism’s proponents. Though a resolution of this struggle for a coherent imagined nation is not upon the horizon, study of the 1998 cultural phenomenon shows that the French nation is both a product of its past and amenable to change.
Bibliography


