Diasporic Belonging: The Life-Worlds and Language Practices of Muslim Youth From Marseille

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Abstract
Since the 1980s, when it became clear that immigrants from France’s ex-colonies were likely to settle with their families in France, the French have repeatedly questioned the cultural compatibility of Muslim immigrants and their descendants with French Republican values. Recent security concerns about Islamic terrorism in Western countries have reinflamed this debate about French Muslims’ “assimilability,” albeit with a novel focus on the cultural affiliations of French Muslim youth, in particular. The French State and politicians are concerned about survey data showing that, even as such youth have acceded to legal citizenship, they nevertheless exhibit a greater adherence to Islamic norms and more numerous transnational links than their parents’ or grandparents’ generations, and may, for these reasons, pose a threat to French sovereignty. This dissertation investigates these top-down claims of French Muslim youth’s unprecedented religiosity and transnationalism, seeking to ethnographically test the veracity of such hypotheses and to offer a more nuanced, historically emplaced account of youth’s cultural identifications and practices.

Based on long-term research with youth ages 13 to 30 who grew up in North, West, and East African Muslim households in Marseille’s northern housing projects, I demonstrate that such youth embody various emic forms of belonging to France, many of which stretch mainstream definitions of what constitutes Frenchness. Through ethnographic observation of these youth while they partook in Arabic classes, spent time with their peers and family, and navigated public space, this work reveals that youth more often perform local cultural belonging than are accorded French cultural citizenship, or the right to be seen and heard as French within the public sphere. I document the forms of alienation from Marseille that youth experience as a result, quite notable among them a gendered reverse migration phenomenon whereby orthodox-identified Muslim young women are planning to leave Marseille for their parents’ home countries and the Gulf States. Two further foci of the dissertation are the role of Arabic language education, both publicly provided and denominational, in shaping youth’s cultural trajectories, and also the analysis of youth’s language practices. I contend that, as diasporic youth draw upon—and play with—standard and non-standard varieties of French and Arabic, they afford the listener unique insight into where they are coming from and where they are headed, or their life-worlds and aspirations.

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Graduate Group
Anthropology

First Advisor
Asif Agha

This dissertation is available at ScholarlyCommons: http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/1708
Second Advisor
Stanton E. Wortham

Keywords
Arabic, Diaspora, France, Islam, Language, Youth

Subject Categories
Anthropological Linguistics and Sociolinguistics | Education | Social and Cultural Anthropology

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Due to the solitary nature of the dissertation-writing task, many of the individuals who were instrumental in helping me write this document may not be aware of the key forms of assistance they have provided me.

My thanks go first to my professors at Penn, whose incredible intelligence, both intellectual and social, is a continued font of inspiration to me within the academy. Dr. Agha, your optimism, sense of humor, and ability to incisively illuminate the most hazy of social labyrinths have been a true boon to my efforts all along the way. This document would surely look entirely different were it not for having stumbled into one of your classes at Penn in the Spring of 2010, and for your intellectually generous relationship with me since then. Mr. Moore, our exchanges over the years, both in person and over e-mail, have been a constant source of intellectual glee for me. The texts to which you have introduced me are, not only quite literally littered throughout this manuscript, they are also an essential underpinning to my conviction that I would like to continue being an anthropologist. Thank you for nurturing in me an interest in the discipline’s history that I believe will last throughout my career. Dr. Wortham, I have so appreciated your willingness to read parts of this dissertation that, at the time when I sent them to you, should probably not have left the confines of my office. Your comments cut to the marrow of my work’s shortcomings and have most surely improved it. Dr. Caubet, you have been an unending resource in the world of French and Arabic linguistics. Your knowledge of Moroccan is something I sincerely aspire to, and on a more personal note, your warmth was a beacon in difficult times. Dr. Hornberger, you are surely the person that led me on this academic path to study how youth use language in educational settings. I can only hope to contribute, via my ongoing work, to the struggle for educational and cultural justice that your body of work in educational linguistics represents. Dr. Schurr, meeting you in my later years at Penn was an unexpected breath of fresh air. Your professional mentorship and kindness, as well as your encouragement of my budding interest in the history of our species, greatly contributed to the store of positive energies I used to continue working. To my Arabic professors, Taieb Chérif, Emad Morsy, and Farouk Mustafa, your Arabic instruction has greatly enriched me, widening my view of the world and allowing me to interact with many lovely people who might otherwise have remained unfamiliar to me.

There are many people in Marseille that require my deepest thanks as well. Assia, thank you for opening your classroom to me and welcoming me to
your Marseille. Nour, how fortuitous it was to have you, an Arabic teacher in a Marseillais high school, as my neighbor and friend. To the staff at Marseille’s private secondary school, you welcomed me with affection where there could have been suspicion. Thank you for sharing your knowledge of faith in Allah and compassion with me. To all the Arabic students in these pages, thank you for letting me distract you with my endless questions from studying a language that, in its depth, could quite literally have occupied all your time (though I know you have much fuller lives than that). I hope that I have done justice to your creativity and humor, and resourcefulness in the face of adversity, within these pages. Djamila, you and your family were my family away from home while I lived in Marseille. Thank you for being a fountain of Algerian female inspiration. To Ouria and Carole, you are extraordinary women whom I feel lucky to count as friends. You slid so easily into my life—with your warmth and humor—it was as if I had known you for many years. I look forward to many more delightful moments together.

To the incredible women I have had the pleasure of writing beside in the past couple of years, Mariam, Krystal, Roseann, Holly, and Jara, your strength, smarts, and solicitousness as to my well-being have kept me going. Mariam, you have been here for me through thick and thin, and I hope our intellectual relationship and friendship continue for many years to come. Thank you, to Karim, for thinking through my tangled ideas about this project, on the phone, over dinner, and in your home, and for enlarging my field of vision about the Arab world through invaluable reading recommendations. Jacob, I am truly grateful for your comments on Chapter Five, which made it immeasurably better, and for the little voice you instilled in my head telling me to “finish and flourish.” Ferhan, it has been a pleasure to get to know you, and your comments on early versions of a chapter proved very useful indeed. To my peers in Educational Linguistics and Anthropology, Coleman, Haley, Andrea, Sofía, Nicolas, Cate, Hei-Won, Michelle, Briana, and others, I smiled many times for your presence in my life.

My sincere thanks go, likewise, to the Wenner Gren Foundation for supporting the fieldwork phase of this research, and to the National Academy of Education and Spencer Foundation, for funding the write-up of this dissertation.

To my family in San Francisco, your support has meant everything to me over the last six years of graduate school. Maman and Neenie, your check-ins lit a flame under me, in a good way. Dad, thank you for your pragmatic perspective on the task of writing a dissertation. It is a means, not an end. Nicky, I so appreciated the candid interest with which you asked me about my research. To Samory, the countless quiet afternoons you spent reading beside me while I
typed, rather than going to dinosaur exhibits, have earned you a place in the stepson hall of fame, and my heart. To Ousmane, nene, words cannot fully describe the scope of your support for me. This work’s completion attests to our partnership, and I dedicate it to our Kakane Marguerite and Mbarang René Traoré, who came and left too quickly but remain in our hearts.
ABSTRACT

DIASPORIC BELONGING:
THE LIFE-WORLDS AND LANGUAGE PRACTICES
OF MUSLIM YOUTH FROM MARSEILLE

Cécile Anne Marguerite Evers

Asif Agha

Stanton Wortham

Since the 1980s, when it became clear that immigrants from France’s ex-colonies were likely to settle with their families in France, the French have repeatedly questioned the cultural compatibility of Muslim immigrants and their descendants with French Republican values. Recent security concerns about Islamic terrorism in Western countries have reinflamed this debate about French Muslims’ “assimilability,” albeit with a novel focus on the cultural affiliations of French Muslim youth, in particular. The French State and politicians are concerned about survey data showing that, even as such youth have acceded to legal citizenship, they nevertheless exhibit a greater adherence to Islamic norms and more numerous transnational links than their parents’ or grandparents’ generations, and may, for these reasons, pose a threat to French sovereignty. This dissertation investigates these top-down claims of French Muslim youth’s unprecedented religiosity and transnationalism, seeking to ethnographically test
the veracity of such hypotheses and to offer a more nuanced, historically emplaced account of youth’s cultural identifications and practices.

Based on long-term research with youth ages 13 to 30 who grew up in North, West, and East African Muslim households in Marseille’s northern housing projects, I demonstrate that such youth embody various emic forms of belonging to France, many of which stretch mainstream definitions of what constitutes Frenchness. Through ethnographic observation of these youth while they partook in Arabic classes, spent time with their peers and family, and navigated public space, this work reveals that youth more often perform local cultural belonging than are accorded French cultural citizenship, or the right to be seen and heard as French within the public sphere. I document the forms of alienation from Marseille that youth experience as a result, quite notable among them a gendered reverse migration phenomenon whereby orthodox-identified Muslim young women are planning to leave Marseille for their parents’ home countries and the Gulf States. Two further foci of the dissertation are the role of Arabic language education, both publicly provided and denominational, in shaping youth’s cultural trajectories, and also the analysis of youth’s language practices. I contend that, as diasporic youth draw upon—and play with—standard and non-standard varieties of French and Arabic, they afford the
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NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Throughout this manuscript, I rely on the MSA transcription standards of the American Library Association-Library of Congress (c.f., reference list) when transliterating Arabic. A left-facing apostrophe is used to indicate the letter ‘ayn (ع) and a right-facing one is used for the letter hamzah (ڞ). Personal names with Arabic sources are spelled according to the owner’s preference if known, and according to MSA conventions if unknown. Terms in MSA are italicized within the body of the text. The sole exception is words familiar to general readership (e.g., Sunni, Koran, Muslim, Mecca, Medinah, Wahhabi, Salafi, Sharia), for which I use English conventions.

Other conventions of note are that I italicize languages other than English (e.g., French, MSA, etc.) throughout the body of the text, and that for my transcripts I make selective use of Schegloff’s (2007) discourse analytic conventions. Within the transcripts, International Phonetic Alphabet transcriptions are indicated by phonetic [brackets], while overlapping speech across speaker turns is shown with {curly brackets}. I provide the French original versions of my participants’ quotes, and their dates of occurrence, in footnotes in most chapters except Chapter Two, given its introductory nature.
I. Citizenship, Belonging, and Language among Marseille’s Diasporic Youth

I. Introduction

They spoke French perfectly. This is how Coco, one of the cartoonists at Charlie Hebdo, described the Kouachi brothers who terrorized the newspapers’ headquarters on January 7th, 2015 (L’Internaute, 1-7-2015). One of the people taken hostage on November 7th, 2016, during the attacks on the Bataclan concert hall, in turn affirmed that his assailants “spoke entirely in French, with barely a dash of a North African accent, nothing more” (L’Humanité, 11-17-2016).\(^1\) Language surfaces early on in these witnesses’ accounts because how we speak is believed to be a window onto where we call home and who we are. As Belgian poet-singer Julos Beaucarne sings (1980), “An accent is good. It’s a whole country unfurling from one’s mouth, with its houses, its forests, its paths, its factories. And in a voice, all one’s anxieties. Where are you coming from? Where are you going?”\(^2\) Investigations would later reveal that the men

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1 “Le tout en français, avec à peine une pointe d’accent nord-africain, mais sans plus” (L’Humanité, 11-17-2016).

responsible for both strings of Parisian attacks were French-born individuals. The Frenchness of their speech, as judged by the witnesses above, ultimately proved a reliable indicator of their nationalities, though not of their cultural and political visions. Indeed, their cultural identifications assumed a trajectory leading away from their nationalities and legal citizenships; they were going somewhere other than where they were coming from, in the words of Beaucarne.

Events like these in France, along with the July 7th, 2005 bombing of the London Underground train system, likewise perpetrated by locally born men, have alerted Europeans to the potential for European nationals to wish—and act—to disrupt the sovereign integrity of their birth countries. My study did not center on such individuals, who in fact represent a microscopic slice of the demographic describable as French Muslim youth. I begin by addressing them, however, because the disjuncture they embody, between being French citizens and yet feeling animosity rather than belonging towards France, introduces terminology key to understanding the French Muslim youth around whom my study did revolve, all of whom, like the lion’s share of Muslims in France, cultivated perfectly benign dreams for the future. To capture the experiences of the youth appearing in these pages, I elaborate a three-way terminological distinction. When I speak about youth’s French nationality and legal citizenship,
I refer to their de jure, passport-holding relationship to the French nation and the kinds of rights it bestows: freedom of movement across borders, political involvement, state protection, etc. Beside this more objective measure is a more subjective measure of Frenchness. This is the Frenchness that is personally claimed or decided upon, which I term cultural belonging. An individual’s claims to Frenchness can be subtracted from, however, by others failing to publicly recognize them as culturally French. The practice of measuring the cultural Frenchness of others was illustrated, for instance, by Coco when she offered that the Kouachi brothers spoke French *perfectly*, or by the man taken hostage when he remarked that his takers spoke *entirely* in French, with *barely a touch* of a North African accent, *nothing more*. Thus, a third dimension of Frenchness is cultural citizenship, which I define as the right to be seen and heard as French in one’s public interactions with others.

In what follows, I examine the histories and political dimensions of each of these three relationships to France—nationality and legal citizenship, cultural belonging, and cultural citizenship—as they apply today to French Muslim youth, in particular. In Section II below, I recount how French Republican citizenship has been formulated as a privileging of the body politic’s needs over individual cultural differences: first, during the French revolutionary era; second, during the Third Republic; and thirdly, during the citizenship and national
identity debates that have lasted from the 1980s to present. Towards the latter part of this discussion, I dote especially on contemporary political representations of French Muslim youth as, either, occupiers of French space or, alternatively, a demographic experiencing cultural upheaval of various sorts. Subsequently, in Section III, I detail my research participants, sites, ethnographic methods, and analytical tools. Section IV concludes with an overview of the dissertation’s chapters. Each of them assumes a different vantage on a central problematique: why were these diasporic youth, who were by and large legal French citizens and also experienced themselves as locals to Marseille or else French in a more cosmopolitan sense, nevertheless frequently denied cultural citizenship by Marseille’s ethnically French (de souche) inhabitants, as well as actors and programs working on behalf of the French State?

II. French Republican Citizenship: What Kind of Collectivity?

The particular mark of French Republican citizenship, since its initial formulation in 1789, has been a tension between a tendency towards the liberal autonomy of the individual, on the one hand, and a focus on the social and political collectivity, on the other (Laborde, 2004; Young, 1989). The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789, for instance, outlined a model
of French citizenship structured around an unconditional right to private property, but also around the right (and duty) to participate politically in the State’s deliberations alongside fellow citizens. The first three articles of the Declaration set up this initial tension between individual and collectivity in the definition of the citizen:

“(1) All men are born and remain free, and have equal rights. Social distinctions are unjustifiable except insofar as they may serve the common good. (2) The purpose of political association is to preserve the natural and inalienable rights of man, i.e., liberty, private property, the inviolability of the person, and the right to resist oppression. (3) Sovereignty resides essentially in the nation as a whole; no group or individual can exercise any authority not expressly delegated to it or him.” (Osmańczyk & Mango, 2003, p. 1937)

Whereas the freedom to be a proprietor was individually assured, political liberty—of the sort sought by the subjects of the feudal, ecclesiastical, and monarchical Old Regime, with its unequal privileges—depended upon concerted political participation. Political rights had to be claimed *equally* by each individual in order to effectively combat despotism. The citizen was, in a word, “a subject who rises up (*qui se relève*)” at the side of other citizens (Balibar, 1991[1984], p. 40). Linguistic propaganda during the First Republic (1792-1804) evinced a similar emphasis on fighting oppression by finding a unified political voice. A document from June 4th, 1794 entitled “An invitation from the National Convention to the French people, to speak only French,” identified French as the language of citizens’ accession to the Republic:
Citizens, you detest political federalism, swear off linguistic federalism. Language should be like the Republic: from North to South, throughout French territory, the ways of speaking, like the hearts, must be in unison. These diverse dialects have gushed from the impure spring of feudalism. This fact alone should make them odious to you. They are the last ring in the chain with which tyranny bound you. Hurry to break it. Free men, put aside the language of slaves, to adopt the language of liberty. (Kibbee [Trans.], n.d.).

In summary, this early formulation of French citizenship, though it placed certain rights, like the right to private property, fully in the hands of the individual, likewise demonstrated a keenness for individual, mainly political, rights that were meant to be exercised en masse.

This emphasis on freedom from tyranny through joint political participation was meaningfully influenced by the mid-18th century writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau on the general will. I briefly touch on Rousseau’s influential position here in order to prefigure the later triumph, at two key moments in the history of thinking about French citizenship, of the collective over the individualistic understanding of the citizen. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau (1993[1762]) leads with an argument about human nature. Man, according to him, is a ratiocinative being who resolves that his self-preservation is of utmost importance: “…as soon as he reaches years of discretion, he is the sole judge of the proper means of preserving himself, and consequently becomes his own master” (p. 181). Rousseau then proposes an analogy, between the

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3 My thanks go to Robert Moore for sharing Douglas Kibbee’s translation of this archival document with me.
family as the model of the first political unit and the French Republic. He deduces that, much as children find it in their self-interest to surrender their independence to their father in exchange for protection, adults, too, recognize the advantages of “a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate” (p. 191). Thus, man trades away his “primitive independence” (p. 187), alienating his liberty, in Rousseau’s idiom, for the sake of self-preservation. By Rousseau’s theory of the social contract, as such, people abstain from their individual personalities and predilections in order to partake in, and yoke themselves to, a self-governing “Republic or body politic” that looks out for the common good (p. 192). For a variety of reasons discussed below, this theoretical bequest from Rousseau would later resurface at two decisive junctures in French Republican history: first, during the Third Republic (1870-1940), and second, in the 1980s. Each of these two periods was characterized by a deepening of France’s relationship with foreigners, first abroad, then at home, circumstances that prompted France to reexamine the modalities of French citizenship.

**Citizenship in the Third Republic**

The Third Republic, which lasted from 1870 to 1940, witnessed vigorous French imperialism, in Africa, the Caribbean and South America, Southeast
Asia, and Oceania, progressive changes in road and rail infrastructure (c.f., Weber, 1976), the First World War, and Fawzive labor immigration to France. Casualties from the Franco-Prussian War (1870) and World War I, coupled with a demographic stagnation in France more generally, had led to a dire need for men to work in France’s industries and the army (Camiscioli, 2009). Legislation enabling immigration followed suit, and by 1931 the population of foreigners, mainly from Italy, Belgium, Poland, and Spain, residing in France numbered 2,715,000, 6.6% of France’s total population, over the 381,000 in 1851, totaling 1.1% (Schain, 2008, p. 40). It was in fact to strengthen France’s military ranks that one of the first pieces of legislation on naturalization, the Law of June 26th, 1889, was drafted (McGovney, 1911). With this law, French legislators repealed naturalization based on descent, or *jus sanguinis*, and instituted *jus soli* naturalization, allowing those born to foreign parents on French soil to acquire French nationality at legal maturity. During World War I, a further 662,000 immigrant workers were recruited to man France’s war-time industries, half of whom were from Western Europe and another half of whom came from France’s colonies (i.e., Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Indochina) and China (Nogaro & Weil, 1933). The individuals from France’s colonies, many of

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4 Childers (2003) registers France as having the lowest birth rate in the world at the end of the 19th century.
whom fought the Great War in France’s name (c.f., Fogarty, 2008), were excluded from full citizenship rights, as were their “French” brethren back home, totaling an estimated sixty million across France’s colonial holdings (Lewis, 1962). It was within this three-fold context, of private and public industry recruiting hundreds of thousands of foreign laborers to work in France, the strategic naturalization of these workers’ French-born children, and the exclusion of “native” Frenchmen overseas from citizenship status, that the Rousseauian core of French citizenship, that of the collective cemented by the will of individuals to participate in politics, was reiterated, only with culturally particular overtones.

In a lecture given by the rationalist Ernest Renan in 1882, he distinguishes between the French form of nationalism, which he claims is grounded in people’s “daily plebiscite” (1990, p. 19), and the German form of nationalism, in which the “ethnographic principle” of the Volk, or German race, “is substituted for a national one” (p. 13). He deplores the latter and lauds the French nation’s basis in “a spiritual principle,” namely, “the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form” (p. 19).

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5 The French treatment of the people in their colonies varied by case. Senegal, for instance, was unusual in the extension of rights like the vote and education to inhabitants of its four Communes. Even so, Commune inhabitants had to meet certain requirements in order to access such rights (c.f., Diouf, 1998). Because colonial Algeria was a French département, Algerians had the option to become French nationals, starting in 1880, and citizens, in 1958, but always pending requirements (P. Silverstein, 2008; Weil, 2008).
This heritage, he specifies, is neither linguistic, nor ethnoracial, nor religious. Rather, it lies in the French people’s common memory of the “great deeds” of the past and “the wish to perform still more” (p. 19). At the very time Renan was speaking, however, was the individual’s simple wish to participate politically or perpetuate great deeds enough to assure him or her citizenship in the French nation? Certainly, for the foreigners, French women, and colonial subjects who lived during the Third Republic, a profession of faith in Republican civic principles was not sufficient to guarantee them membership in the sacred collectivity described by Renan. Cultural and ethnic heritage, rather, represented “the anthropological minimum” (Mehta, 1999, p. 63) mediating individuals’ access to French citizenship.

In sum, thus far I have described how, during the Third Republic, French thinkers and politicos were challenged by the country’s intensifying ties with foreigners and newly French people overseas to account for the less-than-universal scope of their citizenship. I used Renan’s thesis as a case study of how, in response, the French appealed again to Rousseau’s concept of a general will that rises above ethnographic particularities and personal interests. In addition to further belaboring the political nature of ties between the individual and the Republic, Renan’s writing underscores the quasi-religious, moral terms in which

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6 Suffrage for women was not granted in France until 1944.
such political arguments were couched. The subtext of such appeals to the
general will was that “groups judged not capable of adopting that general point
of view” (Young, 1989, p. 251), or individuals deemed likely to fail the test of
civic faith in the French union (Citron, 1987), could be excluded in practice
from French citizenship and yet not impair its ideals. Now, prior to moving into
the citizenship debates of the 1980s, I discuss two brief historical examples of
how individuals who were in fact denied French citizenship viewed their
exclusion from the Third Republic. These examples will aid in fleshing out the
distinction between legal citizenship, cultural belonging, and cultural
citizenship.

A first example shows how the residents of France’s overseas départements,
who were French nationals but not legal citizens, desired citizen status because
of the cultural belonging they felt to France. At the International Colonial
Congress of Paris in 1889, on the centennial of the Declaration of the Rights of
Man and Citizen, a man named Alexandre Isaac, who was a French-educated
native of the Antilles and a Senator in the French département of Guadeloupe,
took the floor to denounce contradictions in the document’s application. He
stated:

“I cannot understand how (...) between a colonizing people and the inhabitants of the
colonial country there should be only a relationship of domination; that the customs, the
language, the knowledge of the European nations are a reserved patrimony which the
natives should not be permitted to touch; that, finally, in the external territories of
which these nations have taken possession, there should be only subjects, never citizens." (Lewis, 1962, p. 139).

Senator Isaac sought to convince those attending the congress that, at least for the case with which he was most familiar, that of the West Indies, the cultural and linguistic assimilation of islanders had proceeded to such a point that it would be nothing short of logical to continue their assimilation in constitutional terms (Lewis, 1962). The incorporation of colonial residents into the French “community of interests” stood to benefit the metropolis, thought Isaac, not least because such individuals bore the spirit of the French nation aloft:

Should not a colony be considered, even after a conquest, once the traces of violence have been effaced, as a fraction of the national individuality, which is linked to the original country by bonds of affection as well as by a community of interests?” (Lewis, 1962, p. 142).

A second example illustrates how, for such non-citizen individuals linked to France, their feeling of cultural belonging stood in stark contrast to how they were regarded by the native French people they encountered, who denied them not only legal but also cultural citizenship.

Upon his visit to Marseille in 1929, Ludovic Naudeau, a traveling journalist working for a Parisian weekly, waxed nostalgic about a city whose revolutionary commitment to progress and civilization heaved under the weight of a foreign worker population. Naudeau’s reflections and encounters with members of the worker population, which in the early inter-war years exceeded a quarter of the city’s inhabitants (López & Témime, 1989), reveal that whereas
the workers considered themselves locals, the French were likely to consider them foreigners. Naudeau reports, for instance, on a stirring story told him by an old-timing Marseillais. The Marseillais, who was trying to locate a particular foreigner, visited a building where foreigners were rumored to live. Much to his surprise, when he queried the building's residents about the whereabouts of the foreign man he sought, they replied, “there aren’t any foreigners in this place; we are all Italian” (p. 201). Having likely been in Marseille for many years, the residents considered themselves locals, if of the Italian persuasion. Naudeau himself is in turns impressed by the French fluency and mannerisms exhibited by the local population of non-white people, and then bewildered by their sheer numbers. Mostly, his piece reads as a distressed account of the city’s ethnic diversification: would not Marseille’s autochthonous population be genetically swept away by "all those sidis, all those gingerbread-faced people (à figure de pain d’épice), all those brothers from the coasts, all those blackies (noirauds)... that enormous allogeneic mass that only continues to densify" (1929, p. 200)? His closing sentence blends admonishment of what the future could hold with a reminder of France’s past agreements on the constitutive marks of the French soul: “I dare not try to envisage with any clarity by which signs will manifest, here, a hundred years from now, what we have agreed to call the French soul. No! I dare not!” (p. 202).
Naudeau’s travel bulletin, together with Senator Isaac’s hints at the limited scope of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, are worth examining insofar as they expose the thick web of cultural and ethnic pre-conditions that undergirded French Republican citizenship as it was understood during the Third Republic. These anecdotes reveal that access to French citizenship, in either of the dimensions I have delineated, legal or cultural, depended on more than simply a “daily plebiscite” (Renan, 1990, p. 19), despite much oratory to the contrary. “Foreigners” with ties to France, whether they lived in a French département abroad or labored in the Hexagon, performed and claimed Frenchness, and still they were not acknowledged as potential fellow citizens. An examination of Renan and Naudeau’s writing demonstrates how they draw on Rousseauian ideas to sanctify the political collectivity, which they refer to as France’s “spiritual principle” or “soul,” and also to selectively establish certain individual cultural differences as detracting from this union’s moral integrity. By couching their rejection of cultural and ethnic difference in terms of people’s supposed inability to contribute civically, such writers were effectively able to sustain the French citizenship construct’s veneer of universality. In practice, meanwhile, the distribution of French citizenship privileged a French ethnic and cultural order. Nowhere was the reality of ethnic barriers to French citizenship clearer, additionally, than in the stories here
presented of foreigners (and, in some cases, French nationals) who, despite identifying culturally or politically with France, were deprived of public recognition as legal or cultural citizens of France.

The Citizenship and National Identity Debates, 1980s - Present

The previous section demonstrated how, between 1870 and 1940, French nationality, citizenship, and cultural belonging often proved not to be overlapping, congruent processes. This section dwells on another formative moment in the history of French citizenship, beginning in the 1980s and continuing to present. Marking the end of economic immigration to France, this period ushered in a debate about the settled immigrant population, their children, and more specifically, these populations’ right not only to French nationality but also to legal as well as cultural “citizenship in France” (Balibar, 1984, p. 1752). Weil (2008) identifies this period as the third iteration of the relationship between citizenship and nationality. In the first period, under the French Revolution, citizenship was primary, and nationality was derivative of being a citizen. The second period, lasting from the beginning of the 19th century to the 1980s, decoupled nationality from citizenship, and focused more squarely on how foreigners’ personal circumstances interacted with policy.

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7 Balibar (1984) compares this to the “right to French citizenship” per se, as debated during the French colonial period, for instance (p. 1752).
frameworks for nationality (e.g., *jus sanguinis* until 1889, *jus soli* afterwards).

Nationality during this period, moreover, did not necessarily pave the way to citizenship, as illustrated by the case of French indigenous residents of certain colonial *départements* and French women (until 1944) who, though French nationals, lacked equal access to certain civic rights, like the vote or education.

The third period, beginning in the 1980s and continuing to present, reinstated the reciprocal relationship between nationality and citizenship, only now assuring that legal citizenship was derivative of nationality. In what follows, I chronicle the dynamics leading up to the creation of a new consensus about citizenship during this most recent period and explain in what sense the contemporary citizenship construct is classically Republican. Through a discussion of the terms in which both the political left and right couch their discourses on integration, and specifically that of French Muslim youth, I set the stage for my own study and research question, which are described in the following section.

If the French need for man-power after World War II resembled that of World War I and the inter-war years, the circumstances under which foreigners arrived and lived in France during the second half of the 20th century nevertheless differed considerably from the earlier period of immigration. For one, worker populations increasingly became settled communities. Ordinances
from 1945 made it possible for laborers to remain in France past the duration of their work contracts, and the family reunification (*regroupement familiale*) Decree of April 29th, 1976 would increase the relative proportion of women and children to men, as compared with the previous decades (Schain, 2008).

Secondly, decolonization and the end of the War in Algeria in 1962 effected a shift in the demographic balance of immigrants: by 1982, immigrants from Africa and Asia outnumbered those from Europe (*ibid.*). Thirdly, to address the housing shortage created by relatively fluid decades of immigration and family reunification, large-scale construction of government-subsidized worker housing began in the 1960s and 1970s, under the aegis of the National Society for the Construction of Worker Housing (SONACOTRA). These public housing projects, known as *Habitations à Loyer Modéré*, came to replace most of the hostel accommodations in which male workers had been living since the start of immigration (Hargreaves, 2007).9

Economic and political dynamics converged in the 1970s to reverse the flexible immigration policy of the years since World War II. On the one hand,

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8 Schain (2008, p. 49) reports that, in 1982, foreigners from the European Community resident in France numbered 1,580,000, whereas 2,100,000 foreigners from outside the European Community were registered. This demographic shift frustrated the National Immigration Office’s (ONI) efforts to favor people arriving from European countries over those arriving from Africa and Asia.

9 Hargreaves (2007) notes that, according to a census by INSEE, in 1990 there were 100,000 individuals, 85% of whom were Africans and most of whom were men, still living in hostel accommodations.
the world economy’s Fawzive contraction in the early 1970s put an end to the economically prosperous years (Les Trente Glorieuses) France had enjoyed since World War II, drying France’s thirst for foreign labor. On the other, 1974 saw the election of a centrist-conservative president, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing.

Giscard d’Estaing’s administration exerted a conservative influence on immigration policy, proposing for instance to forcibly return 100,000 foreigners per year, many of whom were Algerians, to their countries of origin (Weil, 1991). He was denied a second term, however, defeated by French social-democrat François Mitterand in 1981, who remained in the presidency until 1995.10 The socialist party’s tenure in office would nevertheless be marked by significant power sharing with the political right. A right-wing coalition achieved victory in the 1983 municipal elections, and again in 1986 during elections for the National Assembly, prompting President Mitterand to appoint right-leaning Jacques Chirac to Prime Minister in 1986. Despite these political hands-offs, both parties perceived the necessity of hammering out an across-the-political-spectrum consensus on immigration policy.

Consensus was to emerge on the legislative front first. In May of 1984, the National Assembly unanimously voted in a law that had the following three

10 Mitterand is France’s longest-serving president and remained in the presidency for two full seven-year year terms. In 2000, a referendum reduced the presidential term to five years.
effects. First, it dismantled previous plans by which foreigners would have been forced to leave France. Second, it limited all further immigration only to the families of those presently installed in France, refugees, and students. Third, the law granted ten-year residency permits to adults already in France, regardless of employment status or national origin (Taguieff & Weil, 1990; Weil, 2008). The post-immigration context of the mid-1980s also gave way to another, more subtle kind of consensus; namely; the emergence of a dominant idiom, among French political elites as well as academics, for discussing cultural diversity within France. On television and in official documents, politicians from across the aisle urged France’s ethnic minorities to harness their cultural diversity, confining it to the private sphere, for the sake of a more socially and morally cohesive union. Gesturing to this idiom’s resuscitation of a classically Republican focus on national unison, Weil (1991) characterizes this unusual merger between politicians as “the new Republican synthesis” (p. 187).

This discourse of Republican citizenship and cultural integration was surprising in the agreement shown by its proponents as well as its timing. The neo-Republican turn in political discourse followed hard upon the heels of the anti-colonial identity struggles of the 1960s and the multiculturalist “right to difference” movement of the 1970s and early 1980s (c.f., Giordan, 1982), not to mention its consolidation during a democratic-socialist presidency. Favell (1998)
offers convincing reasons, however, as to why it was at this time in particular that the integration of immigrants, and especially Muslim immigrants, became “the epicenter of party political debate and positioning, and the key test-site for the continued validity of Republican ideals” (p. 48). If the question of immigrants’ compatibility with the French national identity was much politicized during these years, Favell estimates this was not because France effectively “discovered” the Islamic cultural traditions of its immigrant population at this time, or because of competition over scarce jobs.\textsuperscript{11} Rather, in the mid-1980s France was in the throes of questioning its political sovereignty as a nation-state. Following the general trend taking hold of Europe at the time, France was liberalizing its financial markets, deregulating business, and pursuing transnational policy frameworks for security and the economy, like those proposed by the European Community. France’s political sovereignty and national unity were, thus, already facing challenges when the far-right National Front party hit its political stride in the 1983 municipal elections. This unprecedented political success gave a platform to the National Front’s concerns about the divisive influence of immigrants, and specifically Muslims, on France’s cultural, ethnic, and political cohesion.

\textsuperscript{11} In 1989, three girls entered their middle school wearing headscarves. Although the State Council eventually ruled in favor of the girls’ right to wear the headscarf, this event, known as the “scarf affair,” fueled a Fawziive debate in favor and against the girls’ decision, one which reigned whenever Islam became politicized, like after 9/11 (Bowen, 2009).
Although the National Front never achieved preponderance in the electorate, with electoral successes falling between 10-25% over the past thirty years, the binary they helped to erect, between a national unity based in Republican principles and a dangerous cultural pluralism, gained remarkable traction across the political spectrum in the mid-1980s and continues to reverberate throughout French political discourse today. The Republican concept of French citizenship that crystallized in the 1980s, which required citizens to restrict mores perceived as culturally different to the private sphere, was, again, articulated in the Rousseauean idiom of a need to defend the body politic from partition and corruption. This logic of citizens needing to defend the French national identity was not an altogether new one though, and Taguieff and Weil (1990) trace it—along with some of its stereotypical roles: foreigner, invader, patriot, collaborator—to the “political mythology” (p. 101) of the Vichy Regime (1940-1944). Only the threats have drastically changed; with indulgence in individualism and cultural singularities representing the contemporary “disturbances of the collective order” (Durkheim, 1951[1897], p. 246). Below, I compare how recent political discourse from the right and the left has portrayed the nature of “the threat.” I contend that political representations of French youth from Muslim families, as, alternately, "occupiers" of French space (according to the right), or a "lost generation" (according to the left), share in a
deep-seated fear of social “anomy” (Durkheim, 1951[1897], p. 254) and are, hence, inhibited from attending to the ways in which youth display cultural rootedness.

*The Political Right and the Left Speak to Diversity within France: “Homesick at Home” versus “The Lost Generation”*

Each year since 2007, on French television, tele-journalist and anti-racism activist Rokhaya Diallo awards (or rather, projects) “golden bananas” to politicians who contribute to racist stereotypy through their public speech. The satirical Y’a Bon ceremony confers awards with names like “the Super Patriot Award,” “the Barely Veiled Racism Award,” and “In the Good Ole Times of the Colony Award” upon unsuspecting politicians and public figures. In 2013, then-President of the center-right Union for a Popular Movement Party (UMP) Jean-François Copé eked out a victory over several competitors for “the Lost Territories of the Republic Award.”

Copé delivered the comments warranting his selection on October 5th, 2012, while on the campaign trail for presidency of UMP. He revealed his despair at certain swaths of France:

“...those neighborhoods where certain of our compatriots, mothers and fathers whose exasperation I can understand, upon returning home from work in the evening, learn that their son had his pain au chocolat torn from him by thugs (voyous) as he was leaving school, who explain to him that ‘we don’t eat during Ramadan.’ There are some French families that live their suffering in silence, and to whom no

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12 The original award titles are *Prix Super-Patriote, Prix Racisme à Peine Voilé, Prix Au Bon Vieux Temps des Colonies, and Prix Territoires Perdus de la République.*
Above and beyond equating those who keep Ramadan with thugs, in these now famous remarks Copé hints that such petty thieves have come to speak for the French Republic. They presuppose a Republic within which their Islamic norms are customary, as indicated by their speech in the first-person plural (on, "we"). Forms of punishment for infringing such norms, we learn, include the expropriation of old staples of French baking, like the pain au chocolat, from the clutches of wide-eyed schoolboys. Copé’s depiction, in which diasporic Muslim youth occupy French space and cause French “natives” (français de souche) to lose their bearings and evacuate, pervades right-leaning political discourse. The left also speaks in terms of a disorientation, interestingly, only the roles of victim and perpetrator are reversed in their discourse. In the eyes of the French left, it is diasporic Muslim youth who undergo a destabilization process, whether because of cultural disjunctures with their parents’ generation, or due to French institutions’ failure to deliver socioeconomic equality. Below, I touch on each of these two circulating portrayals of French society in turn and discuss how both are haunted by the specter of a Durkheimian anomic disintegration.

Copé’s political candy-gram from Ms. Diallo was named after an edited volume entitled Les Territoires Perdus de la République (Brenner, 2002). Indeed, the
threat Copé introduces, of authentic French cultural values shrinking in jurisdiction, is also the thematic kernel of Brenner’s book. The volume assembles the accounts of a dozen schoolteachers and principals who attest to a climate of anti-semitism, racism, sexism, and violence unfurling in the heartland of the French Republic, the French public school system. This “new doxa” (Brenner, 2002, p. 54) is spearheaded by France's new “nous, the children of the Arabo-African immigration” (p. 69). Thus, one author reports that a gang of Franco-Maghrebi girls thrashed two thirteen-year old girls on the steps of a Jewish private school in Aubervilliers. Several express disbelief at how, on September 12th, 2001, some students extolled Al-Qaeda for its role in weakening the U.S.-Israeli axis against Palestine. Yet another teacher recounts his disturbance when, during a history lesson on World War II, a handful of pupils praised Hitler. The book’s contributors, in sum, warn of home-grown French values—like those of the Republican triptych: égalité, fraternité, liberté—receding in the wake of an “Islamic advance” (p. 43). This text exemplifies the social phenomenon Cohen (1980) has termed a moral panic, when “a condition, episode, person, or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media” (p. 9).
The propos of another writer, novelist Richard Millet, establishes that the right’s moral panic about Muslim youth is laced through, additionally, with an anxiety about people of color. During an appearance on public television channel France 3 in 2012, Millet commented on his perceived transformation into an ethnic minority within France:

“I would like, no, not to play the devil’s advocate, but I would like to depart from another position, that of my singularity. What am I? I am an ethnically French person (un français de souche). ([raises both hands, palms forward]) How dreadful (quelle horreur)! Catholic. How dreadful!. Heterosexual. How dreadful! I have everything going against me. I would like to say, for example, that I am haunted by the question of identity, not only my identity but also the national identity. How dreadful too, of course. I would like to say, for example, that I take the RER [subway] on a quotidian basis. For me, the Châtelet-Les-Halles station at 6 in the evening is an absolute nightmare, especially when I am the only white person. So, am I allowed to say that or not? Is it playing along with the National Front, Mr. Guéant, or who knows who. No! There is pain for me associated with having to ask myself which country I am in, ethnically, racially, religiously, etc.” (2.7.12)

In a short essay entitled “Chronique № 3” that appeared on his personal website two years later, Millet further fleshed out the nature of his dismay upon passing through the Châtelet-Les-Halles subway terminal:

“French civilization is dead at Châtelet-les-Halles, I thought, the other night, around six, at the moment when, for lack of another option, I entered into that human mustiness (remugle), all races and ethnicities confounded in one feverish body in search of social legitimacy (…) This post-racial laboratory, this accelerator of multicultural particles, this uterus of the radical inversion of all values, was able to produce nothing more than that characteristic state of contemporary servitude in which the human forgets himself to the point that he begins to smile internally, in the Babelian swarm where each ignores the other while keeping him under close watch, dreading to be assimilated into the mystical body of the French nation, which is dead nonetheless.” (Millet, 18.12.14)

Millet paints an apocalyptic canvas in which, now that those once seeking entry to the French nation have been admitted, the ethnically French come to doubt their place, and whether they still want to partake, in “the mystical body of the
French nation.” The French motherland’s adoption of ethno-racially diverse individuals turns the “normal” order of affairs on its head: as France draws her adopted children closer to her bosom, now her biological children feel estranged, their just complaints at this treatment now grounds for others’ exclamations of “quelle horreur!”

This strategy of depicting a radically inverted world reappears throughout right-wing discourse. Philosopher and Académie Française member Alain Finkielkraut, for instance, explained the prevailing mood in France to New York Times journalist Rachel Donadio with the description, “people are homesick at home” (Donadio, 1.8.15). With these words, Finkielkraut implied that an unspoken force had transformed the French landscape, making it unrecognizable to those who call it home. Finkielkraut’s comments show distinct similarities to the rhetoric used in the 1980s by radical right-wing Germans who were against the presence of Turkish guest workers. In the infamous Heidelberg Manifesto, for instance, a circle of professors expressed their fears that Turks were irreversibly transforming the German people, language, culture, and religion. They cautioned that “Many Germans already feel foreign in their own neighborhoods, workplaces, and homeland in

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13 This interview took place, quite by coincidence, two days prior to the terrorist attack by a pair of young Frenchmen of Algerian descent on satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.
This kind of account, whereby locals and foreigners switch places due to an “invasion” by the latter, has long been popular with the far-right National Front party in France as well. In 2010, Marine Le Pen, who was then campaigning to become the president of the National Front, likened Muslims’ Friday prayers in the city of Lyon to an occupation of French territory: “Sure, there aren’t any tanks. There aren’t any soldiers. But it’s an occupation all the same, and it weighs on the residents” (Le Figaro, 12.11.10). To summarize, politicians and writers speaking from France’s political right bear in common a tendency to narrate themselves as silenced, dispossessed, occupied, and lost. These predicaments are, furthermore, typically identified as bred by the presence of Muslims and people of color in France.

Discourse from the political left partakes in a parallel idiom of loss and disorientation, only the demographic portrayed as straining to return to its bearings, in this case, is French Muslim youth themselves. Only a couple of weeks prior to Copé’s remarks on the campaign trail about Muslim youth stealing pains au chocolat, the leftist weekly Marianne circulated an installment about the abject circumstances under which French Muslim youth live in Northern Marseille (Marianne, 10.15.12). This issue of Marianne came to my attention the same way as most, with its headlines—“Marseille, lost territory of the Republic: Delinquency, unemployment, poverty, corruption”—beckoning to
me from the windows of the café (and horse-race betting shop) at the foot of my apartment building. The 8 a.m. lineup at the café, with punters from all walks of life riveted to the television screen and the café owner alternating between brewing coffees and taking bets, set a vivid backdrop to the article's potemkin tale of a city doing its best to dissimulate the likes of gerrymandering, hashish rings, mafia vendettas (to the tune of nineteen homicides since the beginning of the year), and destitution beneath the town’s affluent sectors and world-class attractions. The city had become irrecoverable due to “decades of disastrous policies” (n.p.), noted the article. Those who suffered disproportionately from the “apartheid-era” socioeconomic gap resulting from this mismanagement, however, were the immigrant and immigrant-descendant inhabitants living in the city’s northern quarters, who were lacking employment, transportation, and security (n.p.). The author all but sounds the death knell for the city, concluding that Marseille’s government officials have left residents roaming “free of their moorings and of any authority” (n.p.). The article’s explanation that such forms of social agitation result from a lack of imposed authority harks back once more to Durkheim’s (1951[1897]) theory of anomy, or normlessness. According to Durkheim, delinquent practices can be seen as resulting from a break-down in the amount of social regulation to which people are subject. Below, I present studies undertaken by leftist sociologists and state-funded statistical institutes
that have followed this line of reasoning further, identifying various failed forms of social regulation thought to have set diasporic youth, in particular, adrift.

A sociological study by Lagrange (2010), carried out in the project of Le Val Fourré in Paris' western suburbs, identified higher percentages of secondary school failure, delinquency, and joblessness among male adolescents of Maghrebi and West African descent specifically. Lagrange traces the difficulties faced by male youth raised in West African families, in particular, to African mothers’ relative lack of parental authority over them compared to fathers and both parents’ difficulty at being educational role models for their sons. The establishment of healthy relationships between mother and son, argues Lagrange, would be aided by “empowerment policies” designed to help women “extend their activities...and develop their autonomy” (p. 25). Whereas Lagrange looks to weak filial relationships as the source of youth’s instability, others like Brouard and Tiberj (2005) identify disproportionate unemployment as the primary characteristic distinguishing youth raised in Muslim (African and Turkish) households from other French youth. The authors are of the mind that the youth from these households that they studied did not consistently

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14 Lagrange singles out the countries of the Western Sahel, Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali, and also the countries near the Gulf of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Benin, Togo, the Ivory Coast, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

15 Brouard and Tiberj’s (2005) study was based on survey data collected from two samples of people: one of 1006 ethnically French people above 18 years of age, and one of 1003 people above 18 years of age, born to Maghrebi, African, and Turkish parents.
share in a common affiliation or practice of Islam. They report great variation in their sample population’s responses on this count. They conclude, rather, that the main sense in which youth from Muslim households could be seen as “communitarian” (p. 121) lies in their joint economic marginalization from mainstream society.

Another much larger survey-based study, conducted by National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) in 2010, yielded findings about the religiosity of second and third-generation youth in France that contradicted Brouard and Tiberj’s conclusions. The “Trajectories and Origins,” or TeO, study was administered to 9,600 immigrant descendant youth and 9,600 first-generation immigrants (INSEE & INED, 2010). It revealed that the French Muslim youth in the sample exhibited greater religiosity and transnationality than either, non-Muslim descendants of other religious backgrounds, or their first-generation parents. Religiosity was evaluated on Likert scale responses to questions like “do you attend religious events” and “do you wear religious paraphernalia?,” while conclusions about transnationality were drawn from responses to questions like “where do you want to be buried,” “how frequently do you visit your parents’ home country,” “do you stay in touch via online media,” “do you vote there,” and “do you send remittances?” Lagrange (2010) hailed the TeO study’s findings
as indicative of a reverse secularization phenomenon, whereby, since the end of
the 1960s, each generation of Muslims in France has increased its adherence to
Islamic norms over the former.

Although the TeO study’s authors do not offer any causal explanations for
these trends among French Muslim youth, they nonetheless flag two other,
possibly related, tendencies that disproportionately affect immigrant
descendants from Muslim households. The first is these individuals’ greater risk
of finding themselves unemployed compared to the ethnically French:

“For descendants of immigrants from Turkey (1.3), sub-Saharan Africa (1.7), Morocco or
Tunisia (1.6), Algeria (1.8), and for immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (1.7) and
Algeria (1.8), the risk of unemployment is significantly greater than that of [ethnically
French] natives.” (INSEE & INED, 2010, p. 59)

The second trend is for these same individuals, descendants of immigrants from
the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, and Turkey, to report a greater likelihood of
racist encounters, of being refused employment for unjust reasons, and of being
questioned about their “real” origins despite being born in France. The authors
conclude that “these discriminations are essentially an issue relating to visible
minorities” (p. 131).

To summarize, this appraisal of discourse from the French left has
allowed a glimpse into the left’s portrayal of French Muslim youth as a “lost

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16 The numbers within parentheses correspond to these individuals’ risk of being unemployed
compared to the mainstream French population. In all cases, immigrant descendants of these
origins are at greater risk of being unemployed; in some cases, their risk is almost twice as great.
The sample looked at immigrant descendants aged 18 to 50.
generation,” teetering on the edge of lawless anomie. The causes proposed to account for their unmooring are various: lack of parental supervision, few employment opportunities, racial discrimination. A general account seems to have emerged, however, of the results of such anomy; namely, that youth react to their relative freedom and unmet expectations by veering towards strict observance of Islamic norms for conduct. In the upcoming section, I describe how through my research project I have endeavored to rectify this understanding of French Muslim youth as culturally lost or afloat.

III. This Study: The Scope of the Inquiry, Sites, and Methods

My dissertation research consists of an ethnography in which I examined the forms of cultural belonging youth from Muslim households in Marseille performed on a daily basis. Over fourteen months, between 2012 and 2013, I documented the cultural as well as linguistic dimensions of how individuals in several youth friendship-groups positioned themselves, whether with respect to their diasporic peers, their immigrant parents, or mainstream society and State institutions in Marseille. My goal in undertaking this research was to trouble the State’s homogenization of French-Muslim youth: as a demographic moving homogeneously towards religiosity and transnationalism. By examining youth’s
speech practices—both what they said and how they said it—I learned a great deal about what religiosity and transnationalism signified for them personally. Specifically, I found that youth’s concepts and practices relating to religiosity and transnationalism held little similarity to those described in the survey-based literature, where the behaviors in which such youth engage are typically designated as “foreign” or being at odds with France.

Rather, youth nurtured aspirational trajectories that, while they may have involved Islam and transnational movement, were nevertheless solidly crafted in the byways of Marseille. Nowhere was the local nature of youth’s personal aspirations more clearly reflected, furthermore, than in the language varieties they selected to index their identities. The youth who partook in my research drew on both, family and peer-learned non-standard repertoires of Marseillais French, dialectal Arabic, and other heritage languages (e.g., Wolof, Comorian), as well as standard repertoires of Arabic and French learned in French schools and neighborhood prayer rooms, when projecting images of themselves as pious cosmopolitan Muslims or savvy project (quartiers) dwellers. After conducting this research, it is my contention that immigrant descendants in Marseille exhibit a host of signs indicating their cultural belonging. It is, quite evidently, when others do not recognize such youth to belong, denying them cultural citizenship, that youth experience varying measures of alienation from home.
Data Collection: Sites and Analysis

Marseille provided the ideal research site in which to investigate the aspirations and identities of diasporic youth born to Muslim families. Marseille is France’s second-largest commune, with 859,543 people, of whom 34,776 are Moroccan, Algerian, or Tunisian nationals, 11,774 are sub-Saharan African nationals, 61,281 are French by acquisition, and 725,689 are French-born (INSEE, 2008). Since at least de-colonization, it has also sheltered generations of immigrants from Muslim countries in North, West, and East Africa, a fact that makes of Marseille today home to many young people with diasporic ties (Sayad, Jordi, & Témime, 1989). Marseille’s Muslim communities are thus longstanding and highly active in community, educational, and worship activities throughout the city’s different neighborhoods, as evidenced for example by the plethora of Muslim community associations (e.g., Institut Méditerranéen d’Études Musulmanes, Union des Familles Musulmanes, Association des Travailleurs Algériens), the existence of private Muslim primary and secondary schools, locally produced Muslim radio programming (Radio Galère, Radio Gazelle), and the current struggle to build Marseille a central mosque (Le Monde, 10.27.11).

17 These INSEE figures do not account for the large number of undocumented immigrants of various origins living and working in Marseille, nor for numbers of immigrant descendants.
The majority of the sixty or so youth, aged thirteen to thirty, with whom I carried out this research were young men and women I met through the educational institutions in which they were enrolled, whether for full-time school or for elective classes at night or on the weekends. Thanks to personal connections I made within Marseille’s public school system and in a handful of private Islamic organizations with didactic missions, I was able to spend time with youth, as well as adults, in these settings, and also render my services as a part-time Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and English teacher. The main educational settings and groups of people with which I carried out ethnographic research, continuously over the 2012-2013 academic year and during the adjoining summers, are the following:

1. I observed MSA and French language arts classes two-three times weekly at a public collège (secondary school) located in Marseille’s northerly 16th arrondissement. There, I followed students in the bilingual French-MSA track who were in grades 6ème, 5ème, 4ème, and 3ème, though the students I became most familiar with were those in 3ème, which is to say fourteen-year old students finishing their last year before high school. I accompanied this class on a school field-trip to Paris and also spent time with the students and the MSA teacher after school and on the weekends.
2. A second site where I conducted research was a private Muslim secondary school or collège, likewise located in Marseille’s northern neighborhoods, in the 15th arrondissement. As a part-time English teacher at this school, I became acquainted with students in all four grades (i.e., 6ème, 5ème, 4ème, and 3ème), aged 11 to 14. My time at this school likewise involved participation in community and worship activities as well as a week-long trip to London with the 3ème class in April, 2013.

3. At the local public university, a further group of participants comprised young, highly devout Muslim women in their first and second years in the MSA bachelor degree program. With this group of female friends, I attended various MSA classes at the University, tajwīd\textsuperscript{18} classes and Friday prayers at a nearby mosque, Muslim speaker events, and recreational activities such as Muslim sisters’ parties, meals, and hiking.

4. Observation and several interviews were likewise conducted with administrative and teaching personnel in the three above-mentioned institutions. At the public secondary school, I interviewed and frequented a handful of the teachers. I also met several times with the woman who served as the academic inspector for MSA classes in this school as well as in other schools across Southern France. At the private Muslim secondary school, I

\textsuperscript{18} MSA tajwīd refers to classes in Koranic elocution.
interviewed teachers, administrative personnel, recess monitors, and religious leaders present in the school community and also observed classes other than my own (i.e., MSA, Islamic Studies, French language arts). At the public university, I interviewed one of the principal professors in the MSA degree program.

5. Remaining spheres of participation included attendance at the adult MSA classes of a Muslim community center (3rd arrondissement), tutoring high school students in various languages at the Union des Familles Musulmanes downtown (1st arrondissement), teaching a once-weekly adult MSA class to adult French and heritage-language (Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian) speakers at a secular community center downtown (2nd arrondissement), and weekly Wednesday outings with 12-16 years olds who attended this same community center. In addition to my interactions with youth in these spaces, I also interviewed adults with whom they spent much of their time, including their parents and siblings, community members, and school and community center monitors.

The methods of investigation for this research were qualitative, combining traditional ethnographic methods for data gathering, including participant observation, semi-formal interviews (Briggs, 1986), document collection, and the writing of field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995), with discourse
analysis and linguistic anthropological techniques for collecting and analyzing data, as well as the gathering of video footage and data from youth’s social media interactions. I recorded my participants’ speech with a professional-grade digital voice recorder and used a regular video camera and a tripod to capture video footage, when necessary. The speech data I collected represented a mix of interviews and spontaneous speech behavior, allowing me to mine my participants’ speech for examples of reflexive social activity, or metapragmatic discourse, as well as speech tokens “in action,” or pragmatics (M. Silverstein, 1976). When analyzing my data, I transcribed audio with the aid of a transcription pedal and the softwares ExpressScribe, and video with the software InqScribe. When the need arose to analyze speech in a more phonetically detailed way, I used the audio-editing application Audacity and the acoustic-analysis software Praat. Most of my phonetic transcriptions using the International Phonetic Alphabet remain impressionistic, however, leading me to believe that, given more work, further information could be gleaned from more precise transcriptions in the future. As for the conceptual tools I employ to analyze my data, I provide more information about each of these tools when, in the course of my chapters, they present themselves as useful to the cases at

19 As per IRB regulations, youth signed consent for each of these types of data collection.

20 Approximately one-hundred hours of audio data were recorded and fifteen hours of video data.
hand. A final note is that the overwhelming majority of my research participants preferred to have their real names appear in this work. To respect their wishes and yet maintain a semblance of confidentiality, I have omitted people’s last names. I have also, of course, used pseudonyms when people did not want their first names mentioned or when the material they provided was politically sensitive.

VI. Overview of Dissertation

This chapter explored the divide between a France that grants legal citizenship and yet occasionally withholds other, more subtle, sorts of recognition, like cultural citizenship, from diasporic youth. Chapter Two is a short ethnographic chapter that serves as a complement to Chapter One. In Chapter Two, I introduce some of my research participants and show, via three ethnographic snippets, how diasporic youth from Marseille are constructed by others as “foreign” or “un-French.” Chapter Three, in turn, focuses in on the daily lives and cultural practices of a group of students who attend a public school MSA class in Marseille’s 16th arrondissement. This chapter demonstrates that these young men and women express various emic guises of cultural belonging to Marseille, even if these manifestations may not always match the
mainstream French population’s definition of Frenchness. Chapter Four turns to address how youth from the same MSA class negotiated their relationships with people from their parents’ home countries and also ethnically French people from more affluent parts of Marseille. In Chapter Five, I examine the experiences of diasporic youth from Marseille who identify as orthodox Sunnis. There, I analyze the alienation youth report in regards to their home town, its gendered nature, and the measures some orthodox young women are taking to remedy their lack of a sense of home. Chapter Six presents an in-depth look at the social ramifications of a particular educational initiative, begun in 2012 by Marseille’s Ministry of Education, whereby a new, revamped kind of MSA was being taught to local youth from Muslim households. Chapter Seven, finally, attends to how certain gender ideologies, prevalent among the students in the MSA class from Chapters Three and Four and the orthodox-identified youth presented in Chapter Five, affected these respective groups’ feelings about what kinds of language were appropriate or inappropriate to use, and were in turn influenced by these youth’s socialization into Islamic norms about sexuality and modesty.

Taken together, my hope is that the chapters of this dissertation provide the reader with a more nuanced, multi-faceted view of how diasporic youth in Marseille position themselves, whether vis-à-vis their home town, their parents and their parents’ countries of origin, and the French State and France’s
mainstream population. This work also places special emphasis on youth’s language practices. This is because I found such practices to afford unique insight into youth’s life-worlds and aspirations, helping to answer questions about where they were coming from and where they were headed. My optimistic perspective is that any step towards increasing general familiarity with the experiences of such youth will, over time, aid in brightening their futures.
II. Snippets from Contemporary Marseille: Cultural Belonging without Cultural Citizenship

I. Introduction

This section introduces some of the key dynamics taking place among social groups in Marseille. How does the city’s mainstream population perceive the diasporic youth with whom they are generally unfamiliar? How do ethnically French adults who work with such youth in the public school system understand their behavior and aspirations? Also, how do sub-populations of diasporic youth perceive one another? The three anecdotes I narrate will begin to describe a dichotomy that will be more fully fleshed out in subsequent chapters, between outsiders’ perceptions of diasporic youth as foreign or wayward individuals, and their own sense of themselves as belonging culturally within France. The three interactions I analyze provide examples of how particular listeners went about judging the cultural affiliations of diasporic youth, often with reference to their speech, but also, quite probably, in response to certain visual signs, like youth’s appearance. I propose that the accuracy of a listener’s judgement about a speaker’s identity and intentions is mediated by their social proximity to that
speaker, and also by their past experiences with ethnic others. I show how, in other words, diasporic young people’s foreignness or Frenchness resided primarily in the ears and eyes of their beholders.

II. A Drive with a Cabbie from Marseille: “A Connotation of the Maghreb”

On a crisp morning in November, 2012, I toted my suitcase to the Place de la Joliette and got in the only waiting taxi. Speeding along the empty freeway towards the airport, the driver was interested to learn that I lived in the neighborhood of La Joliette but am originally from San Francisco. He volunteered that “seventy percent of people that work in, or, that come to La Joliette are people exterior to Marseille.” He told me that people arrived by fast train or plane, often from Paris, because of the growing business opportunities in the neighborhood. La Joliette, we were both aware, has since 1995 been the target of a seven billion dollar, mostly private urban renewal project called l’Euroméditerranée. Historical buildings tied to the docks of La Joliette’s port are undergoing Fawzive renovations, as are its Haussmannian boulevards (e.g., Rue de la République, Boulevard des Dames, Boulevard de Paris). This commercial investment and beautification has placed La Joliette back on a par
with downtown Marseille (le Centre Ville), spelling an expansion of the city’s center to include previously industrial areas. For many, this reorientation of La Joliette, away from its historical links to industry and port activities, and towards the city’s civic center and Marseille’s bourgeoisie (Roncayolo, 1996), has been accompanied by no small degree of nostalgia. La Joliette is no longer cloaked in blue, as Albert Londres (1929) described it upon his visit, referring to the dockers of all ilk stationed at its docks and bars in their coveralls. Whereas for the past 150 years La Joliette has housed mostly working-class immigrants, and, at key moments, also refugees (Attard-Marainchi & Témime, 1989), in the past couple of years its has become agleam in glass buildings, banks, hotels, and restaurants. From Monday to Friday, well-dressed workers file in and out of silvery office buildings and restaurants with lunch-only hours, returning to their home cities in the evenings or on the weekends and leaving La Joliette to the few original inhabitants who can still afford to live there.

The driver, himself a descendant of Neapolitan immigrants to Marseille, continued with his reflections on Marseille’s shifting demographics. “Marseille’s population today has little in common with its population in the 1960s” (c.f., Transcript 2.1). Given our previous discussion, I assumed he was referencing the gentrification of La Joliette. I inquired whether he saw “a change in accent” as a result. To this, he gave an enthusiastic yes, only he went on to
describe, not the more standard (or français d’oïl) French accents accompanying
the Parisians and other urbanites commuting to La Joliette (Trimaille &
Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013), but the Maghreb-connoted speech of youth from “the
banlieues,” or peripheral suburbs.

Transcript 2.1.21 Changing Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driver: La population qui fait Marseille maintenant n’a plus rien à voir avec une population des années: des années soixantes.</td>
<td>Driver: Marseilles’s population today has little in common with its population in the 1960s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Mhm, mhm, et vous voyez un accent-pardon, et vous voyez un changement dans l’accent?</td>
<td>Cécile: Mhm, mhm, and do you see an accent-sorry do you see a change in accent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver: Oh oui! Oui, oui, les gens maintenant, du fait de la mixité ont un accent qui est, disons, de banlieue. Nous on le ressent parce que- ((windy))</td>
<td>Driver: Oh yes! Yes, yes, yes, as a function of the social diversity now people have an accent that is, let’s say, from the banlieue. We detect it because- ((windy))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: -Qui est plus quoi?</td>
<td>Cécile: -That is more what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver: Qui est plus un accent de jeunes de banlieues-</td>
<td>Driver: That is more of a banlieue youth accent-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: -Aha-</td>
<td>Cécile: -Aha-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver: -!Que de Marseille. Il y en a de l’intonation… Ils ont une façon de parler qui est plus ((clicks against teeth)), on dirait qui est pl-y a plus de connotation de…du-du Maghreb.</td>
<td>Driver: -Than from Marseille. There’s an intonation… They have a way of speaking that is more ((clicks against teeth)), we might say that is mor-there’s more a connotation of the… the-the Maghreb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The driver’s reference to youth from Marseille’s banlieue puzzled me, particularly because, unlike Paris or other French cities, Marseilles never developed a true banlieue. Instead, the housing projects clustering at its northern and southern-most extremities remain within Marseilles’s municipality (Donzel; 1995; Roncayolo, 1996). I asked the driver for clarification about what he called a

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21 This interview dates from 11-12-12.
“We understand each other, no problem,” he replied; only youth from Marseille’s northerly projects “take pathways (passerelles) in their speech different from those of this country’s speakers.” Whereas his own speech he qualified as “sing-song” (chantant), youth’s speech, he said, “drags much more” (beaucoup plus trainant). In an effort to appeal to my cultural coordinates, he analogized his Marseillais accent to the English of a fourth-generation Irish-American in Texas. How diasporic youth speak French, by contrast, he compared to the English that might be spoken by a Mexican person in Texas.

Although the driver began by noting a demographic shift affecting La Joliette, it quickly became clear that the more crucial demographic—and sociolinguistic—shift for him was the changing population of the city’s working-class northerly neighborhoods (les quartiers) since the 1960s. He was concerned that the European immigrant populations, whose families had “one or two children,” were being outstripped by “foreigners,” who “easily have four to six children.” This immigration narrative, of first “Europeans” and then “foreigners” arriving in Marseille, revealed that his cultural baseline was likely that of the first wave of immigration to Marseille, the Italian wave, the smells of which likely graced his own family’s kitchen. Indeed, Italian immigrants immigrated most numerous to Marseille between 1830 and WWII (López & Témime, 1989), residing in the working-class neighborhoods north of the Canebière.
(Naudeau, 1929). Today, however, most people living in Marseille’s quartiers are
immigrants or are descended from immigrants coming from North, West, and
East African countries (Césari, Moreau, & Schleyer-Lindenmann, 2001). The
driver’s anomalous use of the term banlieues to cover Marseille’s quartiers, as
such, served as an indicator of his misgivings about the ethnic transformation of
such neighborhoods, banlieues in Paris and other cities typically showing large
populations of African immigrants and their descendants.

If the driver’s cultural baseline was the Italian-descended community in
Marseille, his linguistic point of reference was, not Standard French, but the
Marseillais accent. Certainly, how he spoke throughout our conversation,
making liberal use of the velar nasal syllable—finally, word-final schwa, and gently
affricating his stop consonants (e.g., gentil ‘nice’ [ʒəŋʧi]), was decidedly
representative of the old-timing Marseillais accent (Binisti & Gasquet-Cyrus,
2003). It was with reference to this “sing-song” accent that he judged diasporic
youth to have a “dragging,” Arabic-connoted learner variety of French.

Sociolinguists have identified other urban youth vernaculars (Rampton, 2011)
from throughout France as having a similar “Arabic coloration” (coloration arabe;
Billiez, 1992, p. 120), whether in phonology (Billiez, 1992; Gasquet-Cyrus,
2009; Jamin, 2005), lexical borrowings (Caubet, 2001; Doran, 2002), intonation
contours (Fagyal & Stewart, 2005, 2011), or pragmatics (Tetreault, 2009). Billiez
(1992) drew the interesting conclusion that Arabic phonology, once embedded in a French surround, was sufficiently emblematic so as to dissimulate its French surround. This resonates, too, with Agha’s (in press) remarks that even the slightest breach of an enregistered variety can warrant listeners to characterize such breaches as “slang” ways of speaking, easily equating their linguistic deviance with social deviance.

Sitting in the airport after leaving the cabbie behind, I was struck by how a son of Neapolitan immigrants was led to call a slightly younger generation of immigrant descendants, from the same working-class neighborhoods as him but with African parents, “foreigners.” He appeared to be operating on an ideological premise according to which European immigrant-descendants could become “locals,” but non-European immigrant-descendants would remain culturally foreign. Although due to the fleeting nature of my relationship with the driver I cannot estimate what exactly motivated his use of the label “foreigner” for people born locally, perhaps he, like other actors in French immigration debates throughout the 20th century who gestured to skin color as a reason for certain immigrants’ inassimilability (Camiscioli, 2009), was also moved by a perception of youth’s phenotypic differences from Europeans to interpret them thus. Perhaps this axis of difference, combined with a soupçon of linguistic difference, prevented the driver from hearing in such youth’s French the hallmarks of the
very Marseillais accent in which he was addressing me (c.f., Chapter Three). This driver offers an illustrative example of what Roxy Harris (2006) has discussed as the need to “think with the ears rather than think with the eyes” (p. 11). Harris recommends that sociolinguists, interestingly, avoid making superficial, ethnicity-focused judgements of diasporic Europeans’ identities by listening to them more carefully. It would appear that this kind of attentiveness could also benefit members of the European public more generally, though how realistic it is to divorce the acts of seeing and hearing one’s interlocutors from one another remains an open question. In this case at least, the cabbie’s assignment of such youth to the category of “foreigners” likely proceeded from his perception that they differed from him on multiple dimensions, some of which he had ideologized as irreconcilably distinct.

III. In the Teachers’ Lounge with Charlotte: The “Wesh Wesh” Local Vernacular

Each week on Wednesdays, Charlotte and I enjoyed a mid-morning free period together before classes resumed, English classes for her and Modern

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22 Harris (2006) says that whereas a visual approach might lead the English to perceive such youth as Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis (or alternatively, Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims), paying attention to their speech enables their reassessment as British or even London-born. Based on his own work with diasporic youth from West London, he concluded, for example, that they embody “an everyday low-key Britishness, albeit a Britishness with new inflections” (2006, p. 1).
Standard Arabic classes for me. We would sit in the teachers’ lounge, chatting and drinking espressos from the coin-operated machine. Through the lounge window, we could see the main thoroughfare separating the public secondary school from La Castellane Project across the street. Visible, too, beyond the six towers of La Castellane, was the northern sweep of Marseille’s industrial bay.

Charlotte, a woman in her thirties raised by Parisians in southwestern France, had been teaching English at this public school for six years. The Ministry of National Education had placed her in this “educational priority area” (zone d’éducation prioritaire) based on a point system of teacher seniority. Teachers with relatively few years of teaching under their belts headed to schools in challenging neighborhoods, like this one. The school in effect catered to two projects: La Castellane, with around 7,000 residents, and, right above the school, La Bricarde, with around 2,000 residents. These projects provided government-subsidized housing to working-class, primarily immigrant families, a disproportionate number of whom, more than 50%, were living below the poverty line (Césari, Moreau, & Schleyer-Lindenmann, 2001).

Charlotte taught English to the same class of students, Class 3B, that I observed in their Modern Standard Arabic and French classes. One morning, I conducted an interview with her in order to learn more about her perspective, as one of these students’ teachers, on why these youth spoke the Arabic-accented
French remarked upon by the taxi driver in the first anecdote. Charlotte’s initial point was to distinguish between two local types of speech: first, Marseille’s historical vernacular, which she called *le parler marseillais*; and second, the type of French her students speak, which she termed *le parler local*, or the vernacular local to Northern Marseille’s projects. Charlotte explained that she always made a point of correcting the students’ local kind of French, so much so, in fact, that the students wondered “if that lady is a French or an English teacher.” Charlotte clarified, furthermore, that whereas Marseille’s historical vernacular could be recognized by any northerner as autochthonous to Marseille, her students’ vernacular was so circumscribed as to be unrecognizable anywhere outside of the projects. She reminded her students of this fact by feigning misunderstanding when they would use their vernacular in class. The *Castellanois* fashion of pronouncing the Standard French adverb *après* (‘after,’ [apʁɛ]) was to drop the “p” and add a geminated rasping “x” sound, yielding *akhé* ([ɑ̃χɛ]). Charlotte would play on the quasi-homonymic word for bus stop in Standard French, *arrêt* ([ɑ̃ɛ]), quizzing the students thus: “Stop? Which stop, the bus stop?” (“Akhé [ɑ̃χɛ], quel *arrêt* [ɑ̃ɛ], l’*arrêt* [lɑ̃ɛ] de bus?”). She reported coaching students to pronounce the letter ‘p:’ “p-p-p, a-près!” and reminding them that this “thing is not in fact the real language.”
Although Charlotte routinely modeled Standard French pronunciation for her students, this routine did not seem to derive from a view of them as second-generation “semi-linguals” deficient in French (Bloomfield, 1927; Christopherson, 1948). Charlotte recognized, for instance, that which heritage language, if any, her students heard at home (e.g., Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Comorian, Wolof, Turkish, Romani) had little bearing on how they spoke French amongst themselves. She reflected that “the kids can, uh, just as likely be a Gipsy as a Kurd as a Comorian and yet not pronounce the ‘p’.” Rather, Charlotte recognized youth’s stylistic use of the parler local and corrected instances of akhé on the conviction that such linguistic trappings would not serve them well in the future. Charlotte’s insight into youth’s speech as a vernacular in its own right contrasts sharply with how the cab driver in the last section designated diasporic youth’s speech as a learner variety of French. Her reflections resonate, in fact, with decades of sociolinguistic research asserting that children or grandchildren of people who migrate to new countries come to speak, not learner varieties of those countries’ majority languages, but vernaculars capable of expressing certain identities (Bills, 1977; Fought, 1997; Hinskens, 2011; Kotsinas, 1988). Charlotte’s description of the project vernacular with the label parler is also telling in this regard, intimating an awareness that devices like akhé
hang together with several other elements in a coherent speech style shared by youth of varying backgrounds.

Charlotte went on to delineate the demographic scope and speech ideologies that made her students’ vernacular unique. “We say akhé. We’re from the Northern Projects,” she imitated. According to Charlotte, the parler local was traceable to the northern projects, spanning the youth of all different familial backgrounds who lived there. Marseille’s traditional vernacular (le parler marseillais), by contrast, was typically considered the purview of white, working-class folks who live near l’Estaque or Marseille’s Vieux Port (c.f., Binisti & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2003). As for the social meaning of her students’ parler, Charlotte summed up that “it’s all about holding onto a form of social status.” In Transcript 2.2, Charlotte sheds light on what she means, exactly, when she says that “holding onto a social status” motivates her students to speak as they do.

Transcript 2.2.23 The Wesh Wesh Vernacular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte: Ils aiment bien parler ce que j’appelle le wesh wesh, donc “We::sh, je m’en bats [əmba:] les couilles, ma main [mã] sur [syɛ] le Coran [koːʁɑ̃].” Donc du coup je les imite si je les croise. Je fais “Ouais, j’habite dans le 1-3. Je mets la casquette à l’envers.” Ils parlent un peu comme ça aussi-</td>
<td>Charlotte: They like to speak what I call the wesh wesh, so “We::sh, I don’t give a fuck, my hand on the Koran.” So I just imitate them if we cross paths. I say “Yeah, I live in the 1-3. I wear my hat backwards.” They talk kind of like that too-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 This interview dates from 6.10.13.
Charlotte: -Pour faire style justement “je suis du 93 à Paris,” mais bon, ils n’ont pas l’accent d’un ban-d’un banlieusard parisien
Cécile: Pas du tout c’est très différent-
Charlotte: Non pas du tout MAIS ils aiment bien quand même faire un peu "wesh wesh.” “Wesh wesh la famille.”
Cécile: Mmm, et pour toi ça te rappelle un peu les banlieues parisiennes-c’est ça, un peu leurs-
Charlotte: -Ben PLUS euh, oui, fin le kaid de banlieue parisiennne. Voilà, on veut ressembler au kaid de banlieue.
Cécile: Mhm, tu connais un peu ce milieu là à part la télé?
Charlotte: Bah à part-non.... J’ai pas la télé... euh (((laughs)))
Cécile: C’est bien ça. (((P laughs))
Charlotte: Le rap, euh, voilà, puis de se balader à Paris dans le RER et tout. Ça, ils accèdent au centre de Paris. Et puis, euh, j’avais des cousins aussi qui habitaient en banlieue parisiennne. Donc c’est plus après, en effet, par les medias quoi, la radio, le cinema... toutes formes de medias.

This transcript is edifying insofar as it reveals that Charlotte, despite teaching students from La Castellane and La Bricarde projects on a daily basis, lacks in familiarity with the precise modalities and social meanings of their vernacular. She introduces yet another label for their speech, “le wesh wesh.” A reduplication of the Algerian interrogative word for ‘what,’ wesh [weʃ] served the students of Class 3B as a way of saying “what’s up?” Charlotte likewise attempts to phonetically imitate her students’ wesh wesh speech, rasping the “r” ([ʁ]) in the words sur [syʁ] and Coran [’koː̃xʊ̃] and speaking with a rap-like meter.
However, she employs neither the word-final schwa, nor the open-mid, unrounded back vowel /ɔ/, nor the velar nasal /ŋ/, features that students in Class 3B would surely have stamped on words like couilles, which she renders as [kuːj:], Coran, which she pronounces in Standard French, without the velar nasal ['koː-xɔ], and habite, on which she omits the word-final schwa [əbit]. The only features of her imitation that hark back to youth at the secondary school would be wesh and the devoicing of French ‘r,’ and even these phenomena have been described for French youth vernaculars in banlieues elsewhere (c.f., Doran, 2007 for Parisian examples of Algerian wesh; Billiez, 1992 for examples of voiceless “r” in Grenoble).24 Similarly, her use of the back ‘ɑ’ [ɑ] (e.g., embats [əmbaː]) recalls Jamin’s (2007) description of the same feature among youth in the Parisian banlieues of La Courneuve and Fontenay-sous-Bois, but not her own students’ speech per se. Further, the rising-to-falling pitch contour Charlotte gives to the penultimate and ultimate syllables of the intonation phrase Coran ['koː-xɔ] and famille ['fa-mij] parallels the tonal pattern observed among Parisian youth from La Courneuve by Fagyal (2005). Last but not least, Charlotte mentions the 13th arrondissement as the neighborhood to which her students pledge allegiance (“Yeah, I live in the 1-3. I wear my hat backwards”), though both La Castellane

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24 In the French popular media, wesh is also stereotypically associated with how youth greet one another in the Parisian banlieues. The expression came to greater notoriety in the 2001 film “Wesh wesh qu’est-ce qui se passe?,” which was set in the 93rd department, northeast of Paris in the Île-de-France region.
and La Bricarde Projects are located in the 16th arrondissement. Charlotte’s rendition, as such, does not only fail to pinpoint youth from Northern Marseille in any unmistakable way; it channels youth from the Parisian banlieues.

The larger point to be taken from these observations is that Charlotte, despite her more enlightened perspective on her students’ strategic use of a youth vernacular, nevertheless perceives few differences, in repertoire or in social function, between the youth vernaculars of La Castellane and La Bricarde projects, of other projects elsewhere in Marseille, or, indeed, of the Parisian banlieues. Her imitations and understanding of the function of her students’ vernacular appear to be inspired, less by careful observation of their practices, than by an idea of dynamics in the Parisian banlieues, gleaned perhaps from travel or media exposure. She suggests, for instance, that just as youth from the Parisian banlieues wish to act out “the kaid,” so, too, do her students locally aspire to emulate this trouble-maker type when they speak in their parler local. Charlotte’s underlying assumption is that youth who live in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods, regardless of their location in France, engage in parallel forms of linguistic deviance in order to strategically perform the same kind of social deviance. Hence, whereas the taxi driver in the previous anecdote put youth’s linguistic departures down to their cultural difference or foreignness, in this section Charlotte constructs an account of diasporic youth.
from Marseille as using their speech and behavior to expressly reinforce their social marginality. As will become clear in Chapter Three, the students in Class 3B performed their in-group speech register (Agha, 2007a) in line with an identity and aspirations that bore little resemblance to Charlotte’s account of their parler local’s significance. Thus, although Charlotte frequented these youth on a daily basis, her comments attest to the degree of social and cultural unfamiliarity, or distance, that she continued to maintain vis-à-vis their desires and cultural affiliations.

IV. Coffee with Two Administrators at a Private Muslim School: “Animal Sounds”

No recess break eluded Fawzi, the recess monitor, as an opportunity for some good-natured teasing. Popping his head into the makeshift teachers’ shed from the yard, he found me making photocopies of a handout for my upcoming English class. “Un caccuppino?,” he offered with a grin. I shook my head no but, before I could even begin to laugh at his word games, he was already back in the yard with the kids. The school where Fawzi and I worked is a private Muslim secondary school serving children ages 11 to 17. Nestled in Northern Marseille’s 15th arrondissement, about a twenty-minute bus ride from the public school where Charlotte teaches, this school serves a more orthodox community of Sunni
Muslims. When the director and his wife, Anwar and Hanan, founded the school and its adjoining mosque, they envisioned a school that would not only teach religion, Modern Standard Arabic, and Islamic history classes alongside the French national curriculum, but one that would remain financially accessible to the neighborhoods it serves. Parents pay one-hundred and fifty Euros a month to have their child attend this private school, rather than other public schools in Northern Marseille for free. For many of these parents, who made a living working blue collar or retail jobs, or were unemployed, and often depended on government-subsidized project housing, paying this monthly sum nevertheless remained a hardship.

After teaching my English class, I wended my way to the central administrative office of the school. The corner-view sécrétariat office was a magnet of sorts for teachers and administrators alike throughout the day, both because Lamia, the head secretary, was responsible for pacing the school day, and because, unlike other rooms in the still partially built school, the sécrétariat had consistent heat. Instead of Lamia though, I found Fawzi in the office with Yaman, the assistant director, chatting and enjoying cappuccinos.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Fawzi was 23 years old at this time and Yaman was in his early thirties. Fawzi was born in Marseille to Kabyle parents from Algeria, while Yaman was born in Morocco but came to Marseille at a young age.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Both were well familiarized with my research questions, and neither missed a beat when I wondered aloud why the kids at this school, who are almost exclusively born in Marseille to parents hailing from North, West, and East African Muslim countries, spoke so differently from the same-aged kids with similar cultural and socio-economic backgrounds that I observed at the public secondary school no more than a couple kilometers away in La Castellane. “Isn’t it simply that they don’t frequent the street as much?,” tendered Yaman. Fawzi agreed with Yaman straightaway. Raising his volume and lowering his pitch in a clear imitation, Fawzi added that the “no one scares me”—je crains dégun [ʒə kʁɛ̃ dœɡœn]—way of speaking can really be acquired simply by hanging out with the wrong crowd. He went on to tell us how he and his twin brother received different “educations.” Whereas Fawzi attended a small sleep-away high school one-hundred kilometers from Marseille, during the same period his brother began living in the northern project of La Busserine and “stayed in the street hanging around (à trainer) with some guys (gars).” Fawzi recounted how his brother became someone light years away from him in terms of speech and behavior. As his brother’s friends and activities diverged, he “spoke more...he had more of, well, an accent, because he would insist on some words and accents but not on others.” He began using expressions Fawzi did not understand, such as tu duhes [dɔ̃], ‘you’re pissing me off,’ and khéner dégun [χɛne
değend], to ‘not be bothering anyone.’ “It’s all Comorian to me!,” exclaimed Fawzi as Yaman looked on, bemused.

I recognized the expressions Fawzi imputed to his twin immediately, if only because the students I observed in Class 3B over at the public school used them as well. Such expressions, which in fact constituted Arabic-sounding neologisms, with Arabic phonemes like /ħ/ and /χ/, were part of the youth vernacular that Charlotte, and also Yaman and Fawzi here, identified as characterizing the social persona of the youth from Marseille’s projects. Though many of the students who attended this private Muslim school lived in housing projects as well, Fawzi and Yaman drew distinctions in the way their students were being educated at the school. They were being taught to emulate the Prophet Mohamed in demeanor as well as speech. And, added Fawzi, “if, short of going all the way back to the Prophet, the students want to resemble someone, they already have a strong example in the Director. Not only does he hold a doctorate in mathematics, he is a director, an imam, almost a statesman!”

In the following transcript, Yaman and Fawzi elaborate further on how an Islamic education comports with “correct” speech, whereas a street education connotes coarseness and is indexed by the raucous speech style of the projects.
### Transcript 2.3: Teaching French, but What Kind of French?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: C’est quoi un peu la philosophie du collège par rapport à l’enseignement du français? Vous voulez leur enseigner un français de Paris, un français de Marseille, un français comment?</td>
<td>Cécile: What is kind of the school’s philosophy with regards to how French is taught? Do you want to teach them a Parisian French or one from Marseille, what kind of French?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaman: Euh</td>
<td>Yaman: Euh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Un français international, un français quoi?</td>
<td>Cécile: An international French, a what kind of French?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaman: Qu’ils s’expriment correctement et qu’ils savent surtout écrire correctement, donc euh…</td>
<td>Yaman: That they express themselves correctly and that they know how to write correctly in particular, so uhm…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Mmm… après, les accents, euh, de quartiers tout ça, vous…-</td>
<td>Cécile: Mmm… and as for the accents, uh, from the quartiers and all you-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaman: -Ah non, les accents de quartiers c’est même pas un français. C’est c’est, c’est, une révolte {le le milieu du quartier} -</td>
<td>Yaman: -Oh no, accents from the quartiers are not even a type of French. It’s it’s it’s revolting {the quartier milieu} -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawzi: {c’est une horreur}</td>
<td>Fawzi: {It’s a horror}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaman: -Ce n’est du français. C’est des, des, des, cris animaliers!!!</td>
<td>Yaman: -It’s not French. It’s, it’s, it’s animal sounds!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawzi: Voilà! ((Yaman laughing)) Wesh!</td>
<td>Fawzi: Yes! ((Yaman laughing)) Wesh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawzi: Akha [əxa], {wakha} [wɔxa]</td>
<td>Fawzi: Akha [əxa], {wakha} [wɔxa]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaman: Je te jure, des fois, si j’entends les élèves d’en face s’inventer, mais je… mais on se croirait dans un zoo! Je te jure…</td>
<td>Yaman: I swear, sometimes when I hear the students across the street a-assailing one another well I… well you would think we were in a zoo! I swear it…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawzi: C’est comme akha [əxa]. Je regardais un {documentaire}</td>
<td>Fawzi: It’s like with akha. I was watching a {documentary}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaman: {Ah oui?}</td>
<td>Yaman: {Oh really?}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawzi: Je regardais un documentaire, eh, TF1 la-dessus. Le Black, comment il s’appelle?</td>
<td>Fawzi: I was watching a documentary, eh, TF1 on that the black guy. What is his name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaman: {Roselmack}</td>
<td>Yaman: {Roselmack}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: {Ah}</td>
<td>Cécile: {Ah}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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26 All of the speech that I cite in this anecdotal section is drawn verbatim from a long interview I held in the main office on December 13th, 2012.
Earlier on, Fawzi had explained how the “words and accents” being used by his brother during his transformation into a “project guy” were as foreign to him as the Comorian language, an oft-heard language in Marseille due to the sizable Comorian immigrant population. In Transcript 2.3, he goes on to mock how Harry Roselmack, the TF1 television anchor renowned for being the first black man on the French nightly news, reported on a project in Northern Marseille. Fawzi takes on a journalistic, disembodied kind of diction and syntax: “one hears what one might call ‘the watchdogs’” (on entend ce qu’on appelle ‘les guetteurs’). The punchline comes, of course, when Fawzi imitates Roselmack’s dictionary-like definition of akha [ɑχɑ] as a word that “means ‘be careful’ in Arabic.” Although akha is indeed a vocative that certain youth from Northern Marseille rely on to draw attention or exclaim at some occurrence, and it does display the Arabic phoneme /χ/, Yaman and Fawzi and his fiancée are well aware
that it represents a neologism created in Marseille’s projects. Fawzi, for instance, imitates his fiancée’s sarcasm (e.g., “Really? I didn’t get the memo on that one”) at the idea that lexemes from Marseille’s project vernacular could in any way be associated to “Arabic,” dialectal or standard. Although the school staff members’ dismissal of Roselmack is worth a laugh, the most intriguing detail in this transcript is their stance on the youth vernacular spoken by kids from Marseille’s projects. Earlier in the transcript, Yaman laid out his disgust at the “accents from the quartiers,” stating that these “revolting” accents more closely resemble “animal sounds” than the French language. He relays his impression of being “in a zoo” when he hears the students from the nearby public school talking in the street. In the course of this conversation, as such, Yaman and Fawzi effectively renounce the project vernacular’s ties with “Arabic” of any sort, or with French.

In Chapter Five, in which I focus on youth who practice an orthodox form of Islam in Marseille, like Fawzi and Yaman and the students at their school, I elaborate further on how the ideologies such individuals hold about what qualifies as “good” or “real” language are closely tied to the orthodox community’s self-imagery of themselves as being sophisticated, global-minded Muslims who happen to live in Marseille. Not unlike Charlotte, who flouted youth’s parler local for being too insular, orthodox-identified Muslims in
Marseille perceived all non-standard accents in Marseille, including Marseille’s historical vernacular and youth’s project speech, as undesirable insofar as they were illegible at the French national level and internationally. Another point of comparison between Fawzi and Yaman’ remarks and those of Charlotte and the taxi driver is that, while all similarly cast out the project register associated with youth from Marseille’s projects, only the ethnically French people read foreignness, or Maghrebi connotations, into the project way of speaking. At the private Muslim school, meanwhile, the diasporic people who worked there interpreted the project vernacular as an exaggeratedly Marseillais, or Marseille-specific, form of speech. This became apparent when one of Fawzi and Yaman’ colleagues, an accountant named Halima, joined the previous conversation. She specifically described the project way of speaking as “the super-pronounced Marseillais accent” (l’accent Marseillais super-prononcé). This depiction is in fact quite accurate, leading to the conclusion that individuals who are situated close to, or who share in, the experience of living in Marseille’s projects may also be more capable of detecting important sociophonetic information conveyed in people’s speech. Another complementary interpretation is that diasporic people of color, even if they belong to a distinct social sub-group, such as the orthodox Muslim community in Marseille, do not draw conclusions about other diasporic individuals’ identities based primarily on their visual appearance. The same may
not be true for white people in Marseille, whose aural perceptions seem to be
tinted by their interlocutors’ appearances. A conspicuous instance of this
dynamic was that of the cab driver, who esteemed that youth from Northern
Marseille whose speech connoted the Maghreb were “foreigners” parallel to
Mexicans recently arrived in Texas.

V. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has dealt with how individuals in Marseille who are situated
at various degrees of social remove from, or proximity to, the city’s northerly
housing projects apprehended youth who live there. Through three examples,
one of a taxi driver who was largely unfamiliar with youth from Muslim
households in the projects, a second with a teacher who instructed youth from
two projects on a daily basis, and a third involving the young diasporic Muslim
staff at a denominational school, I showed the way in which perceptions of
project youth’s foreignness or wayward aspirations relied, less on these youth’s
actual manifestations of any cultural belonging or lack thereof, than on the
ideologies and experiences of the person doing the perceiving. My suggestion, as
such, is that diasporic individuals are more likely than other French people to
experience disjuncture while maneuvering in French society. Despite a diasporic
person’s move to emically declare him or herself a cultural member of Marseille, evincing what I term cultural belonging, others may nevertheless not recognize him or her as such, effectively denying them the right of cultural citizenship. Chapters Three, Four, and Five, in particular, revolve around the forms of cultural belonging that myriad groups of diasporic youth from Marseille exhibit.

In addition to airing this contradiction between cultural belonging and citizenship a bit further, this chapter has also insinuated the existence of micro-differentiations taking place within the broader minority group of diasporic youth in Marseille. An interesting question in this regard is whether highly practicing Muslims like Fawzi or Yaman confer cultural citizenship upon other diasporic youth who embody what they called “street” education, and whether, likewise, Charlotte’s students in Class 3B would see Frenchness in the cultural attachments of orthodox students from Yaman and Fawzi’s school. Certainly, Halima the accountant’s understanding of project youth as speaking in a profoundly Marseillais way would portend a positive answer. What, though, of Yaman’ disparaging portrayal of project speech as non-French animal sounds? In what way does this portrayal differ from the racist way individuals in French history have painted immigrant populations? One might think, here, of Naudeau’s (1929) comments, for instance, when he visited immigrant residences north of the Canebière and said that “Marseillais slums (taudis
marseillais)...reduce humankind to the level of animality” (p. 198). A seamstress I once visited in Marseille provided another more contemporary example of this kind of metaphor. A pieds-noir who relocated to Marseille from Algiers after the War, she spoke to me, without the slightest whiff of shame, about the immigrant “fauna” (la faune) with their dishonest ways who plagued her existence in Marseille. Although Yaman compared the speech of impious project youth to animal sounds, his motive was by no means a racist one, however.

Rather, for youth and adults who practiced orthodox Islam in Marseille, a key part of projecting an image of themselves as pious, ethical sophisticates was to formulate others, by contrast, as wholly unlike them. Merton (1968[1949]) discusses this practice of managing one’s self-image in relation to others in terms of “reference groups,” or when “people take the standards of significant others as a basis for self-appraisal and evaluation” (p. 40). Practicing Muslims in this context, as such, saw fit to juxtapose themselves besides less pious diasporic individuals precisely because they viewed them as comparable (“significant”) to them; as people who, in other words, warranted placement in their social landscape. In terms drawn from linguist Trubetzkoy’s (1969) theory of phonological features, these diasporic subcultures coexisted, not in a privative relation to one another, but in one of equipollent opposition. In this analogy, communities of diasporic youth in Marseille enjoyed their own range of “plus”
values, even if such values were formulated using one another as comparative anchors.

Of further note is that, their inner distinctions not withstanding, diasporic youth groups in Marseille faced the same kinds of difficulties with the mainstream granting them cultural citizenship. As presented in Chapter Five, for instance, the French mainstream in Marseille tended to view youth who practiced orthodox Islam as especially different from them, culturally speaking. Visual indicators such as religious clothing and skin color prevailed in the calculations that French-origin individuals made of pious youth’s cultural affiliations, and they were more often seen as foreign than diasporic youth who did not assiduously practice Islam. Ironically, the mainstream’s dependency on visual indicators effectively prevented this pious community’s recognition as a model of the very kind of assimilation French politicians crave (Haut Conseil à l’Immigration, 2000), that of a “French Islam” (Bassam, 1992; Ramadan, 1999). Pious individuals like Fawzi and Yaman, as such, represent an ill-starred foil to the experience of Asian Americans and other so-called “model minorities” in the United States (Stacey, 1996). Since the 1960s, Asian Americans have been constructed by mainstream America as a model minority. When accusations of racism and communist paranoia were running high during the Cold War and Civil Rights years, for instance, mainstream Americans appeased these charges
in part by holding up Asian Americans as a case of successful integration into
American society, a “model minority” (Reyes, 2004). In the case of pious
diasporans in Marseille, in contrast, these individuals in effect constructed
themselves as exceptional citizens and yet the mainstream did not acknowledge
them as such. More will be revealed about differing diasporic youth’s
constructions of self and aspirations in the following chapters.
III. The Projects: Linguistic Antics of Class and Ethnicity in the Mediterranean Borderlands

I. Introduction: Residents of the Borderlands

"Nosotros los Chicanos straddle the borderlands. On one side of us, we are constantly exposed to the Spanish of the Mexicans, on the other side we hear the Anglos' incessant clamoring so that we forget our language. Among ourselves we don't say nosotros los americanos, o nosotros los españoles, o nosotros los hispanos. We say nosotros los mexicanos (by mexicanos we do not mean citizens of Mexico; we do not mean a national identity, but a racial one). We distinguish between mexicanos del otro lado and mexicanos de este lado. Deep in our hearts we believe being Mexican has nothing to do with which country one lives in. Being Mexican is a state of soul—not one of mind, not one of citizenship. Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders." (Anzaldúa, 1999[1987], p. 84).

This chapter investigates the stories told by youth from La Castellane housing project about where they were coming from and where they were headed. Through their telling of tales about themselves and their parents, but also about Marseille’s projects and their parents’ home countries (or bleds), it becomes clear that these youth considered themselves French enough to differ in crucial ways from someone born in the bled (a blédard/e) but, simultaneously, similar in sufficient respects to their blédard parents to be immediately distinguishable from a French person lacking that ethnic and linguistic heritage. In the spirit of Anzaldúa's reflections above, youth were neither Marseillais in the mainstream sense, nor people born in the bled, but somehow both. To wit,
between the poles of the Marseillais and *bled* identities, youth discerned another identity for themselves. They described themselves as cultural products of Marseille’s *quartiers*, or Marseille’s neighborhoods that revolve around housing projects, an identity here argued to exemplify the concept of the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1999[1987]). This chapter illustrates the enregisterment (Agha, 2005), or historical elaboration, of the way of speaking youth call *Castellanois*, alongside other kinds of conduct, as emblematic of this *quartiers* identity. Through a detailed analysis of how youth communicated with one another in their peer groups, I also tease out differences between *Castellanois* and two other “enregistered voices” (Agha, 2005, p. 39) that youth invoked in their interactions, both of which are further detailed in Chapter Four. Across this chapter and the next, both of which look at youth from Class 3B in the 16th *arrondissement*, I argue that youth in fact made recourse to three phonolexical registers: *Castellanois*, which indexed youth’s own identity; *clando*, via which youth performed their parents’ generation; and *paillot*, how they enacted ethnically French people in Marseille. These three enregistered voices served youth as resources for enacting proximity or distance to certain social positions, and also for taking stances on issues involving race, class, religion, and matters of comparative national development.
This chapter likewise explores what it means to say that borderland identities and languages are syncretic, a case of neither, nor, but both. My use of the term syncretism to describe the identity and way of speaking characteristic of youth from Marseille’s Castellane Project, in particular, opens up an analytic space within which to regard their practices as actions that explicitly positioned them in relation to other people and places. How youth behaved, in other words, did not reveal them to be the uneasy bearers of hybrid, fragmented identities; nor did these diasporic youth seem to inhabit a "third space" (Bhabha, 1990) wholly different from France and their parents’ home countries. Rather, young people from La Castellane are shown to lean on a variety of communicative resources, including linguistic “interferences” (Haugen, 1956) between French and Arabic varieties, accent stylizations (Rampton, 1995, 1999), music, clothing, and bodily hexis, to relate to past generations and class and race configurations in Marseille and, hence, position themselves within the French post-colonial legacy.

The remainder of the chapter is split into two sections. Section II reviews a handful of labels that anthropologists and other social scientists have leaned on to capture the supposed neither-here-nor-there-ness of youth like those who appear in this chapter, including second-generation, hybrid, mobile, and transnational. A summary of these critiques paves the way for my argument, in
Section III, that youth from La Castellane Project can more precisely be considered what Martínez and Sayer (1994) have called border people—or diasporic locals, in my own idiom. Section III proceeds through a first sub-section in which I introduce life in the 16th arrondissements’ projects and the quartiers identity claimed by a particular classroom of students in a local school, and then a second sub-section where I detail the forms of linguistic syncretism these youth called Castellanois. Overall, this chapter adds to understandings of post-colonial subjectivities the insight that the communicative forms of play in which such youth engage double as implicit claims to their own French but diasporic and working-class ethnic identity.

II. Labels for Diasporic Youth: Critiques and New Directions

A forceful critique of the “second-generation” label comes to anthropology from Rumbaut (1976; 2004), a sociologist who operationalized the idea that important differences exist intra-generationally. In a 1976 study, for instance, Rumbaut pointed out how the Cuban generation “1.5,” who arrived in the United States from Cuba in the 1960s and came of age there, was influenced by the concept of exile in a way the Cuban second-generation was not. Rumbaut (2004) further refined his “decimal” typology (e.g., generation 1, 1.25, 1.5, 1.75,
meant to capture these differences in educational, linguistic, and occupational outcomes between generational cohorts, with the understanding that outcomes could also be guided by the personal circumstances of a particular cohort. Thus, in a study of refugee youth from Southeast Asia who moved as adolescents to San Diego, Rumbaut and Ima (1998) found that youth’s adaptive resources varied along with their national origins, reasons for relocating, and contexts of reception.

Rumbaut’s (2004) insights into acculturation have been further nuanced by anthropological scholarship, especially with respect to how diasporic youth form their ethnic identities. Lo and Reyes (2004), for instance, do not approach terms like first and second generation as a priori categories. Rather, their analyses burrow into the “indexically emergent” (p. 119) lives of such categories. In order to better grasp why “particular categories become relevant in the moment of speaking” (Lo & Reyes, 2004, p. 119), the authors are attentive to local discourses about ethnicity and their circulation. Emic ethnic categories have been illuminated by Kang and Lo (2004) and Rosa (2010), in two pieces that address how youth use such labels to position themselves and others in interaction. In Kang and Lo’s (2004) study with Korean-American youth in Los Angeles, for example, local ethnonyms like “Korean Korean” or “Korean-washed” stepped in to replace more etic categories based on generation. Rosa
(2010), too, shows that youth apply local ethnic labels in ways that frustrate generational categorizing. He describes the context of a school in Chicago marked by ethnic solidarity between youth of varying Mexican and Puerto Rican heritages. There, children with one Mexican and one Puerto Rican parent, who in other settings might have identified as the “MexiRican” or “PortoMex” members of generation 1.5, instead pronounce themselves “Latino.”

These examples stipulate that diasporic contexts call for a sharper analytical lens than generational cohorts or ethnicity, if thought of as a preformed essence that inheres in people. In a move away from such categories, Mandel (2008) chooses to speak of “processes of ethnicization” (p. 2) in her research with Germans of Turkish origin in Berlin. She interrupts Germans’ representation of diasporic Germans as monolithic “Turks” by documenting how diasporic Germans reappropriate Turkishness and identify in complex combinations of the following dimensions: “rural, urban; elites, working-class; Sunnis, Alevi; Turks, Kurds; Islamist, secular; or naturalized Germans, Turkish nationals” (p. 2). Mandel (2008) hence uncovers a gap between etic views of ethnicity and the more emic, processual understandings explained by diasporic individuals.

The latter concept of ethnicity is a close cousin to what Stuart Hall designated under "new ethnicities" in 1992. Below, he urges a new usage of
“ethnicity,” one reflecting the historical specificity—and discursive basis—of ethnic identities:

“If the black subject and black experience are not stabilized by Nature or by some other essential guarantee, then it must be the case that they are constructed historically, culturally, politically - and the concept which refers to this is ‘ethnicity.’ The term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language, and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual. Representation is possible only because enunciation is always produced within codes which have a history, a position within the discursive formations of a particular space and time” (1992, p. 226)

The construction of ethnicity, understood in this broad sense of the cultural attachments developed by a person in a specific time and place, turns out to be the elemental activity underway in the discursive exchanges between youth studied in the remainder of the chapter. Specifically, the transcripts reveal the ethnic categories invoked by youth from La Castellane project to be only loosely tied to the generational cohorts to which they technically belong or to the ethnic categories to which they might etically be ascribed (e.g., West African, Maghrebi). Rather, it is youth’s living circumstances, mainly, their neighborhood, friends, and school, that play a key role in the ethnic stances they develop, with ethnicity understood in the processual and overarching way outlined above.

If labels like second-generation or etic ethnic terms no longer qualify as descriptive, given the historical contingency of how youth claim ethnic identities, then what additional purchase might other descriptors for diasporic
youth (e.g., hybrid, cosmopolitan, transnational) hold, if any? Friedman (2002), for one, rues the uncritical application by anthropologists of adjectives like transnational, hybrid, and mobile to the people they study. He argues that certain anthropologists’ tendency to use these terms rests upon, on the one hand, a vision of people as culture “containers,” and on the other, a fear of falling into the structuralist reverie of bounded and homogeneous languages, individuals, or nation-states. The “moral-political solution” (Friedman, 2002, p. 25) to the essentialism and boundedness that skulk in the shadows of the discipline, says Friedman, is for anthropologists to answer with cultural analyses averring the hybridity and transnationalism of their research subjects. He notes that this inclination dissimulates an anthropological position that is both etic and highly privileged:

“It is the discourse of global elites whose relation to the earth is one of consumerist distance and objectification. It is a bird's-eye view of the world that looks down upon the multiethnic bazaar of ethnic neighborhoods and marvels at the fabulous jumble of cultural differences present in that space. Hybridity is thus the sensual, primarily visual, appropriation of a space of cultural difference.” (Friedman, 2002, pp. 27-28)

Friedman further illustrates his point with a comparison of the emic and etic meanings attributed a traditional Papua New Guinean shield. Its maker had decorated the shield with an advertisement for a popular but foreign beer, and the shield presented as a hybrid object to unfamiliar viewers, one fusing a Western, modern product with local traditions. The shield maker later explained
to Friedman, however, that he had chosen the beer advertisement because it symbolized danger, prowess, and the “life force” of war. Friedman summarizes his point by saying that labels such as hybrid and transnational tend to lean on scholarly analyses that are inattentive to the ways in which the people involved may be reappropriating and integrating cultural elements into meaningful wholes. A similar critique can be summoned in the case of other theoretical catchphrases as well, notably “superdiversity” (Blommaert, 2010). To deem the European “landscape” superdiverse in human and linguistic terms connotes, not only the observer’s degree of remove from people’s precise biographies, but likewise their own baseline of “normal” diversity.

A parallel logic can be applied to the uncritical exercise of labels like mobile, migrant, cosmopolitan, and transnational. Friedman (2002) asks what to make of the anthropological readiness to see a world busied with roving people, particularly when “less than 2 per cent of the world’s population is on the move, internationally” (p. 33). Taking up Friedman’s question, Hage (2005) submits in response that it may be worth examining the very way mobility is labeled, for distinct positionalities may be revealed in the process. Why was it that when he left Lebanon to do his doctorate in Australia, this movement was not called migration but simply going abroad to study? He wonders if the Lebanese merchants and bankers whom he researches would be accorded the
same terminological benefit of the doubt. They do not speak of their movement
in terms of migration either: “They say I am ‘living’ in New York, I am living in
Paris, or, ‘where were you living during the war?’” (Hage, 2005, p. 470).
Migration thus appears more of an etic term, but what of other labels? Mandel
(2008) offers similar reflections on German double-standards in the use of the
term cosmopolitan. She contrasts an enlightenment version of cosmopolitanism,
such as underpins the German State’s campaign to replace Germany’s Second
World War reputation with one of a cosmopolitan and world-open (Weltoffen)
society, with the more “demotic” cosmopolitanism offered by Turkish Germans.
Only what Turkish Germans bring to Germany, quite tellingly, is not called
cosmopolitanism at all (p. 14). That it is socioeconomic or physiognomic
parameters which lead migrants to be distinguished from non-migrants (or from
refugees, as per the current debate), or cosmopolitans from immigrants, reveals
both the highly etic nature of these determinations and the political stakes
involved in qualifying people in this manner. Given these positional discourses,
it may be that in the theoretical scramble to dismantle borders and illustrate
globalization, some anthropologists have trodden over not-inconsiderable
inequalities in terms of people’s ability to move and the importance of locally
based practices. Thankfully, there not need be, as Friedman (2002) remarks, a
contradiction between the fact of building lives and cultures locally and being
open to global influences. Indeed, it is precisely this play with the global from a local position that the “borderlands” heuristic affords—if not more emically, then more empirically.

The late Gloria Anzaldúa (1999[1987]) writes of a certain Chicano identity that spans the border between Mexico and the United States. As she specifies in the anecdote that began this chapter, this border identity is a racial one, not a national one. It is also, in her formulation, communicated primarily via a “Chicano” language, and in her own case by a Chicano Tejana language. She explains further that, “for a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language?” (Anzaldúa, 1999[1987], pp. 77). To these ethnic and linguistic mainstays of her Chicano Tejana identity, Anzaldúa joins other memorable sensations: the corridos songs that “wafted through her bedroom window,” “woodsmoke curling up to an immense blue sky,” and “homemade white cheese...melting inside a folded tortilla” (p. 83). Anzaldúa’s homeland perches on the Texan border with Mexico, and yet she experiences it, not as fragmented, but simply as where she comes from, a place she cannot but evoke through multi-
sensorial memories. In other words, despite the the Chicano borderlands being “neither eagle nor serpent, but both” (p. 84), these places are nevertheless regular homes for those who inhabit them. This coincides with Jackson’s (2005) description of how Harlemites, via their “ghetto fabulousness” and “the underside of the global” it represents, declare “social margins quite central to the people who live there” (p. 60). In Section III below, I delve into how youth from Marseille’s northern housing projects construct a broadly ethnic identity and corresponding language for themselves that, in their syncretism, point to youth’s location in the Mediterranean borderlands.

III. Class 3B: La Castellane Project and Castellanois

It was 7:45am and the students of Class 3B were readying themselves for the first class of the year. On the sixth floor of bloc (‘tower’) one, inside the housing project known as La Castellane, Kader was reviving yesterday’s mohawk. Ayman, his next-door neighbor, dropped by and they carved two matching slits into their left eyebrows. On the fourth floor, Kardiatou parted her hair into pigtails, stepped into pink Palladium hightops, and slipped on some Senegalese bangles. One floor down and over in bloc 2, Sabrina backcombed and then smoothed her bangs into a crest atop her head. Two-hundred steps above
the six towers of La Castellane lies a smaller but taller project called La Bricarde. Sheyreen and Kenza left La Bricarde and were making their way down the steps to the secondary-school below, not minding the September sun in their imitation Adidas tracksuit and Burberry scarf.

Minutes later down in Madame Chérif’s third-floor classroom, warm air wafted in through the horizontally cocked windows as the students filed in for the first time of the 2012-2013 school year. As they passed the teacher and headed to their seats, each student said ṣbaḥ al-khayr, ustedhah (MSA. ‘good morning, teacher’) to the teacher, who responded with ṣbaḥ al-nūr (MSA. ‘bright morning’). 8am rang and old friends gave up conversation while roll was called. The Ustedhah’s roll continued undisturbed until her call of “Abdel Kader” [ṣabdəl ‘qaː-dəː] was met with a drawled “no need for the Abdel [abdəl] piece” (“c’est pas la peine Abdel [abdəl]”) from Kader.

Along with his peers from Class 3B, Kader was beginning his fourth year of a bilingual Modern Standard Arabic and French track at the secondary level. This year was their last in collège, or secondary school, and they were slated to choose at the end of the year whether to move on to high school or vocational programs. In spite of three years of MSA study with the old teacher, Monsieur Bashir, Kader continued to prefer a shortened, more French version of his name. He disclaimed how his new teacher pronounced his name, as a compound with
MSA phonology (e.g., /ʕ, q, ɻ/), in favor of simply “Kader” [ka-'deχ], which conforms to neither MSA nor Standard French phonology. At the end of the day, while on the bus running from Northern Marseille towards the center of town, Madame Chérif filled me in on similar name preferences shown by her students of past years at the same public school:

“For compound names, like the Abd [ʕabd]-such-and-such, the Abdallahs [ʕabdalːa] become Abdel [abːel], the Abdel Kaders [ʕabdal qaːdə] become Kader [kaːdər], the Abdel Majids [ʕabdal majiːd] become Majid [maːjɪd]... It’s, well, that! A portion is removed because it strikes them as long and seemingly ridiculous.”27

Certainly, the lengthy, compounded first name called out by Madame Chérif, replete with MSA phonemes ‘ayn [ʕ], qaf [q], and a dark ra [ɻ], sounded unlike anything Kader was used to being called by his friends. While in her words, above, Madame Chérif imagined he would prefer the Standard French version of his name, namely Kader [kaːdər], instead he and his friends opted for a neither-nor pronunciation. Indeed, their usual pronunciation of “Kader” [ka-'deχ] switched [k] in for MSA’s qaf /q/, used French stress rules, and yet also replaced the typical French ‘r’ /ʁ/ with the Arabic phoneme /χ/. I learned about this local rendering of Arabic-sourced names through a blunder of my own, albeit in a different setting. In the private Muslim secondary school where I taught, early on in the year I was introduced by Hanan, the school director’s wife, to one of

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27 “Pour les noms composés, si tu veux en ‘abd-katha ‘abd-katha [ʕabd-kaːda ʕabd-kaːda], les Abdallahs [ʕabdalːa] c’est Abdel [abːel], les Abdel Kader [ʕabdal qaːdə] c’est Kader [kaːdər], les Abdel Majid [ʕabdal majiːd] c’est Majid [maːjɪd]... C’est, donc, voilà! On supprime une partie parce que ça fait long, parce que ça fait ridicule” (Madame Chérif, 4.4.12).
the recess monitors, Nasser. I touched a palm to my chest and said in French, "Nice to meet you, Nasser [ˈnɑː-siɛʁ]." Hanan quickly corrected me, "Nasser! [na-ˈsoɛʁ]." To my surprise, Hanan, who speaks fluent Tunisian and excels at MSA, was asking me to pronounce Nasser’s name not in MSA but in French. She was being respectful of his own background as a diasporic individual who, like Kader, grew up in the projects, only on the south side of town. I later learned that, being his usual polite self, Nasser had in fact refrained from cluing us into the exact pronunciation he preferred. Throughout the school year I witnessed Nasser introducing himself to visitors at the school as [na-ˈsoɛx].

Much like Kader, Nasser chose not only French stress and vowels (which Hanan had gotten right) but additionally the Arabic-sourced voiceless fricative /χ/ in lieu of French "r" /ʁ/.

Among young Castellaners, linguistic syncretism of this sort did not end at names. It stretched from discourse markers, to run-of-the-mill words, even to expressions that youth freshly imagined. Although what they spoke was recognizably French, young people from La Castellane consistently employed consonant and vowel inventories and lexis that did not tally exactly with Standard French, nor Marseille’s historical vernacular, nor MSA or dialectal varieties of Arabic. When asked about the languages he spoke in his daily life, Kader listed Algerian as the language he spoke to his Algerian father, French or
Algerian as what he spoke to his French mother (herself born of two Algerian parents in Marseille), and “Castellanois” as what he used with his four brothers and friends. Unlike French or Algerian, Castellanois was about “trafficking in words” (trafiquer des mots) from both, explained Kader. Another classmate named Sheyreen, whose mother is Algerian and step-father is Egyptian, shed further light on Castellanois and this type of French’s relationship to dialectal Arabic.

“We make remixes, actually” she said, explaining Castellanois as speaking “French with an Arabic accent.” By her estimation, Parisians and “those who don’t speak [dialects of] Arabic” lacked culture because they spoke only “French, French, French.” By comparison, “we speak the project version (version quartiers) because growing up in Northern Marseille (Quartiers Nord) we basically come to mix languages.”

Before turning to examples of how youth used Castellanois, below I present how the students of Class 3B described the significance of growing up in the quartiers.

**Tough Love in the Quartiers**

The demographics of the projects of La Castellane and La Bricarde resembled those of Class 3B, the classroom in the public school across from La

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Castellane, only writ large. Of all the students in the four MSA classes Madame Chérif taught at the secondary school (6ème-3ème, or 5th-8th grades), only a young man named Florian in Class 4B was recognizably French by the students’ standards. Teased on account of his blond hair, blue eyes, and Catholic name, he countered with accounts of his trips to visit his Tunisian grandpa in the bled, or country of origin. Each of the other students boasted a bled of affiliation, whether by dint of one or both parents’ birthplace or, less frequently, grandparents’ birthplace. For the majority of the students from Class 3B, that bled of affiliation was Algeria. There were also students, however, whose parents came from Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, the Comoros Islands, Mayotte, Egypt, and Yemen. There were likewise three students who came from mixed marriages between someone from one of these countries and someone born in France. One of these three French-born parents said she had French ethnic heritage and came from a working-class (ouvrier) milieu in the North of France, while the other two themselves grew up in Algerian households in La Castellane.

Like Class 3B, the population of the 16th, 15th, 14th, and 13th arrondissements, together called the Quartiers Nord, was characterized by a greater number of people born in the bled or having bled origins than people ethnically identifiable as French-origin (français de souche). This preponderance of French people of Arab, West African, and East African (mainly Comorian) origins living
in Northern Marseille is not well captured, however, in the census statistics published every ten years by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). France is unique in choosing not to collect statistics on its citizens’ and residents’ ethnic identities. The only available figures that might serve as a proxy pertain to immigrants versus French nationals. Thus, for example, INSEE (2002) reports that 87% of people living in Marseille are French citizens and the remaining 13% are immigrants. Not surprisingly, such numbers ill-reflect the numerical and cultural significance of the city’s French diasporic population. These percentages also dissimulate the relatively greater concentration of diasporic citizens in Northern Marseille. Although all of Marseille’s population has been shaped by “successive immigrations (apports de population) from outside,” the neighborhoods to Marseille’s North have, historically, received more numerous immigrants from North and sub-Saharan Africa (Maurice & Deloménie, 1972, p. 34).

Northern Marseille was predominantly settled by foreign workers who came to support Marseille’s industry and port in the 19th and 20th-centuries. If before World War II these workers were overwhelmingly Italian and Spanish, then between 1945 and the 1970s French colonial ties and later decolonization would prompt the arrival of new workers in Northern Marseille, namely, North Africans and sub-Saharan Africans from France’s (ex)colonies, as well as other
smaller contingents, like the Romani, the Portuguese, and the Turks. During this period, quite different housing arrangements arose in the north of the city than in its southern neighborhoods. Maurice and Deloménie (1972) describe how, in the 1960s, projects like La Castellane were drafted with northerly coordinates and targeted working-class, mainly foreign residents:

“La Castellane welcomed, much as expected, a youthful population, with few qualifications, of heterogeneous social provenance, and more mobile as well. The policy outlook of the organizations promoting its construction contributed to aggravating the arrondissement’s marginalization. If, in the South, public organizations and private entrepreneurs each took shares of real estate, in the 16th only HLMs were built” (p. 37, my translation).

This development of HLMs (Habitations à Loyer Modéré), or rent-controlled and government-subsidized housing, to the city’s north was the result of zoning policies that aimed to create homes for foreign workers close to their places of employment along the Northern littoral, the site of Marseille’s industry.

Urbanization policies of this sort, attempting to circumscribe the movements of Marseille’s immigrant population, continue to present. They remain apparent, for example, in the city’s unwillingness to extend Métro transportation any further north than the Bougainville Métro stop, which lies at the southernmost edge of the 15th arrondissement. Likewise, the city’s cheap public bike network, called Le Vélo and begun in 2007, has its northernmost

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29 In 1972, North Africans represented 45.8% of the foreign population of Marseille. To illustrate their unequal distribution over urban space, there were at this time five times as many Algerians in the 16th arrondissement as in the southerly 9th arrondissement (Maurice & Deloménie, 1972).
stations in the 2nd arrondissement near the Docks, which belongs to the central part of town. As such, the main means of transportation around the Northern arrondissements is the bus network. Due to construction delays and the relatively larger size of the northern neighborhoods compared to those downtown, however, most residents contend with long bus rides. To illustrate, my 7-km (4-mile) commute between Bougainville Métro, which is already located in Northern Marseille, to the project in La Castellane would take between 50 minutes and an hour and ten minutes. Perhaps due to this relative isolation, the students in Class 3B maintained secluded lifestyles to the north of the city, only rarely venturing downtown or to the beaches and parks of the southern districts. It was, for instance, quite an undertaking when I invited female students from Class 3B to visit me on Sundays where I lived at the Northern edge of Central Marseille. Their mothers got quite anxious about them using public transportation and would go through considerable trouble to find someone from the neighborhood who owned a car and could chaperone the girls back and forth from the 16th arrondissement. This worry carried over to a school-organized trip some of the students and I were planning to take to Paris in April as well. As neither the students nor many of their parents had ever been to the nation’s
capital, some parents came along to both see the sights and reassure themselves about their children’s whereabouts.30

Members of Class 3B, hence, shared in identifying as immigrant descendants of their parents’ respective bleds and as Marseillais who, born and raised in one of the city’s northern housing projects, continued the diasporic history of the city. Class was a major part of this diasporic identity, and the students saw their bled backgrounds and ethnicities as bound up with their working-class status. To have bled origins, summed up a student named Sheyreen, is to live in a “rotten neighborhood” (quartier pourri). Césari, Moreau, and Schleyer-Lindenmann (2001) have written about how, in Marseille, often being diasporic or being an immigrant means a greater likelihood of both, residing to the city’s north, and being either working-class or below the poverty line. The map in Figure 3.1 clearly depicts this clustering of poverty to Marseille’s North. The intensity of the color red corresponds to the percentage of people living below the poverty line, which INSEE (2002) defines as having a monthly revenue of less than 621.38 Euros. The 16th arrondissement is shown in varying shades of red and pink, meaning that between 25-50% or, in some cases, more than 50%, of its population make do with less than the sum mentioned. Of

30 Although these 13 and 14 year-olds’ sphere of movement within Marseille and France is relatively reduced, many of them have at some point in their lives been traveled to their parents’ respective home countries, via the 9-hour ferry to close North African destinations like Oran or Algiers, or (less frequently) via plane to places like Grande Comore or Dakar, etc.
the forty parents of students in Class 3B, about half were unemployed. Mothers were more often unemployed than fathers, but students also spoke about how their fathers were seeking work or else stayed at home. On the first day of the school year, for instance, I heard it rumored among students that Kader’s father had come in to a teacher-parent conference about his son and threatened to put explosives in the school should his son be “excluded” again from class this school year. Madame Chérif confided in me that Kader’s father was a nice if strange man, but that he had probably lost his marbles after spending so many consecutive, unemployed days on the couch. If they had jobs, the students’ fathers worked in boat repair, as mechanics and plumbers, and in
manufacturing. The mothers who worked jobs, in turn, were employed as housecleaners, nannies, and cooks. Another anecdote, drawn from my observation of the public school across from La Castellane where students attended Class 3B, illustrates the perceived connection between being from the *bled* and working blue-collar jobs. In this excerpt from my fieldnotes on October 18th, 2012, I describe a conversation I held in passing with the recess monitor.

The new recess monitor started work today at school. In the yard, he asks me if I’ve heard the joke about “*les générations*.” I say no. He starts: “Well, there’s this man in Algeria dreaming about France. He thinks to himself, ‘The streets are paved in gold...’ But, shortly after arriving in France, he discovers three things. One, the streets aren’t paved in gold. Two, sometimes, they aren’t paved at all. And three, he’s the one who’s supposed to pave them!”

The monitor’s joke expresses cynicism about his parents’ generation being brought to France to do strenuous jobs, and students expressed similar frustrations about the lack of options they felt were available to them other than blue-collar jobs. The students’ French teacher, who was born in France to an Arab family, tapped into students’ concern and organized a project where students had to locate somebody from the projects who had what they would define as success. Students brought in journalists, lawyers, and others who had grown up in La Castellane, and they generally seemed enthused to have these additional role models.

If sometimes students were frustrated to be working class or poor, other times they were proud too. One from student Class 3B, named Karim, doggedly
affirmed his pride at being from the housing projects by wearing a t-shirt that read “100% carshare.” His t-shirt made a reference to highly publicized comments made by Nicolas Sarkozy, then-Minister of the Interior, in 2005. Following an episode of gun violence in the housing project of La Corneuve outside of Paris, Sarkozy had vowed that he would “flush out the housing project with a high-pressure hose” (nettoyer la cité au kärcher). Karim’s shirt could thus be read, in other words, as “100% project material.” Kader flaunted his project pride by loudly singing the lyrics to songs by local band Zbatata in the hallways at school or before classes started. This one was one of his favorites, and he shared the music video with me. The chorus is a mantra upholding the “busted” (cramé) nature of the northern neighborhoods:

“Marseille is the Quartiers Nord. Marseille is busted (cramé). It’s, it’s, it’s trouble (chaud). It’s boiling. We don’t give a fuck (on s’en bat les couilles). Khuya (Algerian ‘brother’), that’s Marseille. It’s, it’s, it’s only picking up speed.”

Even some of the teachers in the school maintained a working-class outlook, whether out of solidarity or their own political leanings, I do not know. One day in the teachers’ lounge, for instance, I overhead one of the teachers complaining of another who refused to unionize. He fumed about how “there’s nothing worse than a working-class guy who’s made it” (un ouvrier enrichi). These examples attest to the working-class spirit prevalent within La Castellane and its

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31 “Marseille c’est Quartiers Nord. Marseille c’est cramé. C’est, c’est, c’est chaud. C’est bouillant. On s’en bat les couilles. Khuya, c’est Marseille. Ça, ça, ça démarrre, ça y est.”
adjoining school. Students’ comments about their diasporic links to the bled, moreover, are shown to be inseparable from both their frustration and pride at being from the northerly, socio-economically marginalized parts of the city.

As will be detailed further in Section IV, the relevant contrast to their own diasporic identity for students from Class 3B was people who were French by descent. Tellingly, they avoided the term for such individuals that is more typical among French-speakers nationally, français de souche. Instead, they discussed such people as being “sans origines,” or without any origins, thus positioning their own kind of ethnic heritage as the default. Castellaners also used the label “paillot” for the ethnically French.32 Their use of paillot tended, furthermore, to cue stereotypic associations with wealth and with living in central or southern Marseille, as the following two examples indicate. Thus, one day at the ice-rink in a southern arrondissement, Sheyreen and two other girls from Class 3B looked on as two teens skated and spun at the center of the rink. Sheyreen offered in French, “it’s the paillot families that can afford ice-skating classes.” To make sure I understood, she then glossed her use of paillot with “les françaouis” [lɛ ʁəˈsawi], using one of the words for French person in North African varieties of Arabic [fɪɾˈsaw] but adding a French article and French

32 The term paillot is more widely used than just in La Castellane. That said, the diasporic youth I taught in the central districts used the term bodge in lieu of paillot. Bodge appears to have approximately the same scope of reference.
plural morphology. With this gloss, Sheyreen made it apparent that paillot involved an Arabic-speaking person’s perspective on ethnically French people. A second example demonstrates how youth consider paillots to be, in addition to better off than diasporic Marseillais, also less likely to live in the housing projects. Hence during an afternoon chat at my apartment, a student named Soumia was speaking with me and some girlfriends about how La Castellane was primarily meant for people without means—but also people with bleds. She mused, “I once heard there was an older French lady (femme française) living in my tower but I’ve never actually seen her.” These anecdotes speak to youth’s conception of these opposing identities in intersectional (Crenshaw, 1992) terms. While being a diasporic Marseillais subsumes a geographic location to the North, being working-class or poor, and having bled origins (or being of color), so, too, does being a paillot Marseillais, according to the diasporic youth I polled at least, involve living in Southern Marseille, being middle or upper class, and being bled-less (or white).

Insofar as youth from Class 3B defined their diasporic identity in a manner that additionally invoked ethnicity and class, I witnessed youth engaging in interesting manipulations of other sister categories, like “Muslim” or “Arab.” One took place at the public school on the special day of the school calendar known as “Language Day,” where each language class invites outsiders into their
classroom to learn about the language they are learning. In front of an audience of students, parents, and administrators, a student from Class 3B explained that “our MSA class is for les arabes.” Madame Chérif shot the student an amiable wink lest she go on portraying the class as an ethnic ghetto for Arabs only, and she looked as though she was jotting a mental note to herself to address the student’s misunderstanding at a later time. On an afternoon later that week, Madame Chérif gathered the students’ attention and opened the floor to a discussion of what unified the students of the class, whether it was in fact being Arab or perhaps their Muslim upbringing. To her surprise, students in the class were in agreement that Arabs and Muslims were the same. “There is no difference. All Muslims are Arab and all Arabs are Muslims,” explained one student. At this point, Madame Chérif looked incredulously at Kardiatou, whose parents are Senegalese Pulaars, and Nacima, whose parents are from Grande Comore. She asked the class to meditate on how these two students were from Muslim but non-ethnically Arab families, but to little avail. The students appeared to be thinking about what it meant to be Arabe from a different, project-centric perspective. Unlike other instances where I saw the label Arabe being used to specifically point out an individual’s Arab ethnic heritage, in this instance Arabe served as something other than an ethnonym.
The following case-in-point demonstrates how *Arabe* can also serve as a placeholder for the diasporic Marseillais identity, which is to say being working-class and having ties to a *bled*, any *bled*. In a more centrally located community center, I was party to a conversation between a group of 14-year old girls. Four of them had Arab parents and the other three did not. The issue was for the four girls to find the appropriate label for the three seemingly white girls in their midst. It was decided that Cloë and Mado, who were born to French parents and were middle-class, lacked origins and were hence *paillot*. Antonia, who looked no less white than Cloë and Mado, was by contrast judged “*une Arabe* like us.”

Significantly for the arbitrating girls, Antonia not only grew up in State-subsidized housing (*HLMs*) and knew the right gab, but she also had a *bled*. She had two *bleds*, to be precise, her mother being Romani and her father Polish. The group determined, further, that Antonia was as *Arabe* as Dalila was *paillot*. Dalila was the 25-year old organizer for their outings, and both her parents are Algerian. The girls felt, however, that on account of her higher economic means and purely French way of talking, Dalila did not qualify as *une Arabe*.

In both the case of Kardiatou and Nacima from Class 3B, and that of Antonia and Dalila from the community center, narrower categories like *musulman* (Muslim), *Arabe* (Arab), and *paillot* (ethnically French) were deployed in unexpected ways. This flexible deployment owed to the adjudication of these
young people’s identities with respect to the umbrella category of being diasporic, and the class and bled dimensions this category entails within Northern Marseille. Within that category, it was of vanishing importance whether Kardiatou and Nacima’s parents were from Senegal and the Comoros, or Antonia’s were from Romania and Poland. As long as these young women were tied to a bled and the working class, they could claim status as diasporic youth within Marseille. Arabe could, in this sense, be used in this setting synonymously with diasporic or pan-ethnic status. Hall’s (1992) remarks that, depending on how ethnicity is constructed under particular historical conditions, ethnic categories may grow to absorb other categories of shared experience, seem quite à propos in this regard. If, conversely, one has a bled but is from a different class background or does not speak like the projects, as in Dalila’s case, failure to meet the minimum requirements of the diasporic experience in Marseille, or failure to be Arabe in the second sense outlined here, can lead to one being positioned as white-washed.

Before turning to language, a final dimension of the shared experience of youth from La Castellane, which also begs discussion, is Islam. As intimated above, being Muslim was also part of being a diasporan from Marseille. Of the twenty students in Class 3B, all self-identified as “musulman” when asked about their religion. How they lived their religion, however, was tied into social life in
La Castellane and La Bricarde. The students’ practice of Islam involved mainly observing three principal traditions. They celebrated Muslim holidays, particularly the Ramadan fast, did not eat pork, and avoided alcohol. In observing these rites, they nevertheless tolerated a bit of flexibility. During Ramadan, for example, although they fasted youth paid no more heed to prayer times than during the rest of the year. Likewise, while all stayed away from pork, eating religiously sanctioned (or *ḥalāl*) meat was often bracketed for convenience’s—or hunger’s—sake. I often ate with the students in the fast food shops at the nearby mall, and none seemed concerned that the hamburgers were not *ḥalāl*. Lastly, it was, and especially for the boys, not beyond the scope of possibility to drink an occasional beer. Islamic obligations beyond these big three, including such practices as prayer and rules of dress, were largely dispensed with, and this choice did not seem to overly burden the students’ consciences.

In fact, students would often advertise their nominal form of Islam, or modicum of religious practice, in Madame Chérif’s class. This took the form of students mocking religious expressions in MSA, which the students were well aware had the duplex quality of being both the sacred language of Islam and the secular target language for their instruction. When for example one day Madame Chérif asked the class “How do we say ‘my big sister’ [in MSA]?,” Nacima
retorted with a loud “Allahu Akbar! [MSA. ‘God is great’],” playing on the correct answer’s use of the same elative structure (MSA. *ukhtī al-akbar*). Likewise, no scheduling of the homework or an exam ensued without a great number of students pointing out the hoped-for contingency of such dates with exclamations of “*In Shā Allah! In Shā Allah!*” (MSA. ‘If God wills it’). Yet another student’s favorite retort to her peers when she was being called out for being disruptive was to silence them with the religiously loaded, “*Shaytān!*,” or ‘devil’ in MSA. Students looked forward, nevertheless, to the time spent with their families and friends during Ramadan, and happily took days off from school for Islamic holidays not observed in the French school calendar. This shared commitment to upholding the Islamic faith, if minimally, contributed to the feelings of solidarity among the inhabitants of the 16th arrondissement’s projects that I describe below.

The diasporic Marseillais identity documented thus far is summed up, in the words of Class 3B students, as “*être du quartier,*” or being from the projects. Above and beyond having a *bled*, being working class, and keeping with some of the Islamic pillars, this identity is also something youth sensed in their interactions around the 16th arrondissement. More specifically, youth from Class 3B relayed the belief that interactions within the projects were marked by a sort of tough love. For instance, when asked where he wanted to live as an adult
Mohamed from Class 3B emphasized the importance of staying in the quartier where his Moroccan parents raised him: “That way my son has a project upbringing (l’éducation quartiers)... He won’t let anybody mess with him... A project upbringing means he is tough, that he’s scared of nobody.”

Oussama, too, wanted to stay in La Castellane: “I’ll always stay here because it’s where I grew up, in La Castellane. And people are sociable, solidary.”

According to these young men, increased strength of character and community solidarity were worthy prizes for toughing it out in Northern Marseille’s projects. In another interaction, this time with a young taximan raised in the 16th by East African parents, Northern Marseille was described as having a “certain ambiance.” The young man recalled “rocky living conditions,” when for example his single mother struggled to put meals together for him and his siblings at the end of the month. This was coupled with a feeling of attachment or indebtedness to the projects as well, however: “Even when we have almost nothing, we are still happy to be in Marseille... It’s still a paradise. It remains a little paradise (un petit paradis) regardless.”

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33 “Comme ça mon fils il a-du-il a l’éducation quartiers. (…) Il se laisse pas faire. L’éducation de quartier c’est il est dur, il a peur de personne” (Mohamed, 4.2.13).

34 “Moi je veux vivre à Marseille parce que c’est là où j’ai grandi, à La Castellane. Et les gens sont sociables, solidaires” (Oussama, 4.2.13).

35 “C’est Marseille, il y a quand même une certaine ambience qui fait que même si on a presque rien on est quand même contents d’être à Marseille (...). Ça reste un paradis. Ça reste un petit paradis quand même Marseille” (Taxi driver, 4.8.13).
This mantra of tough love also manifested in a common family metaphor youth used to talk about *quartiers* interactions. One day, during a walk with several students down the main thoroughfare of La Castellane, I observed an exchange between Nacima, whose parents are Maorese, and a 20-year old *guetteur*, a scout paid to make sure drug sales run smoothly and alert higher-ranking others to the presence of the police in the project. Though he did not know her well, the *guetteur* recognized Nacima and greeted her with “ça va ma fille [fɪjə]?” (‘how are you my daughter?’), appending the word-final schwa of the project’s youth vernacular to the word “daughter.” Nacima was obviously pleased at her interaction with the young man but chagrined that it had to take place in front of her girlfriends. A young woman of Comorian descent, Rouqiya, helped her out by playing down the interaction to the group. Rouqiya explained to me in a voice loud enough for the others to hear: “Everyone knows and watches out for everybody else in La Castellane. It’s the capital of all *bleds*.\(^{36}\) As shown by this anecdote, Castellane residents recognized the project’s designated role in reuniting the people in Marseille who have *bled* ties. Rouqiya, for one, indicated that if there existed an imaginary nation reconstituted from the home countries of all of Marseille’s immigrants, then Marseille would be its diasporic

\(^{36}\) “Tout le monde se connait et veille sur les autres à La Castellane. C’est la capitale de tous les *bleds*” (Rouqiya, 4.11.13).
capital. The residents of La Castellane, as such, modeled their interactions with one another, both passing and more intimate, after ones between kin. Although they were joined by *bled* rather than blood, the step to create of the projects a metaphoric family affirmed residents’ intention to combat poverty through solidarity. In the second subsection, I address the kind of language youth have created to reflect these experiences of growing up in the housing projects of Marseille’s 16th *arrondissement*.

*Castellanois and Syncretic Linguistic Interference*

At the beginning of this section, I introduced *Castellanois* as the French syncretic register, in Agha’s (2007a) sense, youth from La Castellane used to cue their belonging to Marseille’s northern housing projects. Here I will describe this register, and its use and evaluation, in more detail. As per Agha (2007a), registers are social formations that often involve language but may also include other modalities of human behavior. To signal this multi-modal aspect, Agha also refers to “registers of conduct” or “semiotic registers.” He defines a register, thus, as “a repertoire of performable signs linked to stereotypic pragmatic effects by a sociohistorical process of enregisterment” (p. 80). This definition encloses

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37 Although I became most familiar with La Castellane and, hence, foreground the way young Castellaners term their speech (“*Castellanois*”), students in Class 3B who were from La Bricarde housing project also participated in this register. I use the term *Castellanois* because the students called it thus, but it could just as well have been called *Bricardois*. 

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the three dimensions of register organization he proposes. The first dimension is
the forms or signs, linguistic and para- or non-linguistic (e.g., gesture, bodily
hexis, clothing, etc.), that constitute the register’s “repertoire” (Agha, 2007a, p.
169). The second dimension, “social range” (p. 169), is the range of pragmatic
or social uses to which such forms can be put. As the definition above indicates,
the register’s forms acquire pragmatic effects only through their repeated linking
to social types. This linking takes place over time and itself constitutes a sphere
of discursive activity in which people comment on social life and its significance,
what M. Silverstein (1979, p. 209) has called “ethnometapragmatics,” and Lucy
(1992), language’s “reflexive activity” (p. 11). The third dimension, “social
domain” (Agha, 2007a, p. 169), is the demographics of the register. Who uses
it? Who cannot use it but can recognize it, although they may ascribe different
values to its use? For whom is the register outside the scope of recognition? I
discuss these dimensions of Castellanois below in order to arrive at a more
comprehensive picture of the register’s “total linguistic fact,” comprising form,
use, ideology, and domain (M. Silverstein, 1985a; Wortham, 2008).

Perhaps like most registers, speaking Castellanois in order to index oneself
as a quartiers youth is primarily an act of self-versus-other positioning. As Said
(1978) argued in the context of the West’s construction of the “Oriental” East,
self-concepts are “made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly
identification of the Other” (Said, 2003 [1978], xvii). Lo and Reyes (2004, p. 118), too, speak of the “relational unfoldings of identity” as Americans tangle with one another. They write that, “there is no Asian Pacific American without Caucasian American, no African American without Latino, no self without the other” (p. 118). Through the following vignettes, it becomes apparent that the type of linguistic syncretism the students of Class 3B have created, namely, between Marseille’s working-class vernacular and dialectal varieties of Arabic, is first and foremost an effort to affirm their own diasporic project identity, while also carefully setting themselves apart from the first-generation immigrants from the bled and the paillots with whom they might be confused.

Transcript 3.1 serves as an initial foray into Castellanois. This transcript is drawn from a longer video interview I held with three female students from Class 3B towards the end of the school year. By this time, I had spent two semesters in their company, both in and outside of school, and they were confident I knew enough about them to understand their linguistic playfulness. Before the transcribed segment, I was asking Soumia, Samia, and Asma about how they would characterize their own speech in reference to other people’s speech. To answer my question, the young women produced three different pronunciations of the French word “midi,” or ‘noon.’ The first is their attempt to say midi in Standard French, with an alveolar [d]. To understand the meaning of
this form, it is important to preface that the students associated speaking Standard French with people from Paris, on the one hand, and with ethnically French paillots who live in Central and Southern Marseille, on the other. For instance, earlier in the year, Sheyreen had drawn the following verbal map of language use for me. She compares people who speak in “o,” or use Standard French and its word-final phonology, to people like herself who speak in “eng,” her way of capturing the word-final phonology of Castellanois.

“Downtown, they have a weird kind of accent. It’s kind of like the Parisians too. They talk in ‘o’ [õ]. ‘Comment [kəmõ] ça va?’ They all talk in ‘o’ [õ], like pourquoi [puskwõ], comment [kɔmõ]. All the syllables with “eng” [æŋ] are transformed into “o” [õ].”

Indeed, one of the particularly salient differences between Standard French and the strongly Marseillais way these youth speak is the transformation of Standard French’s word-finals nasalized vowels into vowel plus velar nasal /ŋ/. Above, Sheyreen likewise locates people who speak in “o” in Paris and in “downtown” Marseille. To return to the transcript at hand, the second iteration of midi given by the three girls is the Castellanois pronunciation, with a post-alveolar affricate [ʤ]. Soumia offers this pronunciation as an example of her own way of saying midi. The third pronunciation of midi, with a dental [d̪], is the students’ imitation of the way their first-generation parents pronounce the word,

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influenced no doubt by Arabic dialectal speakers’ tendency to produce a dental 
[ḍ] before high, front vowels. Aside from brief excursions into voicing the paillot 
(e.g., [midi]) and the first-generation speaker of French (e.g., [miːdi]), the three 
girls carry out the conversation mainly in Castellanois. I have bolded its 
characteristic phonetic features in the French-language transcript to direct the 
reader’s attention, and I continue to do so throughout the remainder of the 
transcripts in this chapter.

Transcript 3.1.39 Midi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Transcription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: On peut pas dire [dʒiːzi] midi [midi]</td>
<td>Soumia: We can’t say midi [midi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asma: Midi [midi]</td>
<td>Asma: [midi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: Midi[midi]</td>
<td>Soumia: [midi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: Mide [mide]</td>
<td>Samia: [mide]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: J’arrive pas!</td>
<td>Soumia: I can’t do it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: Midji [midjɪ]</td>
<td>Soumia: [midjɪ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: On dit [djɪ] midji [midjɪ]</td>
<td>Samia: We say [midjɪ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asma: Midji [midjɪ]</td>
<td>Asma: [midjɪ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: Midji [mi:djɪ]</td>
<td>Samia: [mi:djɪ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asma: Midi [midi]</td>
<td>Asma: [midi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: Mon père il dit midi [miːdi]</td>
<td>Soumia: My dad says [miːdi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: Mon père aussi! Mon père aussi il dit midi [miːdi]...midi [miːdi]</td>
<td>Samia: My dad too! My dad says it too [miːdi]... [miːdi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: Et akhé [ɑχɛ] quand il me dit “il est quelle heure?” et je dis [djɪ] “midji [miːdjɪ]” hein, il se moque de moi.</td>
<td>Soumia: And akhé [ɑχɛ] (‘then’) when he asks me “what time is it?” and I say “[miːdjɪ]” hah he makes fun of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: Il dit “Non! C’est midi [miːdɪ]!” ((giggling))</td>
<td>Samia: He says “No! C’est [miːdɪ]!” ((giggling))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Pourquoi il se moque de toi?</td>
<td>Cécile: Why does he make fun of you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

39 This video clip dates from 5.30.13.
In this transcript, Soumia, Samia, and Asma manifest their greater alignment to the identity indexed by the Castellanois pronunciation of midi than to either of the two personas cued by midi’s other pronunciations. They, for instance, affirm their difference from paillots by claiming inability to pronounce the word with an alveolar [d]—even as they are, in fact, pronouncing it. The way their first-generation parents pronounce midi with a dental [d̪], by contrast, strikes them as amusing. Unlike the paillot pronunciation, however, they do not claim inability to pronounce midi like their parents. This stance-taking unfolds entirely through these three young women’s remarkable orientation to phonetic detail. Their awareness of minute, indeed allophonic, variations in sound suggests that these particular forms have already become “enregistered” (Agha, 2005) in group-centric ways, along with others, as indicative of social types like the paillot or the first-generation immigrant. The social type of the project youth, and its association with the affrication of /d/, also appears to have some measure of social recognition beyond its domain of speakers. Although not a
speaker of Castellanois, Soumia’s father understands his daughter’s pronunciation of midi to be, not simply Marseillais, but heavy-handedly so ("trop accent marseillais"). That he judges an additional social element, beyond being just Marseillais, to inhere in his daughter’s use of affrication or palatalization is telling. Likely familiar with the host of features that characterizes his daughter’s register, Soumia’s father knows that, when used jointly, they index the laminated identity of being both from Marseille and diasporic.

A quick glance at the bolded features in Table 3.1 reveals Castellanois’ greater proximity to Marseille’s historical vernacular than to Standard French. Before youth from La Castellane began affricating, Marseillais of varying class and cultural backgrounds had been palatalizing their stop consonants before /i/ and /u/ for many decades (Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013). Another mainstay of Marseille’s historical vernacular that also appears in Castellanois is the realization of Standard French /o/ as [ɔ], as in trop ("too much") below. Castellanois also differs in its forms from Standard French and Marseille’s vernacular. Its speakers, for example, use a greater intensity of affrication, realize French “r” as Arabic-sourced fricative [χ], borrow words from Arabic varieties (e.g., za’ama [zaʔma] Algerian discourse marker ‘like’), or else invent new French but Arabic-sounding words (e.g., axé [aχɛ], ‘then’). Sheyreen, ever the lucid language critic, explained during an afternoon visit to my apartment that youth from the
16th *arrondissement* speak like the South of France, “only project version” (*mais en version quartier, 10.29.12)*.

**Table 3.1.** Marseille’s Sociolinguistic Landscape from Youth’s Point of View (Examples from Transcript 3.1)\(^{40}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Speech Register</th>
<th>Standard French</th>
<th>Marseille’s Historical Vernacular</th>
<th>Castellanois</th>
<th>L2 French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indexed Social Persona</td>
<td>The well-off <em>paillot</em> from Marseille, the Parisian</td>
<td>White, working-class Marseillais</td>
<td>Diasporic Marseillais youth</td>
<td>First-generation immigrant from the <em>bled</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repertoire of Forms</td>
<td>midi “midday” (alveolar or pre-alveolar [d])</td>
<td>midi/midʒi</td>
<td>midʒi (voiced post-alveolar affricate)</td>
<td>midʒi (dental [d] &lt; dialectal Arabic/MSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ɑ̃ʁε “after” (voiced uvular fricative)</td>
<td>ɑ̃ʁε</td>
<td>ɔ̃ʁε ‘then’ (voiceless uvular fricative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maʁsεje “Marseillais” (voiced uvular fricative)</td>
<td>maʁsεje</td>
<td>maʁsεje (voiceless uvular fricative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tʁo “too much” (voiceless uvular fricative, closed mid-back V)</td>
<td>tʁɔ</td>
<td>tʁɔ (voiceless uvular fricative, open mid-back V)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, these students’ *Castellanois* does, in effect, use several phonetic features characteristic of a broad Marseillais accent, including the velar nasal /ŋ/ syllable-finally, word-final schwa, an opened rounded back vowel /ɔ/.

\(^{40}\) Bolding in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 indicates features of interest, not necessarily *Castellanois* features.
where in Standard French it would be closed, and left dislocation of an object or adverb (e.g., "toujours je fais ça, “I always do that”). It is the very features that occur in Castellanois and not in the Marseille vernacular, however, which serve to invest it with its singular indexicality. These include the substitution of the uvular voiced fricative /χ/ for Standard French uvular voiceless fricative /ʁ/ in most environments, the heavy affrication of dental stops before front vowels /i, ε/ and back vowel /u/, the insertion of Maghrebi Arabic (and occasionally, Comorian, Romani, etc.) lexemes and discourse markers, and the creation of new “Arabic-sounding” words (e.g., "ham-ham [hamham], ‘slut’"). It follows, of course, that although Castellanois and Marseille’s vernacular partially overlap in repertoire, any single form of Castellanois does not have the same pragmatic effect or social range as the corresponding form in Marseille’s historical vernacular. An instance of affrication in Castellanois would evoke the diasporic project dweller to someone acquainted with it, whereas affrication in Marseille’s historical vernacular would index the working-class, ethnically French fisherman mode of life depicted for example in the œuvre of cinematographer and author Marcel Pagnol, 1895-1974 (Binisti & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2003).⁴¹

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⁴¹ Gasquet-Cyrus (2013) reports, quite interestingly, that since the 2000s palatalization and affrication have become increasingly associated within Marseille with how youth from the Northern Quarters talk and less linked to Marseille’s vernacular. Were this kind of form in question, then, its indexicality would likely depend on the speaker’s other behavior.
Transcript 3.2 offers an example of the non-identity—in pragmatic terms—of homophonous forms shared by Standard French, Marseille’s vernacular, and Castellanois. In this video excerpt, three young women from Class 3B and I are brainstorming names that are typical of first-generation immigrants, whom the students stereotypically call clados.42 Halfway into the transcript, Samia and Soumia begin talking about how they dislike the bled pronunciation of their names, with first-syllable stress and three syllables (see right-most column in Table 3.2). They prefer the Castellanois pronunciation of their names, with second-syllable stress and two syllables (see Castellanois column below). Samia is also worried, however, that due to homophonous pronunciations of her name between Castellanois, Standard French, and Marseille’s vernacular, people might mistakenly take her preferred pronunciation to mean she belongs to one of these other groups, rather than to La Castellane.

42 Section IV deals specifically with the social figure of the clando.
### Table 3.2. Examples of Register Forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Speech</th>
<th>Standard French</th>
<th>Marseille’s Vernacular</th>
<th>Castellanois</th>
<th>L2 French (Native Arabic Speaker)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example Forms</td>
<td>sa-’mja: ‘Samia’</td>
<td>= sa-’mja:</td>
<td>= sa-’mja:</td>
<td>’sa:-mi-ja (long [a], 1st σ stress, trisyllabic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(short [a], stress on 2nd σ, disyllabic)</td>
<td>(short [a], stress on 2nd σ, disyllabic)</td>
<td>(short [a], stress on 2nd σ, disyllabic)</td>
<td>(long [u], 1st σ stress, trisyllabic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>su-’mja: ‘Soumia’</td>
<td>= su-’mja:</td>
<td>= su-’mja:</td>
<td>= su-’mja:</td>
<td>’su:-mi-ja (long [u], 1st σ stress, trisyllabic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(short [u], stress on 2nd σ, disyllabic)</td>
<td>(short [u], stress on 2nd σ, disyllabic)</td>
<td>(short [u], stress on 2nd σ, disyllabic)</td>
<td>(long [u], 1st σ stress, trisyllabic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transcript 3.2. Soumia and Samia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: ((laughing)) Zulikha [zuliɣa]</td>
<td>Soumia: ((laughing)) Zulikha [zuliɣa]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia &amp; Asma: Zulikha [zuliɣa]!</td>
<td>Samia &amp; Asma: Zulikha [zuliɣa]!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: Ça c’est un nom qui fout le-</td>
<td>Samia: It’s a name that screws shit u-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: Tranquille [tʁɑ̃kilə] Mais putain [prta], ça va aller dans le video</td>
<td>Soumia: Chill! Crap, that’s going on the video Cécile: And why exactly are these clando names?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Et pourquoi ce sont des noms clando en fait?</td>
<td>Cécile: They’re names that make you...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: Chez pa::s... Zulikha [zuliɣa]</td>
<td>Samia: Noticeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asma: Non, c’est pas des noms clando. C’est-</td>
<td>Asma: No, they’re not clando names. The-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: -C’est pas des noms clando. C’est des noms qui fait chauffer quoi</td>
<td>Samia: They’re not clando names. They’re names that make you stand out y’know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: C’est des noms qui font...?</td>
<td>Cécile: They’re names that make you...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asma: Remarquer</td>
<td>Asma: Noticeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: Chauffer</td>
<td>Soumia: Stand out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: Chauffer</td>
<td>Samia: Stand out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Chauffer ça veut dire quoi?</td>
<td>Cécile: What does “stand out” mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia, Asma, Soumia: Remarquer</td>
<td>Samia, Asma, Soumia: To be noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Mmm mmm mmm</td>
<td>Cécile: Mmm mmm mmm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumia: Bon, moi je parle pas parce que mon prénom est un peu aussi [ɔsi]-</td>
<td>Soumia: We::ll, I shouldn’t talk because my name is a bit like that too-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samia: -Ouais moi je-j’aime pas au lieu de-les gens les Arabes et tou:t au bled... Ici ils disent Samia ['sa:-mja]. ((pause indicating she is now talking about the bled)) ‘Sa:::m-i-ya ['sa:::-mi-ja]. Ils disent toujours “i”</td>
<td>Samia: -Yeah I-I do-don’t like it when people-Arabs and all in the bled... Here they say Samia ['sa:-mja]. ((pause indicating she is now talking about the bled)) ‘Sa:::m-i-ya ['sa:::-mi-ja]. They always say the “i”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Samia’s head gesture is key to understanding how homophony in forms may not be identity at the level of pragmatics. Like Kader and Nasser from the initial anecdotes of the chapter, Samia prefers her name pronounced in *Castellanois*, with French stress and vowel length. Meanwhile, she acknowledges that there may be more affluent diasporic people in Marseille who, to indicate that class belonging, pronounce their own Arabic-sourced names in Standard French. Samia’s head wag shows her negative stance on uppity people of that sort. Possible confusions notwithstanding, Samia continues to prefer her name pronounced like in La Castellane: “Here, they say Samia [sa-'mja].” This transcript likewise allows a second glance at some of *Castellanois*’ characteristic forms, bolded in the original French text. As before, there is affrication of /d/ and /t/ (e.g., tu > [tʃy], dire > [dʒiχ]) and use of the open-mid back vowel /ɔ/
(e.g., oṣi > [ɔsɪ], d̪ʁɔl > [d̪ɔl]). The velar nasal also appears in lieu of a
nasalized word-final vowel (e.g., [pyʁəŋ], and French /ʁ/ is consistently replaced
with Arabic-sourced /χ/ (e.g., ṭrāki:l > [tχəŋkilə]).

I turn now to discussing linguistic syncretism in greater depth. Why have
youth from La Castellane created and made of Castellanois, specifically, a vehicle
for expressing their diasporic Marseillais identity? The majority of students in
Class 3B grew up exposed to both Marseille’s vernacular and dialectal Arabic
varieties. As such, they were particularly well positioned to exploit their
knowledge of both of these linguistic systems. Kurylowicz (1964, p. 40) defines
linguistic syncretism as “the suppression of a relevant opposition under certain
determined conditions.” Hill and Hill (1986), and later Woolard (1999), would
draw upon this definition in their further elaboration of linguistic syncretism.
Hill and Hill (1986) contribute the insight that bilingual speakers may
compromise the usual degree of separation between two linguistic systems for
an express cultural purpose of their own making. Woolard (1999), in turn,
creates a typology of linguistic syncretism in which she includes the phenomena
of bivalency, interference, and code-switching. These three linguistic phenomena
have in common that they take place in bilinguals’ communication and involve
“live, unresolved copresences” between two (or more) languages, thus allowing
speakers to “thrive in their tense intersection” (pp. 5-6). Castellanois is a register
that is characterized by a high degree of the interference type of syncretism, and below I will suggest some possible social functions for such interference phenomena.

Interference, as per Haugen’s (1956) early definition, represents a kind of “linguistic overlap” whereby bilinguals apply their two linguistic systems to a single linguistic form (p. 50). Woolard (1999) develops this idea, identifying interference as the special case of linguistic syncretism when a speaker actively selects both languages at once by drawing on their respective systems, often at differing levels of language (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax, prosody). Unlike the bivalent type of syncretism, where bilinguals deploy words or sounds that “could ‘belong’ equally...to both codes” and are hence ultimately decided based on the listener’s viewpoint (p. 7), speakers who engage in the interference type of syncretism find ways of choosing both languages at once in order not to have to settle on either alone. Hill and Hill (1986) provide examples of interference from their research with Mexicano (Nahuatl) and Spanish bilinguals in the Malinche Volcano region of Central Mexico. Mexicanos, for example, use the expression “sus personitas de ustedes” to mean “your respected persons” (p. 196). Although the expression appears Spanish and looks as though it employs a regular Spanish diminutive, the form personitas in fact represents a calque from Mexicano honorific morpheme -itas. Hill and Hill (1986) argue that this and
other instances of interference in their data capture the desire of certain Mexicano-Spanish bilinguals to put on an authentic or legitimate Mexicano persona. When speaking in Spanish, such individuals nativize the European language’s phonology, morphology, syntax, and prosody, thus taking on the “Mexicano accent in Spanish” that will effectively convey their purist persona (p. 198).

Below, I enumerate and analyze various examples I observed of youth doing interference between Marseille’s vernacular and dialectal varieties of Arabic. Involving the consistent overlap of these varieties at some level of language, these examples reveal Castellanois to be a “double-voiced” register, in Bakhtin’s (1984, p. 189) sense. Bakhtin coined the term double-voicing to capture how certain linguistic texts are uttered or written from more than one perspective, or voice. He found that double-voicing was in fact an utterance-specific manifestation of the more general condition of the speech community he called “heteroglossia” (1981, p. 272) or its composition by many voices in tension with one another. Since Bakhtin, a handful of ethnographers and linguists have shown how actual linguistic varieties characteristic of a social group, or “registers” in the technical sense already given, may also be double-voiced. Urciuoli (1996), for instance, studied English-Puerto Rican Spanish syncretism in the “ordinary bilingual speech” of Puerto Rican-Americans in New
York (p. 35). Meanwhile, Meeuwis and Blommaert’s (1998) pieced together that immigrants to Belgium from the Democratic Republic of Congo were using Lingala-French and Swahili-French as monolectal, unmarked codes. Eisenlohr (2006), too, investigated how Hindu Mauritians shifted between two linguistically syncretic voices, creole fransise and a purist Bhojpuri mixed with Hindi. These ethnographies have demonstrated that two (or more) linguistic codes may be jointly enregistered as indicative of one social identity. This kind of lamination between codes looks “diverse” at the level of practices but, at the level of ideologies about speaker types, coheres into a single, double-voiced persona. Castellanois represents yet another instance of these “hybrid social voices” (Agha, 2009, p. 254) and is perhaps best thought of as the coloration of French with dialectal Arabic. Interestingly, moreover, it appears that, so intimately have Castellanois’ forms been associated with the social identity of the diasporic project youth that the mere insertion of a Castellanois form, even into a language like MSA or English, can cue the same identity. In other words, due to the enregisterment of a particular social range for Castellanois linguistic forms, youth from La Castellane are able to gesture to their identity within multiple languages. This holding steady of identity across languages presents an interesting comparison case to research showing that bilinguals differ in how
they express their identity, depending on the language in which they are speaking (Koven, 2004).

The following example demonstrates how youth draw upon their knowledge of Marseille’s vernacular, in effect the matrix language for Castellanois, when looking for places to interpose Arabic-sourced elements. Thus, during an MSA lesson in which Madame Chérif was introducing new vocabulary, she brought up the MSA words ustādh and ustādhah, male and female teacher, respectively. She began with, “What is the meaning of ustādh?” (ما ماعنى أستاذ؟), to which the students collectively replied “professeur!,” or teacher in French. She then asked the same question, only with ustādhah (آستاذة), emphasizing the feminine singular morpheme, -ah, at the end. Surprised to see the student named Sabrina uncharacteristically raising her hand, Madame Chérif called on her. Sabrina drawled: “Ça veut dire professeuse [sa vœ ðʒiʃ prɔfɛsœ:wa]” (‘it means teacheresse’). Sabrina’s sentence begins with a subject and verb that could equally have belonged to Standard French. The latter two forms, “dire professeuse” (‘means teacheresse’), could only be read as Castellanois, however. These forms display several kinds of interference, both morphological and phonological. From the morphological standpoint, Sabrina brought the incorrect French feminine morpheme (-euse) to bear on the word for teacher. Sabrina, seeking to highlight the feminine semantics of the MSA word ustādhah, had likely found the
correct French feminine morpheme, -e, unfitting due to its non-pronunciation in *professeure*. She thus borrowed from French another more evidently feminine morpheme, -euse. The effect was to create a fictive but French-sounding calque of the MSA word for female teacher. Rendered in *Castellanois* phonology, both her calque and the preceding infinitive verb *dire* brandish the typically Marseillais features of affrication (e.g., Standard French *[diʁ]* > *[ʤiʁ]*) and the realization of /o/ as [ɔ] (e.g., Standard French *[profɛɾe]* > *[χρfɛɾe:ʁ]z*). In both *dire* and *professeuse* Sabrina likewise substitutes the two French ‘r’s’ /ʁ/ for Arabic-sourced [χ] (e.g., *[χɛɾfɛɾe:ʁ]z*). As if to corroborate Soumia’s father’s remark about *Castellanois* being heavy-handedly Marseillais (c.f., Transcript 3.1), Sabrina also exaggerates [œ] by lengthening it and latching on an atypical [w] to heighten its roundedness. Her entire sentence now reads as one in *Castellanois*. Like slang varieties more generally (Agha, in press), a key feature of *Castellanois* is that its utterances resemble Standard French or Marseille’s vernacular, but only fractionally so.

As apparent from this analysis, what distinguishes *Castellanois*’ repertoire is a partial resemblance to these other two varieties but also, quite importantly, interference from Arabic phonology. This interference is an active one, as Woolard (1999) has argued. Woolard reuses the term interference in Haugen’s (1956) sense, meaning not the unwilling intrusion of one’s first language into
one’s second language, but how bilinguals can expressively deploy both their languages jointly in order to assume particular cultural stances. In their complementary work on Chicano English, another second-generation linguistic register, both Bills (1977) and Fought (1997) submit that Chicano English is not American Latino youth’s learner variety of English, interfered with by their knowledge of Spanish. Many of its speakers, Fought (1997) reminds the reader, do not in fact speak Spanish. Rather, Chicano English represents a “vernacular” (Bills, 1977) or a “dialect” (Fought, 1997), meaning a form of speech whose combination of California Anglo varieties and Mexican Spanish is mainly culturally elaborated. Castellanois is similar to Chicano English in at least two respects. First, youth from La Castellane had a regional variety of Arabic as a first language only very rarely. Perhaps two of the students, Kader and Siwar, spoke fluent Algerian and Tunisian, respectively. Second, youth from families that were not Arab also spoke Castellanois to claim project status. These two dynamics argue strongly in favor of categorizing Castellanois as a variety youth produce for its distinct cultural relevance, much of which owes to active interference phenomena. As demonstrated by Sabrina’s utterance, Castellanois syncretically joins two varieties and so, in a sense, adheres to neither one fully. The examples of interference in Table 3, below, show a similar tendency.
Table 3.3 collects examples of Castellanois expressions, including a
discourse marker, a vocative, verbs, adjectives, and nouns, that are used by
students from Class 3B in syntactically French contexts. They all, however,
display a measure of Arabic phonological influence, showcasing consonants
like /χ/ and pharyngeal /h/, and also the back vowel /a/, each existent in
varieties of Arabic. Although such expressions might bring up associations of
“Arabic” in the minds of French speakers unfamiliar with the language (c.f.,
Chapter Two), they do not in fact evince any ties to Arabic varieties’ lexicons.
The one exception is l-hala, which has an etymological cousin in [l-ha:la:],
‘celebration’ in North African varieties of Arabic. This form, which also exists in
other youthful varieties of French (c.f., Caubet, 2007), nevertheless departs from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Castellanois Examples of Interference (in IPA)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɑχχε ‘then’ (discourse marker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɑχα ‘careful!’ (vocative call for attention)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ðʒoh/χ ‘to annoy’ (e.g., tu djeuh [ʧy ðʒoh = you’re
  pissing me off; djeuhman ‘an annoying person’) |
| χεnε ‘to be uncool’ (e.g., ce filme etait khéné = that
  movie was uncool)                             |
| ham-ham ‘a slut’ (e.g., cette fille est une ham-ham =
  that girl is easy)                            |
| ha:s ‘a crisis’ (e.g., c’est la hasse = it’s trouble) |
| l-ha:la ‘trouble’ (e.g., arrête de faire l-hala = stop
  acting up)                                    |
its etymological source insofar as young Castellaners depharyngealize the “h” and have degenerated its meaning to ‘trouble.’ I will elaborate on one of these examples in order to show how elements at various levels of linguistic organization, and from both Marseille’s vernacular and dialectal varieties of Arabic, converge in these forms.

Figure 3.2. “Soumia Tu Djeuh”

On a class day when Madame Chérif had to briefly excuse herself to speak with someone in the hallway, a student named Soumia began doodling on the chalkboard. One of the male students told her, Soumia tu djeuh [su-'mja: tʃy dʒəh] (‘Soumia, you’re annoying), affricating the “t” in tu [tʃy] and the “d” of djeuh [dʒəh] and emphasizing the pharyngeal “h” at the end (c.f., Figure 3.2). Soumia, as if to avenge herself, took to writing Mohamed’s complaint out on the board. Soumia wrote what Mohamed had said, first in French, then in MSA. Although she did not orthographically render Mohamed’s affrication of stops in either her French or MSA sentences, her tidy MSA version of Soumia did in fact reflect her
preferred Castellanois pronunciation, adding a non-standard long “a” to indicate
stress on the last syllable ([su-'mja:]). She also wrote in the letter “khā’” to
represent how some Castellaners pronounce deuh with a [χ] sound. Both
Mohamed’s initial sentence and Soumia’s rendition of it join the syntax and
affrication of Marseille’s vernacular with some phonological elements from non-
standard varieties of Arabic (e.g., /h, χ/). This type of syncretism abounded both
in and outside the classroom. Thus, Chainez enjoyed bothering Madame Chérif
with “Maḥdame!!” [mahda:m], inserting an unmistakable pharyngeal “h” into her
pleas for the teacher’s attention. Another insisted that the teacher spell and
pronounce her name, which would have been Jihad [ʒiha:d] in MSA, as the
affricated Castellanois version, Djihad [dʒiha:d]. Upon seeing Djihad write her
name on the board for all to see, spelling it with the letters dal, jīm, ha’, alif, dal
(دجهاد), Madame Chérif laughed and asked another male classmate also named
Jihad whether he, too, preferred the affricated pronunciation. Having only
recently arrived from Yemen, he quite predictably demurred. Another student
introduced me to her cat, whose name, bandit [bɔdʒi], she pronounced with the
heavy affrication and velar nasal of an exaggerated Marseillais accent.

The overall effect of such Castellanois forms on the Francophone or
Arabophone listener is to impart the impression of someone speaking
Marseillais-like French but layered with Arabic-like elements; neither listener
would recognize their language completely. That said, it is important to note that what young Castellaners speak together remains highly recognizable as being a variety of French. In a similar vein, Deumert (in press) has remarked that the syncretic South African register called Tsotsitaal is unlike Europe’s so-called “multi-ethnolectal” youth vernaculars (c.f., Kern & Selting, 2011) in one important respect. She observes that, “African urban vernaculars are more heavily mixed and often deliberately unintelligible to outsiders (indexing their origin as secret languages), while European ethnolects show limited mixing and are generally intelligible to outsiders” (p. 10). Although Castellanois forms can, indeed, often be understood by outsiders, it nevertheless remains the case that accessing their corresponding sphere of ideological meanings requires familiarity with those who live in Marseille’s northern projects.

Thus far, I have described how circulating youth discourses about what being from the projects means have contributed to enregistering a linguistic variety, syncretically composed of Marseille’s working-class vernacular and non-standard varieties of Arabic, as indexical of the diasporic youth persona typical of Marseille’s projects. These discourses, presented earlier in Section III, described La Castellane as the solidary capital of all bleds, also the role of being raised in the projects (l’éducation quartiers) in making you tough, and lastly how youth represented project interactions in kin terms. The linguistic behaviors
shown to cue this identity, moreover, were marked by interference-type
syncretism between Marseille’s vernacular and non-Standard Arabic.

To close this section, below I review some examples suggesting that
forms showing linguistic inventiveness more generally, whether in French, MSA,
or even English, were also read by young Castellaners as signaling the same
project identity. This overall spirit of linguistic freedom was once conveyed by a
student named Chainez, when during a small tutoring session at school she
shouted out, “We’re from Marseille. We talk like we want. We are
Marseillais!” (On est de Marseille. On parle comme on veut. On est des Marseillais). The
following examples evince general linguistic playfulness at the intersection of
the standard-to-non-standard continua of both French and Arabic, and
specifically in the guise of Castellanois’ intrusion into other languages than
French. One day, a student named Fares responded to the teacher’s question of
“Can you open your notebooks?” with the Arabic-inflected English affirmation
“yas!” [jas], prompting laughter and the recycling of this response for the
remainder of the year. On another occasion, Madame Chérif invited Yamin and
Karim to the front of class to perform a dialogue they had memorized from the
textbook. The interaction unfolded like this:
Karim: *Min ayna anta?* (MSA. ‘where are you from?’)
Yamin: *Ana min al-Maghreb [maχʁɛb] (MSA. ‘I am from Morocco’)
Karim: (bent over laughing) *Ouais, makhhreb!* [maχχχʁɛb] (French ‘Yeah, makhhreb!’)
Madame Chérif: (says nothing and moves on while students laugh))

Here, Yamin seemed to forget his location in the MSA classroom and produced the *Castellanois* form *al-Maghreb [maχʁɛb] (‘Morocco’). He swapped out the voiced uvular ‘r’ /ʁ/, which exists equally in MSA and in French, for Castellanois ‘r’ [χ] and francisized the final vowel to [ɛ], neglecting to give the correct MSA pronunciation of the word for Morocco: [al-maʁrib]. Needless to say, Karim found the mismatch between *Castellanois*’ usual setting and Yamin’s use of it in the MSA classroom, and in MSA to boot, exceedingly funny. For effect, he repeated and exaggerated what Yamin had said, making the other students dissolve into laughter.

Madame Chérif was well aware of youth’s use of *Castellanois*. Unlike other teachers, who tried to coach students on their pronunciation as if *Castellanois* was an unconscious failure of their articulatory organs, she most often ignored it altogether when her students brought such features as the *Castellanois* /χ/ into the MSA class, as above. She appeared to understand a great deal about *Castellanois*’ interactional meanings as well. This excerpt from my fieldnotes

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43 This interaction dates from 10.24.12.
describes a telling interaction between Madame Chérif and a male student named Ayman:

Watching Sara (Madame Chérif) seat Ayman at the back of class, Kenza looks at me and says “he’s a non-stop panic attack” (il a une crise de nerfs). Today, he’s got his hair gelled like James Dean. He’s wearing tight faded jeans tucked into white Lacoste high tops and a grey t-shirt with gothic-like script. He has “Allah” written in Arabic on his right hand in purple. Throughout class, Sara calls on him repeatedly on purpose. In his responses, he pronounces anti as antchi and i’dadati as i’dadatchi, but she doesn’t correct him.

Here, Madame Chérif resisted correcting Ayman’s transformation of MSA anti ‘you’ into [antʃi] and MSA i’dādyatī ‘my prep school’ into [jʔa:dʃati], perhaps because she had read his use of Castellanois-like pronunciation in MSA as a defiant stance on his part and preferred not to engage him in that behavior.

Other times, she would simply laugh at what the students came up with, as when she introduced the new MSA verb sakana ‘to reside,’ and Fares felt inspired to go to the board and conjugate the verb in the present-tense of French: “Je sakane, tu sakan, nous sakanons...” She would likewise smile when Anisa’s classmates called her “Anisatun,” with the MSA (indefinite nominative) case ending, which they did to mock her when she answered too many questions right about MSA grammar.

IV. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, this chapter addressed, first, the spirit youth from La Castellane and La Bricarde believed to characterize these projects and their
residents, and second, how youth expressed this spirit of “tough love” through communicative means. Specifically, youth linguistically invoked their working-class solidarity through heavy use of features and lexis from Marseille’s vernacular, while they indexed their diasporic bled ties by peppering this broad Marseillais with phonological and other elements drawn from non-standard varieties of Arabic. The resulting syncretism, which they termed Castellanois, represented a double-voiced speech register whose interference phenomena and linguistic inventiveness pointed to the singular persona of the diasporic project youth. The linguistic analyses in this section focused on how youth created multi-vectorial junctures between several varieties in their repertoires at different levels of language, the total effect of which was to “tinge” their vernacular Marseillais base with Arabic-like additions.

From a more theoretical perspective, this chapter has addressed how to define the borderland and, relatedly, what it means to be diasporic. The term borderland, as Anzaldúa’s opening remarks established, is not primarily meant to capture how certain places are geographically situated near or on a border between countries. Rather, the borderlands are a theater in which actors are brought to confront their country’s historical imbrication with bordering countries. Whereas the residents of places more distant from the border may stray from such “connected histories” (Subrahmanyan, 1997), imagining them
to be parallel, borderlands residents mingle daily with people from neighboring places. In Marseille, for instance, no diasporic person remains unaware of French traditions in their environment, just as no ethnically French person may live in Marseille and forget France’s colonial history. Further, when people from different social groups meet in Marseille, it is often not on equal footing. Thus, youth from Class 3B may be downtown doing an internship in a department store and encounter French-origin youth who call downtown home. Marseille, as such, can be considered a “contact zone,” which as per Pratt (1991) is a place “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (p. 34). It might also be viewed as a “spotty borderlands,” in Zartman’s (2010) formulation. He writes about how, in addition to national borders, some borderlands are characterized by other internal borders. Northern Marseille illustrates this concept insofar as its population is grouped into cultural “islands” isolated from the larger population; although, as Zartman says, individuals who live in these enclaves nevertheless have “diverse contacts and influence” across internal and external borders alike (p. 8).

These reflections inspire the question of whether border places more closely resemble buffer zones that function to separate the countries on either side, France from its Southern border countries, for instance; or whether they
might also play a role in bridging connections across countries. Speaking of the Mediterranean specifically, Darling (2006) proposes that its borders function to "overlap and blend" neighboring societies (p. 55). Although this kind of blending might be observed in architecture or cuisine, nowhere is it clearer than in the cultural practices of diasporic or so-called “border people” (Martínez & Sayer, 1994). Youth from La Castellane exemplified this syncretism, characteristic of the borderlands as Anzaldúa described them. Their cultural and linguistic practices were not, however, arbitrarily hybrid. Instead, students from Class 3B elaborated culturally syncretic practices that explicitly positioned them in relation to other places, like Paris, Central and Southern Marseille, and the bled, and to other people, like Parisians, paillots, and clandos, the latter two types of people being the subject of the next chapter. In other words, no third national category of, say, Arab-Frenchness or French Arabness, became necessary to capture the cultural singularity of these youth. Youth from La Castellane, rather, were observed simply to be expanding upon what it means to be French today.

Kulick (1998) arrived at a similar conclusion in a quite different context. Summarizing his work with Brazilian travestis (or transgendered male prostitutes) in Salvador de Bahia, he argues that gender studies has no need of a “third gender” space to accommodate travestis' gendered subjectivity. Rather, he encourages scholars of gender and sexuality to see travestis as expanding upon
the gender binary. They are not trying to “squeeze themselves into the ‘wrong’ gender” (p. 232). To the contrary, he recognizes their articulations of gender (e.g., their desire for men, their feminine beauty standards, their God-inspired aversion to sex-change operations) as “distillations of patterns that exist throughout Brazilian society” (p. 236). In a similar vein, the identity and practices of youth from Class 3B highlighted elements of the French mainstream, Marseille’s working-class culture, and the North and sub-Saharan African societies they call *bleds*. In so doing, youth succeeded in recontextualizing discourses circulating within such borderlands societies, particularly with respect to Islam, ethnicity, immigration, and, as will become apparent in Chapter Four, modernity.

A final consideration is what these youth’s practices disclose about the construction of ethnicity. As Anzaldúa implied when she said being a Chicano person from the borderlands is a “racial identity” (1999[1987], p. 84), border places subject national identities to racial and ethnic identities. This chapter has illustrated how youth from La Castellane articulated an ethnic identity, in Stuart Hall’s broad sense of the term “ethnicity” (1992), that encompassed nods towards class, nation, Islam, and race. Diasporic projecthood is, by this definition, an ethnic identity, and its construction is indeed both ideological and
processual, as Mandel (2008) has argued about ethnicity construction in the German context.
IV. Indexing the Self by Distancing the Other: Clando Versus Paillot Imitations

I. Introduction

If in Chapter Three I examined how through Castellanois youth gestured to their own coherent, if syncretic, identity, in this chapter I present two other phonolexical registers, and their corresponding personas, from which youth playfully distanced themselves. A first section presents the stories youth tell about the bled and people from the bled. I contend that youth’s chronotopic formulations (Agha, 2015) of the bled and blédard people as backward helped them position themselves, as youth born in France, as forward-thinking and sophisticated, by contrast. I also examine the particular linguistic features youth have enregistered as indexical of people from the bled, as well as examples of how youth deployed this register—which they labeled clando—to differentiate themselves from the first generation of immigrants to France, their parents’ generation. I argue, additionally, that clando is a persona that youth have repossessed from French mainstream discourse, where the persona of the “clandestin” (clandestine person) circulates and is negatively viewed. A second section reports on how, similarly, youth mock Standard French to set themselves
apart from the ethnically French. Specifically, I cover instances of youth using Standard French speech forms in an exaggerated way to mock the ethnically French and well-to-do people who live on the south side of Marseille. The distant stance youth take on the *paillot* persona represents yet another case, alongside that of *clando*, of Castellanois youth’s use of “othering” to position themselves (Said, 1978).

II. **Stories of the Bled and Clando Imitations**

Right before Winter Break, Madame Chérif began a new chapter in the textbook with the students of Class 3B. The dialogue for that chapter took place in a Moroccan city and mentioned the sights and sounds of a central plaza. It was several minutes into the lesson when Kader blurted out “I didn’t know there were movie theaters in the *bled*!” Madame Chérif looked at him squarely, and responded, “You know, the *bled* is better than La Castellane.” This prompted a loud “Of cou::::::rrse” (*bien sur*) from Mohamed. Again, Madame Chérif made her point: “You guys think it’s great here and the *bled* is a Third World country.” The last word on this topic was Mohamed booming “This place is Vegas!” (*ici c’est Las Vegas*!). This section addresses how youth from Class 3B constructed their parents’ home countries, or *bleds*, as both distant in style and backwards in
time compared to Marseille’s projects. I argue that, by giving the *bled* a “there-and-then” chronotopic formulation (Agha, 2015), youth not only positioned people from the *bled* as located in that particular envelope of time and space; they also chronotopically formulated the projects and project dwellers like themselves to exist in the “here-and-now.” The main activity through which youth articulated these contrastive time-space frames was a mocking routine that involved imitating how native Arabic speakers pronounce French and thus dissociating themselves from the persona of the first-generation immigrant. I begin by introducing examples of youth enacting this L2 French register, and then I turn to analyze the various stereotypic qualities and chronotopic dimensions in play when youth performed this register.

The students in Class 3B were quite familiar with how native Arabic-speaking adults in their milieu pronounced French, and they often took the liberty of imitating them speaking thus. Their imitations fell into two broader types. Some followed a reported speech construction, in which youth reported on what someone, a parent for instance, had said, while others represented instances of what Vološinov (1986) calls free direct style, or when “elements of the reported message creep into and are dispersed throughout the entire authorial text” (p. 133). In these cases, youth enacted the learner French register themselves, without any framing devices signaling the presence of reported
speech. A first example showcases the youth stereotype according to which Arabic speakers have trouble producing words with consonant clusters, varieties of Arabic showing two but no three-consonant clusters. I overheard a male student ask his friend the following: “Have you seen the guys at the Porte d’Aix who say ‘Marlboro? Marlboro? Malobo? Mal au dos [malodo] (back pain)?’” The student was referring to mostly male immigrants who illegally lay out their wares on the sidewalk around the Porte d’Aix, one of Marseille’s central landmarks in the heart of a mostly Muslim neighborhood. He plays on the similarity between the name for the cigarette brand Marlboro, which features a three-consonant cluster (r-l-b), and the expression for back pain, mal au dos, in which the vowel ‘o’ breaks up the consonant cluster. While this example involved the reporting of an unknown individual’s (likely fictitious) French speech, students from Class 3B also reported the genuine speech of people they knew, especially their parents and neighbors.

In Transcript 4.1, for example, Mohamed recounts to a group of male classmates and myself an encounter he had with Anisa’s mom. Anisa is a female student in Class 3B, and she and her family, who have roots in Algerian Kabylia, live in the same tower of La Castellane as Mohamed and his family. Mohamed tells how he came across Anisa’s mom on the way back from the supermarket while on summer vacation. He had been surprised at her invitation to eat some
home-made rice cake at their place. Although he mostly narrates the story in Castellanois, the IPA renditions of which are shown in bold, when he relays what Anisa’s mom said to him, he switches to Arabic-influenced learner French and some Berber-like nonsense sounds.

Transcript 4.1.44 Mohamed’s Story about Anisa’s Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> Et vous connaissez Anisa qui est dans la classe?</td>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> And you know Anisa who’s in class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cécile:</strong> Ouais, bien sur.</td>
<td><strong>Cécile:</strong> Yeah, of course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> Eh ben sa mère-</td>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> Well, her mom-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elias &amp; Kader:</strong> Oooh ((hootings))</td>
<td><strong>Elias &amp; Kader:</strong> Oooh ((hootings))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> -on descendais de Carrefour. Elle est venue me voir et l’été je devais aller en Algérie</td>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> -we were coming down from Carrefour. She came to see me and that summer I was supposed to go to Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cécile:</strong> Hmm ((K laughing in background))</td>
<td><strong>Cécile:</strong> Hmm ((K laughing in background))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> Elle m’a dit [ʤi] quoi, elle m’a dit [ʤi]: Tu [ty] viens chi↑ [ʃi] moi↓. Je te fais [fi] un cake↑ [kik] du::: ↓ [dy] riz [ri] chi [ʃi] moi. Ha ma tcho tcho tu [ty] auras&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> You know what she said to me, she said “You’ll come to my house. I’ll make you a rice cake at my place ha ma tcho tcho you’ll have”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elias:</strong> À poile</td>
<td><strong>Elias:</strong> Naked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> Elle fait trop [tʃɔ] rire!</td>
<td><strong>Mohamed:</strong> She really makes you laugh!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, Mohamed switches between Castellanois register in the preface to his anecdote (e.g., dit [ʤi]) and a modified learner French in his reported speech clause. He cues his imitation of Anisa’s mother by transforming French vowels according to the cardinal “i-a-u” Arabic vowel system (e.g., chez > shi [ʃi]), fais > fi [ʃi]), using a swinging pitch, rolling his “r’s” (e.g., riz [ri], and no longer

44 This transcript dates from 2.11.13.
affricating his ‘t’s’ and ‘d’s.’\textsuperscript{45} In this anecdote, the voice of the first-generation parent appears to be one stereotypically associated with qualities like providing people with a down-south kind of welcome. This warm welcome suggested by Mohamed’s portrayal of Anisa’s mother was likely, furthermore, to have led Elias to slip in the typically adolescent male tag-along “naked” at the end of Mohamed’s story. Mohamed wraps up his story, tellingly, with the pleasant captioned “She really makes you laugh.” This transcript, in sum, exemplifies how youth at times drew on a register associated with first-generation immigrants to France, and, in so doing, commented on these individuals’ distinguishing qualities as compared to the speakers, their French-born children.

In addition to reported speech constructions, students from Class 3B also exploited this stereotypical Arab French-language learner register when narrating themselves. These instances displayed a quality aptly described by Vološinov (1986) as “reciprocal infectiousness” (p. 133), holding between the narrated world of characters (like the first-generation immigrant) and the young diasporic narrators. In simpler terms, when youth spoke thus, they effectively imbued themselves with some of the stereotypic qualities they tended to associate with the register. A first example of this took place on a school day

\textsuperscript{45} As far as I have been able to ascertain from a conversation with a native Berber speaker, Mohamed uses Berber-like gibberish at the end of his imitation (\textit{ha ma tcho tcho}).
when Madame Chérif had assigned Class 3B an MSA test. One male student, Elias, was unable to take his test because several of his friends stole his paper from him and scribbled across the front in red. By the time I saw the test during the break period, Madame Chérif already given Elias a grade for (what she presumed was) his work: 0/20. Above the grade, however, were the French sentences: ‘I am the boss! Give me the answer and give me a 20’ (“Je suis l’i boss! Donne l’i réponse et m’i moi 20”). I have underlined how, in pretending to be him taking the test, Elias’ friends substituted French vowels with Arabic’s cardinal a-

![Image of Elias' MSA Test]

**Figure 4.1. Elias’ MSA Test**

46 The Standard French orthographic rendition of these sentences would be “Je suis le boss. Donne les réponses et mets-moi 20.” (Though this was written to the teacher, the students used informal *tu* forms).
i-u vowels, a hallmark of this phonolexical register.

This example reveals yet another realm of stereotypical qualities youth linked to the first-generation immigrant, those relating to being overly direct and perhaps academically inept. Elias’ friends intended to invest Elias with some of these qualities by giving him such a voice. Madame Chérif was herself quite angered by the gesture, though she thought Elias was the culprit. When she placed the test on the table in front of me in the teachers’ lounge, she declaimed: “He’s making fun of Arabs!” I will comment more on how first-generation people like Madame Chérif reacted to this routine at the end of this section.

If in the previous case, Elias was forced to speak in the first-generation register, there were also many instances when youth willingly took on the learner register to perform certain traits. Figure 4.2, for instance, is drawn from students’ favorite medium, cell-phone texting. It shows a texted conversation between two female students from Class 3B. One student poses a question in French: “Have you seen The Maze Runner it looks tooooo good oulalaan I really want to see it.” Her text evidences two tokens of the aforementioned vowel transformations according to Arabic phonology, specifically her substitution of “ju” [ʒu] for je ‘I’ and “lu” [lu] for le ‘it.’ Her transliteration of French oh-la-la with an “n” at the end is likely the velar nasal of Castellanois. Perhaps inspired by
the sprinklings of the Arab French-learner register in her friend’s text, the other young woman takes fully to the register in her response: “The truth, I’m drooling and all as soon as I see the trailer.” In this sentence, she does not miss a single opportunity to use Arabic “u” instead of French “o” and Arabic “i” instead of French “e.” Her friend’s response is “PTDRRR” (pétée de rire, ‘dying of laughter), showing clear amusement at her friend’s imitation. The young woman in the second text uses this register to express that she is, quite doltishly, drooling over the movie trailer. Here, the young women linguistically invoke the stereotypic figure of the first-generation Arab as a means to show their overexcitement at a new movie coming out.
What I have been discussing until now as the persona of the first-generation immigrant, which youth indexed through a particular French phonolexical register, was often labeled the persona of the *clando*. Though only linguistic behaviors have thus far been enumerated as indexical of the *clando* persona, other behaviors involving one’s actions and appearance likewise formed part of the *clando* figure’s repertoire. Importantly, first-generation as well as French-born diasporic youth could be said to be acting *clando* by engaging in any of these telltale behaviors. An example of how youth designated first-generation individuals *clandos* pertains to Class 3B’s teacher, Madame Chérif. On a particular week day, she came to school wearing a pair of high-heeled shoes, one of which had a wobbly heel. As Madame Chérif and I were walking down the hall after the last class of the day, the heel snapped off and she lurched forward. I managed to catch her, and we both righted ourselves only to hear Chainez, an MSA student in the 4ième class, yell down the hallway, “Madame Chérif is a *clandotte!*” The student’s use of the female version of *clando* in this context served to liken her teacher to a newly arrived immigrant who could perhaps not afford a new pair of heels, a suggestion that left Madame Chérif obviously embarrassed. Significantly, however, youth never called someone a *clando* who was in fact an illegal immigrant to France. Though the label for the register itself was an apocope, or word-final clipping, of the lexeme *clandestin*, meaning
clandestine or paperless, youth only deployed the label *clando* to pick out diasporic individuals they knew who behaved in amusing ways and whom they wished to mock, gently and, occasionally, less gently.

Transcript 4.2 offers an example of how youth also applied *clando* to their French-born diasporic peers when they found their behavior anomalous or out of sync with preferred modes of acting, dressing, and speaking. This case also illustrates how the figure of the *clando* was additionally accompanied by ideologies of time and space, or chronotopic formulations, which, as per Agha (2015), are time-space depictions that perdure for some period of time because people repeatedly orient to them. The ensuing conversation takes place between three female students from Class 3B: Fouhda, Sabrina, and Maisara. The three young women single out Kader, who is often teased in class about his facility with Algerian, and also about the fact that he and his brothers slept four to a bedroom at home, as being *bled*-like, or a *clando*.

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47 Fouhda is third-generation Algerian, Sabrina is half second-generation Algerian and half third-generation, and Maisara’s parents are Comorian. None of them speak a regional variety of Arabic.
In this segment, Fouhda, Sabrina, and Maisara call Kader a *clando* to position themselves as cool in comparison to Kader’s uncool way of speaking and dressing. In order to achieve distance between themselves and Kader, the girls create contrastive deictic frames, mapping themselves into the “here” of the *quartier* and Kader into the “there” of the *bled*. Personal deictics create the first

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48 This transcript dates from 3.3.13.
deictic contrast. Whereas the young women speak as “I” (je), “we” (on), and “everyone” (tout le monde), non-present Kader is referred to as “he” (il) or addressed as “you” (tu). This personal diagram is then mapped into a spatial contrast. The girls situate themselves in La Castellane with the spatial deictic of proximity “here” (ici), while they transport Kader to the bled through the distal deictic “over there” (là-bas). Kader’s spatial “transposition” (Haviland, 1996) to the bled is further reinforced, additionally, by the girls’ reiteration of the derogatory statement “tu es venu à la nage” (‘you arrived here swimming’). Specifically, the verb venir (‘to come’), which is a path-encoding verb implying movement from an outside location towards an origo coinciding with speaker location, implies a deictic origo for Kader that is in the bled, not in France.

Considering Stasch’s (2011) definition of the chronotope as “scale of spatial and temporal horizons within which some events are understood as meaningfully occurring” (p. 3), a Bakhtinian (1981) chronotope—or, more technically, a chronotopic formulation (Agha, 2015)—is thus discernible in the girls’ narrative. What the girls appear to be constructing in this segment is a chronotopic formulation of the quartier versus another of the bled. Marseille’s projects are given a position as spatially central, and also present in the contemporary “now” of France. In this here and now, as the girls indicate, long socks are worn in winter under one’s sweats. This project chronotope is made
central to the above interaction, moreover, through the de-centering of the *bled*. Kader is depicted, not only as distant in space from the girls, but also as removed in time. He, quite anachronistically, wears ankle socks in winter and mismatched colors to class. Students also contrasted the time and space of the *bled* to those of La Castellane in the opening anecdote to this section. In that instance, Kader doubted if there were any movie theaters in Morocco and Mohamed pronounced La Castellane “Las Vegas.”

This chronotopic formulation of La Castellane as flashy and cool, and of the *bled* as backwards and stagnant, echoes Dick’s (2011) reflections on how diasporic individuals often speak about movement in ways pervaded by discourses of modernity and progress. In her piece on the modernist chronotope deployed by Mexican Uriangatense immigrants to the U.S., Dick (2010a) concludes that the way immigrants, returnees, and those who stayed discussed migration revealed that people’s physical movement to the U.S. was often talked about in terms of time. Likely influenced by circulating discourses of progress and modernism, Dick’s informants conceived of moving to the U.S. as moving forward in life (*seguir adelante*), an advancement that was contrasted with staying in Uriangato, México, made equivalent to being trapped in a benighted place. Just as the people who stayed in Uriangato were perceived as backwards in time and immigrants as forward-looking, so, too, does the narration by these three
young women chronotopically position the projects and its diasporic inhabitants as forward, and the *bled* and those who come from there as retrograde.

Another transcript furnishes evidence that students from Class 3B justify some of the binaries sketched above, between the *bled* and the projects, and the *clandos* and young project dwellers, through the semiotic process of iconization (Irvine & Gal, 2000) in addition to chronotopic formulations. Specifically, in Transcript 4.3 below a group of six male students is shown to naturalize the “rawness” of people from the *bled* by sketching iconic links between the “scratchy” sounds of their languages (e.g., Algerian, Tunisian, etc.) and the types of people they are. *Quartiers* youth, by contrast, are smooth-talking and street-wise, as presupposed by the syncretic lilt of *Castellanois*. The linking of sound to shape or sound to texture can be understood as a form of synesthesia, or the apperception of one sense in terms of another. Eisenlohr (2006), for instance, documents how in the French ex-colony of Mauritius, speakers iconically link the articulatory movements needed to produce Standard French phonemes [ʃ] and [ʒ], namely, a “pointing” of the lips, to a speaker’s degree of precision or refinement. Gasquet-Cyrus (2013) reports, similarly, that the Standard French spoken by Marseille’s bourgeoisie can be described, depending on the listener’s perspective on people in this social group, as either “*l’accent pointu*,” the pointed-lips or tidy accent, or the “*cul de poule*” (literally, chicken...
anus or, figuratively, uppity) accent. Whereas in both those examples speakers gave certain articulatory movements, or shapes, ideological meanings, in the excerpt in Transcript 4.3, by contrast, youth focus on the connection between active articulatory organs, the texture of the resulting sound, and people’s qualities.

The Russian novelist Vladimir Nabokov is catalogued in the *Dictionary of Hallucinations* (Blom, 2010) as having experienced a form of conceptual synesthesia. He himself describes in his autobiography how the thought of one or several letters was immediately accompanied by a secondary perception of color, shape, and texture.

"The long a of the English alphabet...has for me the tint of weathered wood, but a French a evokes polished ebony. This black group also includes hard g (vulcanized rubber) and r (a sooty rag being ripped). Oatmeal n, noodle-limp l, and the ivory-backed hand mirror of o take care of the whites. I am puzzled by my French on which I see as the brimming tension-surface of alcohol in a small glass. Passing on to the blue group, there is steely x, thundercloud z, and huckleberry k." (Nabokov, 1989[1947], p. 34).

Was Nabokov a victim of this parade of sensory ideas or visions? Or was he involved, perhaps creatively, in the linking of these sounds (or imagined graphemes) and ideated sensations over the course of his lifetime? Whereas Nabokov suffered synesthesia as an individual neurological ailment, this transcript suggests that synesthesia can also be explored as a group-centric process whereby pairings are made between sounds and sensations and form the basis of ideologies that naturalize types of people. Below, I asked the young men,
whom I had gathered in an empty classroom, to identify male and female names they would say are typically clando. In response, they developed two themes. First, they portrayed clando people from the bled as tough or rough-hewn, inasmuch as they iconically resemble the throat-itching, stomach-breaking phonemes /h, χ, r/ required to produce their names. Secondly, and by contrast, the image of the suave, street-wise youth from La Castellane is affirmed by the creamy, pomade-like Castellanois that youth from the project speak, exemplified by how they render their names.

Transcript 4.3.49 Clandos Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Ouais, c'est quoi des-des noms clandos en arabe?</td>
<td>Cécile: Yeah, what are some clando names in Arabic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayman: Oh Haj Issa::: euh genre les trucs avec [h:::] [eh:::]</td>
<td>Ayman: Oh Haj Issa::: Well, like, things with [h:::] [eh:::]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oussama: Mahmoud [mahmud]</td>
<td>Oussama: Mahmoud [mahmud]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elias: Avec un &quot;h&quot; dedans, non [naː] mais t'as [tʃ] compris quand [kaː] il y a un “h” devant</td>
<td>Elias: With an &quot;h&quot; in them, no, but you know, with an “h” in front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oussama: Rashid [ɾaʃid]</td>
<td>Oussama: Rashid [ɾaʃid]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Et pourquoi Rashid?</td>
<td>Cécile: And why Rashid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oussama: Rashid [ɾaʃid]- ((someone makes an [ahhhhhhh] sound)) parce que c'est un prénom arabe</td>
<td>Oussama: Rashid [ɾaʃid]- ((someone makes an [ahhhhhhh] sound)) because it’s an Arab first name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Donc c'est clando?</td>
<td>Cécile: So it’s clando?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oussama: Non [naː], mais il y a des rashids qui parlent français</td>
<td>Oussama: NO, but there are some rashids who speak French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed: Et ouais le frère à Sheyreen-</td>
<td>Mohamed: Uh yeah, like Sheyreen’s brother-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kader: ((loudly)) Elle m’a quitté [kiːt], je m’appelle Rashid [ɾaʃidː]:! ((laughing))</td>
<td>Kader: ((loudly)) She left me, my name is Rashid [ɾaʃidː]:! ((laughing))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49 This transcript dates from 4.2.13.
Oussama: Je m'appelle Khadija [zadija]
Elias: Ça pique le [xoxo]
Cécile: Il y en a pas de ((unclear)) dans les noms clandos?
((unclear)): Khamisa [yahmisa]
Oussama: Parce que [pax-kx] ça c'est en français ((now to tablemate)) Commence pas!
Ayman: Ka:- Kader [kadx]
Cécile: Kader?
Kader: Ça passe crème [kXM]
Cécile: Ça passe quoi?
Mohamed: Ça passe POMADE ((laughing)) pomade
Cécile: Et les noms pour les filles cl-clandottes?
Multiple: KHADIJA [zadija]
Ayman: Zohra [zuhr]
Kader: Rashida [rXida]
Oussama: NON, NON, Zouliha [zuliha]
Ayman: Attends, attend, attend! Vas-y CASSE LE VENTRE!
Oussama: Non, Cutter Cutter [kœtx]
Mohamed: Zinouba [xi:nu:ba] ((laughing))
Kader: Cutter c'est les parents à Samia ça
Elias: Lakhdar [lXdar]
Kader: C'est le frère à Kenza, Lakhdar ((laughing))
Sabah [sabeh]
Oussama: HOUDA [huda] ((shrieking))
Elias: Même le street factor il n'y est pas
Oussama: ((talking about Ayman)) Il sort les prénoms de ses cousins obligé ((laughing))
Ayman: Oh par Allah [al:] que non. La tête de ma mère que non. Non, genre [zq] mon arrière grandmère-
Oussama: -istaghfirullah [istayfirula:] (MSA ‘may God forgive you’)
Ayman: Mais c'est vrai ((laughing)) elle s'appelle-je me moque pas d'elle
((unclear)): I斯塔ghfirullah [istayfirula:]
Kader: istaghfirullah [istayfirula:] Ayman
Ayman: MAHJOUBA! [mahju:ba]

Ayman: [xa] Like uh you have to pronounce with your throat, your throat
Oussama: My name is Khadija [zadija]
Elias: The [xoxo], it itches!
Cécile: There isn’t any ((unclear)) in clando names?
((unclear)): Khamisa [yahmisa]
Oussama: Because that’s in French ((now to tablemate)) Don’t start!
Ayman: Ka:- Kader [kadx]
Cécile: Kader?
Kader: It goes over like butter!
Cécile: Like what?
Mohamed: It goes over like POMADE ((laughing)) pomade
Cécile: And what about names for cl-clandottes?
Multiple: KHADIJA [zadija]
Ayman: Zohra [zuhr]
Kader: Rashida [rXida]
Oussama: NO, NO, Zouliha [zuliha]
Ayman: Hold up, hold up, hold up! Now go for it-BREAK YOUR STOMACH!
Oussama: No, Cutter Cutter [kœtx]
Mohamed: Zinouba [xi:nu:ba] ((laughing))
Kader: Cutter that’s one of Samia’s relatives
Elias: Lakhdar [lXdar]
Kader: It’s Kenza’s brother, Lakhdar ((laughing)) Sabah [sabeh]
Oussama: HOUDA [huda] ((shrieking))
Elias: There’s not even any street factor
Oussama: ((talking about Ayman)) He’s pulling his girl cousins’ names out of the bag ((laughing))
Ayman: By Allah I’m not. On my mother’s head I’m not.No, but like my great grandmother-
Oussama: -istaghfirullah [istayfirula:] (MSA ‘may God forgive you’)
Ayman: No, but seriously. ((laughing)) Her name is-I’m not making fun of her
((unclear)): I斯塔ghfirullah [istayfirula:]
Kader: istaghfirullah [istayfirula:] Ayman
Ayman: MAHJOUBA! [mahju:ba]
Beyond the extreme amusement being had all around, it is also worth suggesting that the male youth in this segment are likewise engaged in drawing ideological, and especially iconic, links between the texture of certain sounds and the people who speak them. The boys state, for example, that in order to produce such clando miracles as *Mahjouba* [mahju:ba], one must “pronounce with the throat” and “break the stomach.” People from the *bled* are thus constructed as rough-hewn and capable of doing difficult things, like braving immigration to France for instance. Mid-way through the transcript, Kader introduces his own name, only he pronounces it in *Castellanois*, as [kadeɣ]. He informs me that “Kader” rendered in this way goes over smooth as hair gel (*ça passe pomade*). It dovetails perfectly, moreover, with the “street factor” required of project youth. This transcript serves to show how youth from La Castellane naturalize the speech repertoires associated with the personas of both the diasporic youth and the clando. On the one hand, this group of young men establishes ties of resemblance between the “raspy” varieties of North African Arabic and the first-generation clando. To this they contrast, on the other hand, how their own street cool reflects in *Castellanois*, a register whose forms correctly apportion the phonological softness of French and the brawn of non-standard Arabic.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cécile: Wow c’est ta grandmère?</th>
<th>Cécile: Wow that’s your grandmother?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayman: Non, mon arrière grandmère</td>
<td>Ayman: Non, my great grandmother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Importantly, constructing people from the *bled* as tough but unsophisticated enables youth from La Castellane to position themselves as a degree less tough and a lot more up-to-date. Kiesling (2001) calls this type of self-other positioning the strategy of “marking the other” (p. 102). Just as in Kiesling’s piece white fraternity boys indirectly made a subject position for themselves by creating a different category for African Americans, the examples in Transcripts 4.2 and 4.3 likewise demonstrated how *clando* imitations diminished people born in the *bled* as they also, if implicitly, carved out a sophisticated identity for youth from Marseille’s projects.

A final set of comments addresses the social repercussions of youth’s *clando* mocking routine. Was it the case that, insofar as Madame Chérif was offended by her students’ deployment of *clando* register, youth’s routine was somehow a pejorative one? Did youth’s recycling of the figure of the *clando*, along with its backward temporal qualities, for instance, spell youth’s reiteration of negative “First-World” perspectives on the “Third World”? Did overhearers tend to construe instances of *clando* mocking as having a voicing structure where diasporic youth from the projects were “animators” who, ultimately, had French people prejudiced towards immigrants as their “principal” (Goffman, 1979, p. 17)? For various reasons, it would seem not. First, as mentioned, people whom youth positioned as *clando* were, in the instances I witnessed, never in fact illegal
immigrants. They were, rather, often close to the speaker, a relationship typically
gestured to via co-textual cues bespeaking affection. Thus, Mohamed wrapped
up his story about Anisa’s mother with kind comments about her comicality,
and Sabrina, Maisara, and Fouhda in fact got along quite well with Kader, who
incessantly teased them back. Secondly, although Madame Chérif was ill-at-ease
with youth’s clando imitations, it may have been the case that she was unfamiliar
with the full social range of the clando register and its more innocuous uses.
Certainly, youth themselves seemed to find great pleasure in finding new
behaviors, like Kader’s “ankle socks,” or new social stances, like eagerness at a
new movie, that could be grouped under the clando persona. Their keenness to
exploit all of clando’s possible indexical niches is reminiscent of other strategic
uses of foreigner-type talk in France, notably by foreigners. Vigoureux (2011)
writes about how West African marabouts or clairvoyants in France, in composing
paper advertisements to market their healing services, played up all possible
linguistic marks of being African learners of French in order to perform the
“authentic African persona” that they believed their French clients would
entrust with their healing needs. Lastly, the clando imitations reviewed here
were, moreover, enacted by youth who were in fact diasporic, meaning their own
parents were from a bled.
In a final transcript, I give an example of a mainstream French person making a joke that negatively represents clandestine immigrants. Transcript 4.4 represents a joke that Nathalie, one of the ethnically French adult students in my MSA class, which was held at a community center in downtown Marseille, told to our class. Her joke tells the story of a North African male who wishes to leave for France and, in preparation, attempts to perfect his French as much as possible.

Transcript 4.4.⁵⁰ Nathalie's Joke

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nathalie: Il y a un autre c'est un-c'est un, pareil, un-il y en a un qui veut aller en France. On lui dit “Bon, il faut que tu apprennes bien à parler français. Il faut pas qu'on sente que t'as un-.” Alors il apprend euh pendant dix jours la même phrase: “Bonjour monsieur, je voudrais un cafe s'il-te plait et deux croissants.” Alors il arrive à Paris, il rentre dans un bar. Il dit &quot;Bonjour monsieur, je voudrais un cafe et deux croissants.&quot; “Ah, il y a plus de croissants.&quot; &quot;Bah c'est pas garave [garaf], don-ne [donːə] moi une brioche [briʃo]” ((other classmates laughing))</td>
<td>Nathalie: There’s another (joke). It’s it’s a-it’s a, same thing, there’s one (guy) who wants to go to France. He’s told “Okay, you have to learn to speak French well. It’s best if no one hears that you have a-.” So he learns uh the same sentence during ten days: “Hello sir, I would like a coffee please and two croissants.” So he arrives in Paris, and he walks into a bar. He says, “Hello sir, I would like a coffee please and two croissants.” “Oh, there aren’t any more croissants.” “Oh, that's not a problem, give me a brioche [briʃo]” ((other classmates laughing))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The joke’s punchline plays on the contrast between the man’s assiduous linguistic preparation for life in France and how he thoughtlessly botches his whole plan to “pass” as French in exchange for a brioche, since there are no croissants. Focused as he is on either the brioche or complying with the French

⁵⁰This transcript dates from 5.3.13.
barman, the character slips back into his natural Arabic-influenced French, trilling his ‘r’s,’ inserting vowels between consonant clusters, and pronouncing ‘v’ as ‘f.’ The image produced is one of the Arab who settles for less, speaks broken French, and lacks the ability to juggle two thoughts at once. Although Nathalie does not explicitly use the label clandestin, by telling this joke she nevertheless contributes to constructing the figure of the newly arrived immigrant to France and his stereotypical qualities.

To summarize, clandestin is a pejorative label that certain individuals in mainstream France use to talk about and denigrate a minority group. Like other pejorative labels or slurs, such as the word nègre in French or dyke in English, clandestin appears to have been reappropriated by those who constitute the collective referent of the term. In parallel to the Négritude Movement or Dykes on Bikes, the youth of Class 3B repossessed clandestin and now appear to be using it for their own, wholly transformed, purposes as they perform and identify clandos in their midst.

---

51 Nathalie was in her ninth month of MSA study when she told this joke. When she, for example, pronounces the ‘v’ as an ‘f,’ she seems to be drawing on her knowledge of the Arabic alphabet, such as the non-existence of ‘v’ in the Arabic alphabet.
III.  *Paillot Imitations*

The section above demonstrated how students in Class 3B have enregistered a repertoire of Arab-learner French as indexical of the figure of the *clando*, or first-generation immigrant to France. If through *clando* mocking youth were able to identify themselves as French-born diasporans, at a contrast to their parents’ generation, this section deals with how by invoking yet another figure and linguistic repertoire, that of the *paillot* and Standard French, youth effectively cued their difference from ethnically French people in Marseille. On the very first day I observed Class 3B, for instance, I had a telling interaction with a female student named Jihad. At that time, the students knew little about me, such as the fact that I was in fact born and raised in the United States. All they knew was what they could garner from examining me and Madame Chérif’s brief introduction: I was white and I had a French, Catholic name. Thus, Jihad (the same one who prefers her name spelled Djihad) took the desk directly behind mine, beside another student. As I took out my notebook, I caught Jihad making exaggerated motions to unpack her backpack, with flicks of the hand I can only describe as prissy. I then overheard her say to her tablemate in a sing-song voice, “You are so very kind” (Vous êtes si aimable). Jihad’s use of the pronoun for formal, second-person address (*vous*), her school-like diction
and her standard pronunciation of trè [tʁεː:] and aimable [ɛmaːbl], was immediately recognizable as a parody of Standard French. I was, of course, the target for this mocking, and Madame Chérif later summarized the situation, which she had also noticed, saying “Oh, she was just performing for you.” Inoue (2006) writes that often a mocking stance can be enacted through hyperbole in the narrating event; in other words, through the speaker’s impeccable, almost too-perfect performance of a voice. To wit, it was through an exaggeratedly standard form of French that Jihad succeeded at commenting, cynically, on the original form of that speech (namely, Standard French) and those who employ it. In this last section of Chapter Four, I compare paillot register to that of clando and consider the possible social functions of paillot mocking for youth from Northern Marseille.

As described when introducing Marseille’s geographic divisions, the city is marked by a geographic and social separation between its North and South that dates to the 19th century, when the city’s industrial landmarks began clustering to the North of the Commune (Roncayolo, 1996). The Castellanois lexeme “paillot” mirrors this history of the city. Insofar as youth invoke paillot to

52 Her pronunciation was recognizable as Standard French because, first, it lacked Castellanois’ word-final schwa on aimable, second, she used French “r” [ʁ] in lieu of Castellanois ([χ]) in trè, and thirdly, she inserted the long back [ɑ] in the second syllable of aimable that is typical of posh Parisians’ way of speaking. For an example of this way of speaking, see the 1993 film Les Visiteurs. The character Béatrice, played by Valérie Lemercier, plays the descendent of French nobility and uses an unmistakable back [ɑ] in some vocalic contexts.
pick out affluent people of French *souche* (or ethnic origin), who likewise operate in Standard French, the label is keyed to Southern Marseille and its residents. As Central Marseille has become more gentrified, however, less vernacular and more standard forms of French have begun to be stereotypically associated with central *arrondissements* as well (Trimaille & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013). Perhaps this gentrification phenomenon will widen *paillot*’s social range, which until now, has designated people who live in Southern Marseille, dress “BCBG” (*bon chic bon genre*, ‘like a yuppie’), speak Standard French, and are generally middle or upper class. The word *paillot*, as such, is often a human referent noun. It can also, however, function as an adjective. One Sunday afternoon, for instance, a group of girls from Class 3B came to visit my apartment. They sat chit-chatting around my kitchen table while I made tea and prepared snacks. When I offered them *navettes*, dry biscuits that are traditional Marseillais fare and whose long shape commemorates that of the boat that brought St. Lazarus and his sisters to Marseille from Jerusalem, I was met with polite refusals from around the table. Anisa finally blurted out “That’s a *paillot* thing. You know, a French thing.” The lexeme *paillot* itself derives from the Standard French word for straw (*paille*). A glance at an etymology dictionary will show that, in the Middle Ages, it referred to straw bedding or insulation for granaries. It then joined the ranks of argot in
the 19th century, coming to mean ‘door mat,’ and now appears to have fallen out of use in perhaps all but Castellanoïs.

The following interaction takes a look at some of the social contrasts signaled by paillot. Like the clando register, paillot is also organized in terms of a repertoire of linguistic and other forms and a stereotypic social indexicality (Agha, 2007). In Transcript 4.5, I asked Sabrina, Maisara, and Fouhda about how they talked versus how people in downtown Marseille talked. The transcript points to how these three young women link their own Castellanoïs speech to the projects and Standard French to paillot people, whether Parisians or people in Central and Southern Marseille.

Transcript 4.5.53 Speaking French Well and Speaking it Badly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Mais vous parlez de la même façon que les gens en Centre Ville?</td>
<td>Cécile: So do you speak the same way as people downtown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cécile: Paillot c’est quoi?</td>
<td>Cécile: And what’s paillot?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabrina: Paillot c’est euh... Comment on appelle... (yelling to Maisara) Ça veut dire [dʒiɔ] quoi paillot? C’est quoi le paillot?</td>
<td>Sabrina: Paillot is uh... How do you say... (yelling to Maisara) What does paillot mean? What’s the paillot?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabrina: ‘Chez pas, paillot, genre [ʒɔxɔ]...Madame, ils parlent bien [byɛ]</td>
<td>Sabrina: I dunno, paillot, like...Madame, they talk nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maisara: Non [naɲ], c’est des français.</td>
<td>Maisara: No, they’re French people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53 This transcript dates from 11.12.12.
As indicated by the bolded IPA transcriptions, for the most part Sabrina and Maisara narrate in Castellanois, dotting their French with Marseillais lexis (e.g., dégun, ‘nobody’) and vernacular features like word-final schwa, the velar nasal, affricated stops, but also with Arabic-sourced wesh (‘what’s up?’) and voiceless fricative /χ/. When, however, Sabrina imitates paillot people, she switches to
higher pitch, uses different greetings (e.g., salut, coucou) and phraseology (e.g., comment ça va?), and adheres to super-standard syntax (e.g., c’était comment tes vacances?), in a way reminiscent of the nerdy speech Bucholtz (2001) studied in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Although Sabrina’s imitations of paillot were not as naturalistic as Jihad’s performance of paillot for her classmates (at my expense), the boundary she erected between “us” in Northern Marseille and the “paillots” elsewhere in Marseille partook in positioning youth from La Castellane as different from their urban neighbors in non-negligible ways. When youth from Class 3B invoked the paillot voice through use of Standard French, such performances often tended to interactionally position the speaker, by contrast, as a person both of color and with diasporic ties to the bled. Sabrina also intimated in her remarks above, however, that despite her dismissal of Standard French, she was nevertheless aware that its mastery was useful for certain ends. These youth’s relationship to Standard French is analyzed in greater depth in Chapter Seven.

IV. Concluding Remarks

Taken together, this chapter and the previous chapter underlined how youth from La Castellane ideologized their own diasporic project identity, as
well as the identities of those from whom they sought to differentiate themselves, the *paillots* and *clandos*, in ways that were both multi-modal and multi-scalar. These registers’ repertoires comprised linguistic forms, but also clothing styles, accessories, and attitudes. Likewise, in her research with Latina gangsters (*cholas*) in the San Francisco Bay Area, Mendoza-Dentón (2008) has shown that claiming certain personas, like that of the *macha* gang girl, requires the performer’s attention to such diverse aesthetic ingredients as speech, eyeliner, music, and body weight, among others. Similarly, discourses about diasporic projecthood also enregistered a range of sign types as indicative of this persona. This was apparent, for example, when the student named Ayman enacted defiance of his teacher using *Castellanois* linguistic forms, the word “Allah” drawn on his hand, and a James Dean-like getup. Kader, too, was positioned as a *clando* by his female classmates on the basis of his ankle socks, incorrectly colored clothes, and way of speaking.

Youth’s registers were also multi-scalar in at least two senses. First, speech forms or bodily behaviors only achieved meaning through youth’s ideological roping of these different behaviors together, and this took place at the level of reflexive discourses or metapragmatics. It is, likewise, for this precise reason that sociolinguists and ethnographers who study French youthful varieties are treading cautiously in their suggestions that a “youth
vernacular” (parler jeune) exists across France (c.f., Jamin, Trimaille, & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2006; Trimaille & Billiez, 2002). Although this remains an open question, the previous chapter contributed the observation that identity at the level of form (such as affrication being spread over diverse French settings) often belies ideological differences in how specific groups articulate their identities. A second sense in which registers like Castellanois and Clando, at least, were multi-scalar was in the chronotopic formulations youth attributed these personas. In many of the example transcripts, students’ positioning of someone as a project youth or a clando comported with depictions of that person’s spatial affiliations and temporal qualities, such as being avant-garde and hip or old-fashioned and regressive.

Some last questions deal with where youth from Class 3B are headed, moving forward. As time marches on, will the young men and women of Class 3B, who are now in high school and working jobs, continue to speak their ethnic identity and Marseille’s quartiers into being? When I knew them, these youth envisioned futures locally. They hoped to live in the projects, work nearby, and marry other second-generation Marseillais. It is possible, however, that since then new aspirations have come to vie with those of La Castellane. Likewise, what might the outcome of their linguistic mocking routines turn out to be? Will their imitations end in the reanalysis of the values stereotypically associated
with language varieties like Standard French and the learner French spoken by some first-generation immigrants to Marseille, or will they ultimately contribute to reinforcing certain stereotypes even as they subvert others? Both Bucholtz (2001) and Barrett (1999) have observed, in their respective research sites, how embedding others’ voices in one’s speech can have unexpected, and sometimes discriminatory, effects. Bucholtz (2001), for one, addresses how nerds’ use of intelligence to perform hyperwhiteness may have been meant as a critique of mainstream white norms but, even so, ultimately exposed racially different access to intelligence as a strategy for taking social stances, hence reinforcing racial markedness. Barrett (1999), in turn, contends that imitating white women’s speech if you are a black drag queen may serve to question racist and homophobic assumptions even as it potentially reproduces misogynistic ones. Similarly, Class 3B youth’s resort to the voice of the clando to perform interactional stances, like lack of motivation or goofiness, may have tempered more abjectly derogatory stereotypes about the first generation but also potentially yielded new offshoots of pejoration. It remains to be seen if their attempts to ridicule Standard French, and its speakers, as prissy and unimaginative will succeed in yielding new counter-hegemonic evaluations of that language. In sum, thus far I have contrasted two types of heteroglossic speech: the double-voiced, syncretic register of Castellanois, on the one hand; and
youth’s embedding of two other enregistered voices, *paillot* and *clado*, in their speech for the purposes of mocking, on the other. As it stands, mocking reveals itself to be quite ambiguous in its politics. Syncretic language, by contrast, seems to push away from tradition and pull towards invention (Lindquist, 2002), potentially upheaving the script.
V. Alienated at Home: Marseille’s Muslim Orthodox Youth Carry Forth Two Histories of Islamic Piety

I. Introduction

“Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay /
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free: /
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.”

Written by W.H. Auden (1967) in 1939, these three verses describe the plight of European Jews who, for lack of the right papers or a dearth of departing ships, could not leave for safer shores during World War II. The port city of Marseille was, during France’s non-occupied years of 1939-1942, one such point of frozen departures. Auden, who was not Jewish, emigrated to the United States himself that same year. Nevertheless, he appears to have sympathized—perhaps as a queer Englishman living abroad (Roberts, 2005)—with Jewish fugitives’ sentiment of feeling alienated while at home.

Roughly three quarters of a century later, the atmosphere in Marseille is again weighing heavily on its human margins. Only now those seeking refuge are a pious generation of young Muslim men and women who, while born in Marseille, are made to feel unduly foreign in their hometown. Such youth, born
to parents from Muslim countries in North, West, and East Africa and raised in Northern Marseille (Quartiers Nord), report sensing rejection from Marseille’s non-Muslim inhabitants in both conspicuous and more subtle ways. The forms of discrimination they enumerate include harassment, hate speech, and being barred from the public school system, rental housing, and the job market (in spite of high school and university degrees). It is, moreover, precisely the same visual signs which such orthodox youth use to signal belonging to their community, from the floor and wrist-length outfits (e.g., 'abāyah, jilbāb) and accessories like the hijāb or gloves worn by young women, to the beards, short pants, and caps donned by young men, that are to most non-Muslim people in Marseille cause for suspicion, fear, and, not uncommonly, loathing.

This chapter gathers narrative and behavioral accounts of how youth have chosen to live their religious commitments, whether by remaining in Marseille or leaving. These accounts and my analysis of them are the result of ethnographic engagement with several orthodox-identified youth peer groups between 2012 and 2013, and also continuing interactions with them over Facebook and Skype between 2014 and 2016. While my face-to-face interviews took place in both individual and group settings, the majority of the Facebook discussions here reported consisted of online conversations between several friends and acquaintances, of which I was but one. More detail will be provided
about the circumstances in which I met and knew each of these participants when I present them in turn. The firsthand and online ethnographic data assembled for this chapter provide, I believe, a richer picture of the variety of resources youth marshal to communicate about their experiences of being Muslim in Marseille.

As prefaced in Chapter One, a guiding question in this project has been to inquire into the diversity or convergence in the experiences of those who profess Islam in Marseille. This question was prompted by the observation of a nationwide tendency for the French State (e.g., INED/INSEE, 2010) to group youth whose parents hail from France’s African ex-colonies into the broad category of “Muslim.” Not surprisingly, my ethnographic findings in this chapter demonstrate that even just within the circumscribed area of Marseille’s northern housing projects, people practiced Islam quite differently. These nuances were not lost on residents of the projects themselves, who could easily name a handful of local Muslim “types” and their corresponding lifestyle choices. Here, my concern is primarily with a particular Islamic “figure of personhood,” a term that Agha (2011, p. 172) defines as a social type that has been linked to a set of performable behaviors by a precise population. Specifically, I discuss how a particular sub-set of my diasporic research participants qualified themselves as “pious Muslims” or “Sunnis.” By this label, they meant that they observed the
instituted model within Islam according to which one undertakes, not only the behaviors obligatory under Sharia (Sharī'ah), but also a series of actions imitating the Prophet and believed to bestow additional spiritual benefits (Asad, 1986; Gleave, 2010). Even for the young men and women who identified as “orthodox Muslims” or “Sunnis,” however, there remained a measure of fluidity as to how piety was conceptualized. This chapter takes a magnifying glass to ideological divergences in youth’s understandings of piety and shows, specifically, how these differing perspectives led to youth performing piety in two particular ways, and with not-insignificant repercussions on their personal trajectories.

Concretely, some youth—young women, in particular—ascribed to an ideology of piety according to which one must emulate the Prophet’s 7th-century migration and relocate to places in the Muslim World. For example, in the first section below I examine a narrative given by a young woman who analogizes her circumstances in Marseille to those that led to the Prophet’s hijrah, or migration. I argue that her account shows “interdiscursive” links (M. Silverstein, 2005) to texts penned by 20th century proponents of Wahhabism, in which they moved to define piety in terms of al-Walā‘ and al-Barā‘, or loyalty to Muslims and dissociation from non-Muslims, respectively (Wagemakers, 2012a, 2012b). A handful of social media examples in the first section illustrate, furthermore, how
these young women believe it is through leaving Marseille and residing in the Muslim World that they will be able to tighten their ties to Muslims (*al-Walâ‘*) and relinquish their ties to unbelievers (*al-Barā‘*). In the second half of the paper, by contrast, I gather other narratives and social media instances that point to a competing ideology of piety, one that deemphasizes the importance of dissociating from non-Muslims (*al-Barā‘*) and understands *al-Walâ‘*, or Islamic solidarity, as arising mainly through local social activism on behalf of Marseille’s Muslim community. This latter ideology, too, builds interdiscursively upon radical Muslim thinking, only in this instance on the modernist discourses crafted by 19th and 20th century Islamic reformers against colonialism. Broadly speaking, I analyze this central ideological tension, between piety as a movement away from Marseille and piety as a step towards Marseille’s Muslims, as a “double movement” in Polanyi’s (2011[1944], p. 136) sense. Insofar as the majority view the choice to leave Marseille as a form of social dislocation that does not serve the interests of Muslims at large, I also discuss measures taken by the community to keep this understanding of piety in check.

The theoretical objectives of the chapter are two-fold. On the one hand, the data I use to make my arguments indirectly restate the utility of using complementary forms of media in conducting ethnographic investigations. Both the first and second sections below furnish textual and visual materials culled
from diverse media, including face-to-face meetings, Facebook interactions, and also conversations via Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) applications like Skype and BlackBerry Messenger. The sheer volume of the computer-mediated data I collected, only a portion of which made its way into this chapter, attests to these media’s important role in how youth convey—but also disseminate—their versions of pious personhood. Moreover, from a methodological perspective, as the ethnographer I was frequently led by the imagery a young man or woman posted to their Facebook status feeds to confirm or reject an interpretation I had made of their behavior while in other “live” social settings. No doubt the process I went through, of deciphering youth’s visual cues on social media and trying to understand which identities were being indexed, has quite a bit in common with how young people themselves read each other’s displays as they unfold on the screen.

The chapter, on the other hand, also adds fuel to the growing movement within religious and Islamic studies to study religion and belief in terms, not of holy texts and theological tenets per se, but of the “embodied, material features of lived religion” (Morgan, 2010, p. 7). This focus on lived religion reorients the gaze towards the ways in which basic Islamic concepts are reworked into local practices and heterodox traditions by “small-scale, relatively isolated communities” (Eickelman & Piscatori, 1996, p. 37). Such reworkings of religion
and piety, writes Asad (1993), proceed principally through the discursive articulation of ideologies in situ. Asad remarks that “The connection between religious theory and practice is fundamentally a matter of intervention—of constructing religion in the world (not in the mind) through definitional discourses, interpreting true meanings, excluding some utterances and practices and including others” (p. 44). In the case of the youth presented here, my study of their discourses on religion reveals how, by formulating two definitions of piety specifically linked to Marseille, such youth have in effect localized the broader orthodox or Sunni understanding of piety. I consider these ideologies of piety to be “of Marseille,” on the one hand, insofar as individuals came to understand piety in one way or another based on their specific biographies and the opportunities or limits they encountered growing up in Marseille. These ideologies are also broader than Marseille, on the other hand, because in creating them youth draw on specific discourses about piety that are more properly associated with geographic regions like North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The geographically distant discourses from which they draw inspiration are also removed in time, dating from the 19th to mid-20th centuries. Thus, I note how in their spoken and written texts youth use the theorizing of past Muslim authorities to both think through their own circumstances and impart legitimacy to their own definitions of piety. This embedding of Islamic
reformist and Wahhabi discourses on piety in their narratives serves as an
example of what Bakhtin (1981) described in a well-worn remark as one of the
mundane features of language: the past “thickens, takes on flesh” (p. 84) as
people knowingly and unknowingly reference the others’ “voices” in their
speech. This interdiscursive process is central to how youth go about
positioning themselves within Marseille’s thriving culture of Islamic orthodoxy.
This chapter, as such, attends to youth’s ideologies about piety as well as their
pious practices in order to capture the subtle “interplay between personhood
and religiosity” (McIntosh, 2009, p. 21); in a word, how these young individuals
personalize piety on a daily basis.

II. One Ideology of Piety: Al-Barā‘ or Disavowal

Like other school days, I stepped onto the 25 bus line at Bougainville, the
northern-most end of the metro line. As I looked for a seat, I met eyes with
Kenza, a young woman I had met only two weeks earlier at an “all-girls” dinner
to celebrate our mutual friend Safiya’s wedding. I told her I was going to my
teaching job at the private Muslim school a bit further north, in the 15th
arrondissement, and asked where she was headed. Kalima explained that she was
on her way to a café to meet with a young man who had previously lived in
London. He could tell her what it was like in case she decided to move there.

Looking out the bus window at Northern Marseille, Kalima mused, “In London, I can be myself, I think.” I wanted to know what about her native Marseille made her want to leave, so she went on: “I’m too sensitive. It’s difficult to live here with the stares... I’m French on my mom’s side and Algerian on my dad’s, but everyone calls me ‘foreigner.’” Looking at Kalima momentarily from the perspective of the Marseillais on the bus, I imagined they might indeed wonder at her use of fashion gloves in April and the large gray ‘abāyah, or floor-grazing dress, on this willowy twenty-one year old. Her way of speaking about Marseille, describing alienation and the sense of a truer home elsewhere, was familiar to me, however, from conversations with other young women from the self-identified Sunni, or orthodox, community in Marseille.

Young women like Kalima dealt with their feeling of being “stuck” in Marseille by thinking about migration, often to the Islamic heartlands though occasionally to North Africa and the United Kingdom as well. They dreamed of exchanging Marseille, the place to which they should hypothetically belong (as natives to the city), for places that would welcome them and enable them to fulfill their personal, spiritual, educational, and professional goals. Lacking long-term jobs and husbands, they also reasoned that there could be no better moment to pick up and leave. The prospect of relocating was nevertheless
fraught with uncertainty for the majority of these young women, who lacked financial autonomy from their parents and had often developed only tenuous contacts in the places to which they hoped to move, whether Algiers, London, or Doha. An important, if not central, consideration for them as they made their decisions, whether to move or not, was what religious authorities and sources had to say about young Muslims relocating from the West to the Muslim World and, more specifically, about young women doing so on their own. The anecdote that follows exemplifies how youth tacked back and forth between their own circumstances and religious texts in determining how to handle the social dislocation they felt in Marseille.

In the written narrative I analyze below, a young Marseillaise named Qailah writes on her Facebook page about her desire to break with the alienating experience of living in Marseille. She settles upon relocation as the most pious path forward, resting this judgment on comparisons she makes between her lack of religious freedom locally and the circumstances of religious persecution faced by the Prophet Mohammed in Mecca. The parallel Qailah draws, along with her representation of relocation as the utmost confirmation of piety, are examples of Qailah’s engagement with ideals of piety developed by Wahhabi scholars in 20th-century Saudi Arabia. The distinguishing mark of the pious believer, in these writings, was his or her willingness to practice “disavowal” (al-Barā’) and
distance oneself from non-Muslim places, practices, and people in the name of God (Wagemakers, 2012a). A detailed description of Qailah’s transition towards a pious lifestyle, given below, highlights how she first passed through an alternative understanding of piety, one centering upon social activism for local Muslim causes, before settling on the *al-Barāʾ* concept of piety requiring movement away and dissociation from non-Muslims.

Over the course of the 2012-2013 school year, I spent time with Qailah in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) classes offered by a private religious institute located in Downtown Marseille. Qailah was a woman in her early twenties who came from an Algerian Kabyle household in one of Northern Marseille’s housing projects. Between our first encounter and now, I have observed Qailah change from being a non-practicing Muslim, to being highly involved in Marseille’s Muslim community, to restricting her sphere of contacts as she retreats from Marseille. The first of these phases was exemplified by her behavior at the beginning of the school year. When I first met her, other priorities seemed to come before Islam. Qailah had, for instance, signed up for the Institute’s MSA class, and another in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), but only attended when class times did not interfere with the coursework she needed to finish her master’s in social work. In keeping with her nominally Muslim background, she likewise joined the other students at prayer times only
occasionally and wore loose sweatpants and long sweaters, with her brown hair uncovered, throughout the first months of class. Qailah’s classmates were also amused by her use of Marseille’s “project accent” (*accent de quartier*) in this Islamic setting. Indeed, for the pious Muslims in attendance, the sounds and turns-of-phrase associated with the vernacular speech of Marseille’s projects cued hyper-local associations that were quite opposed to the kind of Islamic cosmopolitanism they tried to cultivate, mainly by adhering to more standard forms of French and Arabic.

By late in the fall, Qailah’s demeanor showed novel facets, however. In a first instance, she began keeping a tight prayer schedule. This was accompanied by her adoption of the sporty head-to-knee-length veil known as a *jilbāb*, which she wore over long skirts and tennis shoes. Qailah additionally took to conducting *da’wāh*, 1 or the Islamic social activism and missionizing encouraged in the Koran. When for example one of the institute’s founders, Bin Omar, organized a meeting to enlist volunteers from among the students to collect aid money for the Palestinian cause and the war in Syria, Qailah was among the first to step forward and offer her services. She likewise became the director of Marseille’s branch of a France-wide Muslim charity association. Via the

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1 MSA for teachings and doings in the name of Islamic unity (Canard, 1999), though often synonymous with Islamic outreach and social activism.
Facebook page she managed for the charity, Qailah coordinated all manner of social and financial assistance to Muslim families and (mainly divorced) “sisters” in need, ranging from soliciting blankets, clothes, and monies, to finding safe housing and distributing free meals. Her posts on behalf of the charity read much like this one, which she put up in November of 2012.

“Salâm 3alaykoum wa rahmatou Allah wa barakâtouh” (‘Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of God as well’). Are you familiar with the principle of marauding? It involves a group vigil during the evening and overnight as we roam the area looking for homeless people. (...) During our marauds we distribute meals, drinks, warm clothes/covers/blankets, and smiles!”

In accordance with the pious ideological preference of hewing to the Arabic and French standards, Qailah opens with an elaborate Muslim greeting in MSA and then continues in a quasi-academic register of French, using such standard turns of phrase as “il s’agit de” (‘it involves’) and diction as “sillonnant” (‘traverse’/’roam’).


3 It is worth noting, here, that although this greeting is one typically associated with religious settings and hence with MSA, Qailah renders it in what Palfreyman and Khalil (2007) term “common romanized Arabic” (p. 48), meaning the romanized transliteration of Arabic. Her use of this orthography, typically associated with youth fora online, rather than the more religiously associated Arabic script, perhaps proceeds from her desire to connect with her charity’s young Facebook users. She also transliterates the long “â” of salâm in French fashion as “â” and the nominative case ending plus possessive suffix of barakât (‘blessings’), typically barakâtuhu in MSA, using the dialectal Arabic possessive suffix /-uh/. These inconsistencies in Qailah’s use of MSA speak to her ongoing transition towards assuming both, a pious lifestyle, and the language ideologies associated with such an existence.
Three years have passed since Qailah’s initial forays into Marseille’s Islamic milieu. She no longer runs the charity as before and has closed its Facebook page. In September of 2015, I received a phone call from another member of our old MSA class who filled me in on how Qailah, among others, were doing. This classmate was happy to report that Qailah had married a local Shaykh from a Comorian background, but was more downcast when he told me that he only ever encounters Qailah by accident now, since she no longer feels comfortable joining in the reunions for the MSA class. He explained that when, not long ago, he crossed Qailah in the street, he did not in fact recognize her because she was covering her face and hands. The Facebook post I examine below dates from January of 2014, when her page was still up and running but Qailah no longer used it, as before, to make weekly requests for donations. I interpret the narrative she gives, along with these more recent developments in her Islamic practice, as Qailah’s movement towards a notion of piety that requires she socialize less with people in Marseille and, indeed, distance herself from Marseille altogether. It becomes apparent that Qailah’s current performance of piety is in fact part and parcel of a broader stance of aversion she has developed towards Marseille and its inhabitants. The aversion she shows, moreover, is matched by an equal attraction to the possibility of decamping to places more properly part of the Muslim world.
Thus, on a morning in January of 2014, Qailah posted on her charity’s Facebook page for the first time in several months (c.f., Figure 5.1). She implored her charity’s followers in French: “May Allah help us to leave this country. France is going from bad to worse. Mayday!!!!!!!!!!!!”. Her post inspired affirmative replies of “wallahi” (MSA. ‘by God’) and “amin” (MSA. ‘amen’) from several group members. Then a friend, pressing Qailah, inquired further, “To go where?”. Yet another protested, “But France is our home! Let those who don’t like us leave France! 😊”. This last sentiment seemed not to resonate with the majority of commentators on Qailah’s post, none of whom liked the post. The next post, however, was met with five likes. This female friend supported Qailah’s desire to leave and spoke, specifically, or her desire to conduct a religious emigration or hijrah to distance her from the French:

4 “Qu’Allah nous aide à quitter ce pays. La France, c’est de pire en pire. Au secours!!!!!!!!!!” (Qailah, 1-23-14, 7:34 a.m.)

5 “Pr aller où?” (1-23-14, 9:35 a.m.)

6 “Mais on est chez nous en France! Et ceux qui nous aiment pas, c’est à eux de quitter la France! 😊” (1-23-14, 10:35 a.m.)
“Salam wa3leyki oukhty. Naam Allahuma amin (MSA. ‘Peace be with you as well, my sister. Yes O God amen’). May Allah ease our hijra quickly because I hate them [the French] more and more and I cannot take it here anymore.”

This young women alternates between religious phraseology drawn from the Koran (e.g., Allahuma, MSA. ‘O God’) and standardly written French, and her post is noteworthy for her use of elements of a francized orthography of MSA (e.g., oukhty ‘sister’/naam ‘yes’) together with examples of the romanized orthography of MSA (e.g., wa3leyki ‘and upon you’) used by many youth communicating in Arab countries online or by SMS. Most tellingly, however, is that this young woman expresses alienation from France through these two languages and asks Allah, moreover, to facilitate her relocation to a Muslim country. Underlying the comments made by Kalima (from the section’s initial anecdote), Qailah, and this Facebook friend of Qailah’s, is a reconceptualization of Marseille as no longer their home. Specifically, in their discourse these orthodox young women repositioned Marseille as a place of temporary exile, rather than their home. A female university student named Bushrah, for instance, often joked with her girlfriends about being “apatride,” or country-less, despite her status as a French citizen and local of Marseille. Another young woman named Radya pointed out, whereas in Marseille she felt disoriented,
“when I go to Algeria, I don’t experience country shock.” The act of presupposing the existence of a true home located elsewhere, which these young women were simply waiting to rejoin, allowed them to indicate their greater kinship with places in the Muslim World and thus subvert their feelings of alienation from Marseille.

This transposed reckoning of home was facilitated by a particular analogy young women elaborated between circumstances in Marseille and conditions in 7th-century Mecca. A follow-up post by Qailah on the same Facebook conversation illustrates this analogy and its effects on young women’s plans for the future. At 8:29 p.m., Qailah chimed back in to the Facebook conversation she had begun that morning, citing only Verse 97 of the 4th Sūrah (Al-Nisā’) from a French translation of the Koran:

“The angels will ask those whom they claim back while steeped in sin: ‘What were you doing?’ ‘We were oppressed in the land,’ they will reply. They will say: ‘Was not the earth of God spacious enough for you to fly for refuge?’ Hell shall be their home: an evil fate.”

Here Qailah cues a parallel between the oppressive conditions facing early Muslims in Mecca during the 7th century and those she and her peers face in contemporary Marseille. On September 24th, 622 C.E., following a decade of

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8 “Je me sens pas depaysée quand je pars en Algérie.” (Radya, 9-19-12)

severe persecution at the hands of his own tribe (the Quraysh) in Mecca, Prophet Mohammed relocated dozens of his Muslim followers to Medinah. Not all those who had professed Islam by that time participated in this migration, known as the hijrah in MSA, and certainly the majority of the Quraysh remained in Mecca, preferring paganism and their worldly possessions to this lone Prophet and his monotheistic message (Saleh, 2010). The Verse Qailah cites above describes the wrath of God and his angels at those who were able to leave Mecca but decided instead to stay behind.\textsuperscript{10} Forsaking Medinah as their true home, as the Verse states, guaranteed these sinful individuals an eternal home in Hell.

By invoking this Verse, Qailah maps not only parallels between now and then but also, quite importantly, parallels between the pious and sinful Muslims of yore and the good and bad Muslims living in Marseille. The Verse’s criticism of those who did not accompany the Prophet (“fly for refuge”) goes hand-in-hand with the attribution of moral superiority to those who did in fact emulate the Prophet and his decision to move. As described by Afsaruddin (2010, p. 184), in this early period a hierarchy of moral excellence took shape according to sābiqah, or one’s precedence in converting to Islam, and whether one had been

\textsuperscript{10} Some Muslims were physically unable to accompany the Prophet in his hijrah but were nevertheless “never charged with apostasy or cowardice” (Armstrong, 1993, p. 151). This immunity was due both to their inability to relocate and to their steadfast commitment to the Prophet and his mission.
among the first to accompany the Prophet in the dangerous *hijrah* journey North. These *muhājirūna*, or emigrants, risked their lives to stand by the Prophet during the *hijrah* and combat religious persecution. They also replaced their kinship ties to their Meccan brethren with a new allegiance they claimed in Medinah, namely loyalty to the *Ummah* or Islamic community (Rubin, 2010). Qailah appears to support the idea that, just as piety belonged only to those who conducted *hijrah* and stood by the Prophet, so must Muslims in Marseille lift themselves from their circumstances in order to be pious. The morning after her initial post, Qailah warns those among her charity’s online followers who plan to remain in Marseille of the dangers this poses to their piety: “At the risk of losing authenticity, our residence [in France] must be provisional, temporary...” (1-24-14, 8:51 a.m.). The authenticity of one’s piety, writes Qailah, relies on one’s sincere intent to relocate, followed upon by an actual relocation. One of the first signs of this intent, as intimated above, lies in how young women ideologically recast their continued residence in Marseille in terms of a life of pious exile. Their discourses frame Marseille as if it was a waiting room to be abided *en route* to their true homes, articulated to lie in the Muslim World. Their stopover in Marseille is, moreover, made tenable only through planning their departures; as Kalima said in the beginning anecdote, real home awaits elsewhere.
Several of the points Qailah touches on—the utmost piety of the first Muslims who followed the Prophet, her contempt of France, and the need to relocate—suggest influences on how she conceptualizes piety that come from other than herself or her unmediated reading of Koran and Hadith (codified narrations about the Prophet’s life). The understanding that special moral distinctions are bestowed upon the Prophet and the next two generations that followed him is, tellingly, the central idea of the geographically dispersed movement in Islamic thought called Salafism. Indeed, the very term for the movement derives from its followers’ strict intent to follow the conduct of al-salaf al-ṣaḥīḥ, or the pious predecessors, described by the Prophet himself to be “khayr ummatī,” or the best of his (literally, “my”) community (Wagemakers, 2012b, p. 3). Despite some terminological confusions over which thinkers, precisely, considered themselves proponents of Salafism (c.f., Lauzière, 2010), Salafism is here understood in Wagemakers’ (2012b) sense as the movement proper to 20th-century purists who used textual analysis of Hadith to strictly imitate Islam’s pious predecessors in as many domains of life as possible.11 Although Qailah’s stance might be said to point in some respects towards a more Salafi interpretation of Sunni Islam, it could also be said that in her

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11 Due to Salafis’ close following of Koran and adherence to the ways of the salaf as described in Ḥadīth texts, they notably do not follow any of the five schools (madhhab) of Sharia within Sunnism.
contempt for Marseille and intent to move away Qailah approaches the tenets of the Najdi Saudi branch of Salafism better known to the public as Wahhabism (al-Wahabiyyah). Influenced by the earlier writings of Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), 20th-century Wahhabi scholars like the Saudis ‘Abd al-‘Azziz b. al-Baz (d. 1999) and Muhammad b. Salih al-‘Uthaymin (d. 2001) theorized piety as depending upon the duplex practice of al-Walā‘ and al-Barā‘. Practices corresponding to al-Walā‘, defined as showing loyalty only to Muslims, and al-Barā‘, meaning the disavowal of anything related to disbelief (kufr) and disbelievers (kuffār), included not greeting non-Muslims or celebrating their holidays, not showing attachment to non-Islamic people, places, and things, and refusing to live in or visit the West unnecessarily—all at the risk of being excommunicated from the community of believers (Wagemakers, 2012a).

The way in which Qailah positions relocation as central to her ongoing piety reveals two specific interdiscursive ties to Wahhabi creed. As per M. Silverstein (2005), interdiscursivity takes place when an individual on a certain occasion creates a text, spoken or written, that reveals their “retrospective or recuperative relationship to either another discursive event (in what I term a manifestation of “token”-interdiscursivity) or to an internalized notion of a type or genre of discursive event (in what I term “type”-interdiscursivity)” (p. 9). Both Qailah’s interdiscursive gestures can be considered examples of type-
interdiscursivity insofar as she references, not a certain event or writing of Wahhabi scholars, but their sphere of ideas and thought process. The first interdiscursive link of Qailah’s, as such, is the way in which she sequentially retraces in her Facebook comments the originary reasoning of Salafism. Specifically, she provides a Koranic verse speaking of disbelievers in the 7th century and then she warns against Muslims in Marseille displaying the same inauthenticity. Thus, she recreates the parallel upon which Salafi philosophy was founded, that between the moral Muslims of yore and those of today. Her second interdiscursive indication lies in her advocacy for relocation. Her insistence on leaving Marseille, or planning to, channels an ideology of piety resembling Wahhabi scholars’ insistence on al-Barā‘, or the disavowal of non-Muslim conditions. After bridging Islamic time, as described, Wahhabis move to single out al-Barā‘ as “the litmus test to separate the ‘true’ Muslims from the rest” (Wagemakers, 2008, p. 4). In other words, Wahhabis’ understanding of hijrah as an instance of the Prophet showing disavowal (al-Barā‘) projects a course of action for Muslims like Qailah who, wondering about their un-Islamic surroundings, find their way to the al-Barā‘ interpretation of residence in the West.

Qailah likely became familiar with this mode of reasoning through reading, her classes at the Institute, or through her contact with other young women also
seeking a way of addressing their feelings of alienation. It is worth noting, in this regard, that within Marseille the ideology of piety as relocation is something I have only encountered among young women. It may be the case that young Muslim women, given their relatively more visible styles of dress compared to young Muslim men, are more liable to feel unloved and alienated by Marseillais society and are hence more likely to seek redress through stringent religious solutions to their predicament. This section has described a growing subculture of piety specific, for the moment, to young orthodox women. In the next section, below, I analyze several images and texts from social media to illustrate the importance of these networks in solidifying this particular understanding of piety, namely, as warranting relocation and other forms of disavowal.

*Practices of Piety: Exemplifying Al-Barā‘*

In this section, I examine three examples of social media engagement by young orthodox women to document how the disavowal of non-Muslims, or the ideology of piety known as *al-Barā‘* (‘disavowal of non-Muslims’), is in effect practiced. The first example, drawn from conversations with Radya, presents how this young woman is going about planning to in fact leave Marseille. A social media network she has developed is shown to play a pivotal role in her willingness to relocate to Doha, Qatar. The second two examples, gathered from
two young women who do not have the means to leave Marseille but nevertheless yearn to, demonstrate how they practice disavowal from within Marseille, in part via social media. All three cases point to the centrality of social media as young women either, network in preparation for their departure or, alternatively, seek to communicate their commitment to disavowing Marseille to their peers while still living in Marseille.

Radya, who turned twenty this year but was seventeen when I met her, occasionally attended the same private institute where Qailah was taking MSA classes. A couple of months into the 2012-2013 class year, however, Radya stopped visiting the Institute in Marseille altogether, preferring to spend her time mostly at home, an apartment in a housing project on the outskirts of Aix-en-Provence. When I asked her why she stopped attending classes, Radya replied, “I never go outside. What for? I’d rather stay home and speak to interesting people.”12 Since her junior year of high school, Radya had in fact begun leading an unusual life for a French-born seventeen-year old.13 Inspired by visits to her mother’s family outside Algiers, back in Marseille Radya began wearing the hijab and removing it before entering school premises. She likewise

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12 “Je sors jamais dehors. Pour quoi faire? Je préfère rester à la maison et parler avec des gens intéressants.” (11-2-12).

13 Radya’s father was born in Marseille to a Moroccan father and a pied-noir (or French) mother. Her mother was born in Algeria, of Arab heritage, and speaks to Radya in Algerian.
became increasingly disenchanted with the French public curriculum and, in particular, with her history and geography teacher’s perfunctory treatment of the French-Algerian War, and took to skipping classes. Hence, at the outset of her baccalaureate year, Radya left high school and enrolled in distance-schooling.

The “interesting people” with whom she conversed at home during this period were three women, two from Qatar and another from Saudi Arabia, whom she had met while shopping in a boutique in Aix. Radya surprised the tourists with her cosmopolitan allure, mainly her subscription to the New York-based online magazine *Fashion Week* and her use of Algerian that sounded markedly un-Algerian in accent. During her trips to Algeria, Radya had observed a difference between how people from the capital spoke Algerian, namely with many contributions from French and Berber, and how people from her family’s province of Batna spoke Algerian, “with accents from there [Batna] but only in Arabic words...their dialect is more [standardly] Arabic.” She began emulating this way of speaking, reassured that even if she was far from perfecting her MSA at least she could use a pure Algerian untainted by non-Arab influences. In an interesting turn of events, Radya has since her encounter with these women three years ago also become fascinated with learning from them how to speak Saudi and Qatari (*Khaltiji*) Arabic. These varieties, she now believes, display the greatest linguistic proximity to the speech forms from the Arabian Peninsula.
that participated in shaping MSA during and in the centuries following the Prophet’s lifetime (Suleiman, 2012). Intent on fashioning herself into one of these “true Arabs,” as she calls them, Radya spends her afternoons and evenings conversing and texting in Saudi and Khalījī. This she does via several Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) applications, notably Skype, BlackBerry Messenger, and Viber, with her girlfriends in Abha (Saudi Arabia) and Doha (Qatar), as well as their friends and relatives.

In the Fall of 2014, Radya was able to arrange an initial trip to Doha to visit her friends there. She returned with stories of what life was like for young Muslims “in the real Muslim lands” (dans les vraies terres musulmanes): the courtesy of strangers, modesty in the streets, and the ease with which her friend’s family hosted her for two months. Now back in Marseille, Radya has discontinued her distance learning and given up on her baccalaureate. Based on assurances from the well-to-do family in Doha that they can easily find her employment in the fashion sector in Doha, Radya bides her time sketching designs for modern ‘abāyahs (head-to-toe dresses) and awaiting the day when she can leave Marseille to settle “back home” (chez moi), as she refers to Doha.

Akin to Yang’s (2009) description of online communities as fora allowing the Chinese to express and affirm their “utopian impulses” (p. 156), Radya has and continues to use VoIP applications as networking devices to further define many
of her hunches, whether about Marseille’s depravity or the Arabian Peninsula’s paradisiacal offerings for young Muslims. Since her last visit to Doha she has, moreover, resolved to use Khaliji in her VoIP correspondence. Learning Khaliji constitutes a central piece of preparation before leaving for Doha, and I argue that Radya’s formulation of a local Gulf persona for herself is one among several measures she is taking to ease her impending resettlement.

Figure 5.2 depicts a Messenger conversation between Radya and her friend Maha, who is from Abha, Saudi Arabia. In the conversation, Radya and
Maha resume a previous joke about how Maha is counting on Radya—now the recognized world traveler—to reserve her a ticket to Japan. Maha pleads in Saudi, “Just don’t let me go back to Saudi Arabia. Reserve for Japan instead.” Radya laughs and says “of course” (min ‘uyūnī), using a generic expression that literally means ‘from my eyes.’ Maha then sends kisses of appreciation and finishes with “bless your eyes” (tuslim ‘uyūnīj). Although Maha usually sticks to Saudi Arabic, in this instance she opts to address Radya with the Khalījī possessive suffix -j rather than the Saudi -sh or -s or MSA -k. When I inquired with Radya via as to why Maha had chosen the Khalījī rather than the Saudi or MSA suffix, she laughed and explained in French that Maha has grown accustomed to Radya using the Gulf dialect in her speech: “Every time Maha uses the Saudi way, I say ‘lol,’ so now she just addresses me using the way I prefer.” In a Whatsapp text to me later that afternoon, Radya clarified in English: “usually in saudia they don’t use ج [j] but she seen that i am speaking like this... yeah coz when she use ك [k] i always answer with ههه [hhh] ج [j]!”

This text conversation is telling because it illustrates how, by 2015, Radya has clearly taken to playing the role of a Khalījīyyah (or woman from the Gulf) with...
her acquaintances, even when they come from elsewhere and are less familiar with *Khaliği* speech. Moreover, unlike the female university students from the United Arab Emirates studied by Palfreyman and Khalil (2007), who preferred the “common romanized Arabic” orthography in their online conversations, Radya and Maha employ the Arabic script to exchange with one another. This choice to use the Arabic script, typically associated with Arab culture and the history of Islam, harks back to Radya’s intent to speak in varieties, like “pure” Algerian or *Khaliği* (Gulf Arabic), that she believes will align her with the pious purity and linguistic past of MSA. In sum, Radya’s VoIP interactions with people in the Gulf help her to both, learn varieties like *Khaliği*, through which she presents herself to her acquaintances as a pious person affiliated with the geographic nucleus of Islam, and set up relationships with people in the region who are likely to facilitate her actual departure.

Whereas Radya leans on social media to network for her relocation and develop the kind of Gulf-based pious persona she imagines for her life in Doha, other orthodox young women from Marseille nurture the same dream but currently lack the means to undertake their *hijrah*, or religious emigration. Manal was a 24-year old university graduate when I met her in 2013. Born near Marseille to two Arab Algerian parents, Manal grew up with little religious education. Friends at Marseille’s local university helped her in that regard, and
she began practicing and wearing the veil in 2010, later switching to the more modest *jilbaab*. Since her graduation, Manal’s main source of income has been a low-paying retail position. She nevertheless holds out for a more prosperous future and the means to relocate permanently to Algeria. Though she was not born there, she refers to it as “my country” (*mon pays*) and returns often via the ferry between Marseille and Algiers. Manal, like Radya, grew up with both French and Algerian spoken in her household. As part of her pious ethic, she, too, would like to improve her MSA. For lack of time, however, she instead dedicates herself to making her French as polished as possible, with the understanding that to speak Standard French and not Marseille’s iconic vernacular is yet another way of disaligning with the city.

One of the French-language fora she participates in online is a private Facebook group for women entitled “*Hijrah to Algeria*.” There one can listen to clips in which religious scholars speak in French about the meaning and necessity of conducting *hijrah*, particularly from European countries, and read French-language articles about why a young Muslim woman does not need a *mahram*, or male escort, in order to conduct *hijrah* to the Muslim World. French-born women also contribute posts on a weekly basis dealing with the novelties and difficulties of creating new lives in Algerian locales. Topics discussed include where to send their children to school, best places to grocery shop and get a gym...
membership, and which religious resources are available. The page also addresses more practical concerns, like how to obtain Algerian papers and work permits as a French-born person. Manal occasionally reposts interesting articles from this forum on her Facebook page, such as the promotion for a magazine issue shown in Figure 5.3. Posted in March of 2015, the image depicts the cover of an Islamic magazine published in France called “Faith” (Imān). This issue in particular features the title “Desire to leave... Special Issue on hijrah” and a photo of a Muslim woman beside a suitcase on a desert landscape. Below this, the elegantly composed French captions read: “Once upon a time, emigration;”

These examples of Manal’s engagement with Facebook demonstrate its duplex utility for her. On the one hand, her Facebook page serves as a platform through which to convey to her friends and acquaintances her plans to relocate and, thus, her commitment to this understanding of Islamic piety. On the other, Facebook also allows her to tap into online social networks like the Hijra en Algérie group and hence glean information about the technicalities involved in hijrah. Judging from the posts made by recent emigrants to Algeria and the number and specificity of comments that accrue to each post, this Facebook group no doubt aids young French Muslim women in working out the details of their plans to move to Algeria. Most recently, for example, a “sister” posted about her positive experiences newly living in the capital, Algiers. She writes that “since I began living in Algeria, I have really advanced in the knowledge of our religion. I have started reading and writing the [Modern Standard] Arabic language... I have also been able to enroll my children in a private Muslim school run by the Saudi Arabian Embassy.”15 Several sisters who presumably live in France followed up with her in the comments section, pleading with her to

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15 “Depuis que je vis en Algérie, j’ai beaucoup avancé dans l’apprentissage de notre religion, je commence à lire et à écrire la langue Arabe... J’ai d’ailleurs pu scolariser mes enfants dans une école privée islamique dirigée par l’ambassade d’Arabie Saoudite d’Algérie.” (11-13-15).
provide more information about her children’s school. One wrote: “Salam alaykoum (MSA. ‘peace be upon you’) would it be possible for the sister [who posted] to contact me min fadlikum (MSA. ‘please’) I have some questions concerning the private school.”¹⁶

The two previous examples showed how among the various channels through which Radya and Manal communicate their pious desire to live in the Muslim World, social media proved particularly useful in broadcasting the imminence of their departure from Marseille. This final example illustrates the use of social media to exhibit young women’s disavowal of Marseille and France, much in the same vein as Qailah’s “Mayday!” post. Expressing fatigue and disgust with life in Marseille is, in effect, the other side of the coin of departure. Thus, in 2012-2013, I met an orthodox young woman named Bushrah who was studying for her B.A. in Arabic and Arab civilizations at the local university. Then, after leaving Marseille, we became friends on Facebook. I was intrigued by the trajectory of one of her posts in particular. In November of 2014, Bushrah changed her profile picture to the image depicted in Figure 5.4. The image captures a cartoon drawing of a man who, as he steps back with both hands up, claims in a mix of French and MSA: “No one loves me. I do not love anyone. Al-

¹⁶ “Salam alaykoum serait-il possible que la sœur me contacte min fadlikum j’aurai des questions concernant l’école privé” (11-13-15).
ḥamduliləh (thanks be to God).” In choosing this image, along with its accompanying text and content, Bushrah conveyed to her Facebook friends a strong sense of apathy towards the nature of social relationships in France. Initially, her change of picture solicited no replies and only a few “likes” from friends. However, when several months later, on January 8th, Bushrah added the hash-tags #JeSuisCool (#ImChill) and #TeamJeMenFouDeTout (#TeamIDoNotGiveACrapAboutaThing) to her profile picture, friends contributed a torrent of comments. January 8th, 2015 was, tellingly, the day after the shootings at the Charlie Hebdo Magazine headquarters.

Figure 5.4. Bushrah’s Profile Picture
Bushrah’s addition of two hash-tags, one claiming that she “is chill” and the other that she “does not give a crap,” at this moment of crisis in French society effectively transformed her apathetic attitude to a clearly anti-French stance, one on a par, for instance, with the pro-Muslim “I am *not* Charlie Hebdo” campaign that circulated on some of my research participants’ Facebook pages in the days after the shooting. Contributing to her anti-French stance here, additionally, is a voicing contrast Bushrah sets up through a change in linguistic footing. The cartoon’s text, on the one hand, alternates between a more standard form of written French, which insists on the formal non-contracted *personne ne m’aime* (‘no one loves me’), and the MSA formula *Al-ḥamdulillah*. These linguistic varieties are consistent with the language practices and aspirations of Muslim orthodox youth in Marseille, as described in the cases of Qailah and Manal. If the text and image represent the voice of the pious French Muslim youth, then the hash-tags, by contrast, “style” (Hill, 1999; Cutler, 1999) the voice of the non-Muslim French person. What reveals Bushrah’s hash-tags to be an instance of voicing the other is her extra-normative resort to profanity (e.g., *je m’en fou*, ‘I do not give a crap/fuck’), a language practice otherwise very negatively viewed within her peer group. One of Bushrah’s best girlfriends

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17 The more informal counterpart, common in speech, would be *personne m’aime*, without the negative particle *ne*.

18 I have kept the mispelling of *je m’en fous* as is, given its appearance in the hash-tag.
described their group’s avoidance of profane language thus: “One mustn’t say bad words or speak loudly in the street. We have to be respectful, say sorry, and smile when insulted. One can never be vulgar.” Bushrah’s deployment of profanity, thus, reveals that she is assuming the voice of the non-Muslim French “other,” also indicated by her use of French slang borrowed from English in the hash-tags (e.g., cool, team). As Cutler (1999) has proposed in her article on how an adolescent white male adopts African American Vernacular features in his speech, or Barrett (1999) has described in his article on how African American drag queens employ a register of “white women speech” in their performances, embedding speech associated with an out-group in one’s own talk can act as a metacomment on those who are in fact thought to speak in such a way. Here, Bushrah animates the voice of the non-Muslim French youth to cue her skeptical stance on the degree of “team commitment” such youth display. Via her hashtags, Bushrah suggests that these are the kinds of comments non-Muslim French youth make when French Muslim youth face troubles in their midst. Not only is she cynically returning the favor of not showing solidarity, but, by using their type of speech to do so, she signals that her move to dissociate from the

French victims is an echo of previous moves the French made to disalign with her.

Some of Bushrah’s friends found this cynicism amusing, as was the case of one friend who likened Bushrah’s attitude to that of the Japanese cartoon character Calimero: “Mdrrr, #BushryModeCaliméro ACTIVÉE!” (Lol, #BushryCalimeroMode ACTIVATED). Calimero is a black chicken who complains of being unfairly treated in his family of yellow chickens and hence goes about life with a rather negative, defensive outlook. Other friends, by contrast, were disappointed by Bushrah’s transition from apathy, as connoted by the original image and text, to her outright declaration of disregard for the French victims, as purveyed by her hash-tags. One writes “Moi je t’aiiiiiime” (‘Me, I loooooove you’); another, “Oui moi aussi je t’aime Soumy” (‘Yeah, I love you too Soumy’); then a third young woman named Mimi adds a large emoticon with tears running down its face. These three female friends seem to be urging Bushrah away from this ideology of piety as disavowal of the French and towards a less combative stance vis-à-vis the French. Indeed, as I intimated in the introduction, some orthodox-identified youth from Marseille were proponents of an ideology of piety requiring affiliation with Marseille, one that contrasted starkly with the ideology of piety as disavowal being incarnated here by Bushrah.
Via these three examples, it becomes apparent that social media provide useful spaces, for both, evincing one’s commitment to leave Marseille, as in the examples concerning Radya and Manal, or communicating disavowal of France, as demonstrated by Bushrah. Because these ideological takes on piety are also reflected in the language ideologies held by youth, it becomes of particular importance to take these fractally recursive (Irvine & Gal, 2000) ideologies into account when interpreting how youth engage with one another through online media. Without knowing, for instance, that Radya puts Gulf Arabic on a pedestal based on an etymological link she draws between it and MSA, which she considers the utmost religious language, her use of Khaliji could not be recognized as a display of piety in hopes of relocation. Likewise, in the absence of familiarity with the ideology, prevalent in Marseille’s orthodox community, by which one’s adherence to standard varieties of French and Arabic is performative of piety, Bushrah’s change of footing, from her own voice to styling the other’s voice, could not be read as a cynical gesture.

II. Another Ideology of Piety: Al-Walā‘ and Knotting New Ties to Muslim Marseille

Karl Polanyi (2011[1944]) coined the term “double movement” (p. 136) to describe a social dynamic whereby some part of society acts to weaken the
social fabric and then those affected gather and push back to protect themselves. Although he used the expression to capture the dehumanizing effects of market capitalism on the laborer and the protective measures people developed to check those effects, a kind of protective countermovement nevertheless appears to be afoot within Marseille’s community of faithful youth. Above, I hinted at the significance of how friends commented on Bushrah’s post in ways that challenged her stance of apathy and disavowal. Indeed, the majority of the orthodox youth I encountered while in Marseille did not consider that piety was best exemplified through actions showing *al-Barā‘*, or disavowal of Marseille’s non-Muslimness. Rather, the majority deemed dreams like Qailah’s or Radya’s, to forsake ties to hometown and nation and pursue an unencumbered Islamic life in the Muslim World, unnecessary and, in their penchant towards individualism, not truly of service to the Islamic *Ummah*. According to the youth presented in this latter part of the chapter, piety was instead a function of whether they contributed to the well-being of the Muslim community in Marseille. Specifically, their ideology of piety emphasized *al-Walā‘*, or Islamic solidarity, in the form of Islamic social activism conducted on local Muslims’ behalf. In order to understand the means and ends associated with this interpretation of piety, I consider a narrative by a young teacher named Saleh. In his historical narrative, Saleh informs me of how French colonialism
incapacitated religious education in Algeria and, with it, people’s ability to be pious Muslims. His solution, however, lies not in disavowing the French. Rather, he discloses a plan for fostering Islamic education and, through it, the quotient of Islamic piety within France. In the final section, I discuss examples of how this concept of piety involves a “move towards” Muslims within Marseille. I argue, furthermore, that pious behaviors of this sort illustrate, first, a commitment to an unrecognized school of thought (madhhab) within Islam that the late Shahab Ahmed (2016) called the “madhhab of Love” (p. 41), and second, what Ghazzal Hage (2005) has termed “existential mobility” (p. 470).

On a Tuesday afternoon after teaching at a private Muslim secondary school in Northern Marseille, I happened to catch the same train to nearby Aix-en-Provence as Saleh, the 28-year old history and Islamic civilization teacher at the same school. Saleh lives in Aix but was born in Istres, a small city about 50 kms northwest of Marseille, to Kabyle parents who had immigrated there from Tizi Ouzou, Algeria. He grew up in a family that was only nominally Muslim, or only practiced “the big three,” meaning no pork, no alcohol, and the Ramadan fast. Living in a small city, Saleh had few opportunities to meet Muslims until he went to high school. There, he made friends with other North Africans who frequented the one prayer room in Istres and began to learn about what it meant to be a practicing Muslim. More than a decade later, Saleh is now married with
two children, a highly committed Muslim, and a teacher for Marseille’s only private Islamic secondary school.

We chatted on the train about the course his life had taken and how it differed from those of many second-generation teens living in Marseille today. Saleh calmly critiqued how such youth “refer themselves to their national identity—Comorian, Algerian, Tunisian—without knowing exactly what it is... It’s superficial. They don’t have a veritable identity, especially because they’re detached from their country of origin.” A younger Saleh would also have said he was Kabyle, the tendency being to claim one’s parents’ identity in the diaspora, he explains. Curious what his current preference was, I asked “Kabyle rather than...French?” To which he responded, “My-my uncle died so uh you can’t say ‘I’m French,’ not even as a child could I say that. Not even today, though that has to do with something else, not with the war in Algeria. The [Kabyle] identity now has little to do with me, but when I was little it did.” Saleh’s uncle was a martyr in the Algerian War for independence from the French (1954-1962), and as young man he identified as Kabyle rather than French in part due to this painful family history. I was curious about this “something else” that prevented him from feeling French today as well. So I wondered aloud “and now you feel a little...?”, to which Saleh said promptly in MSA, “Muslim, Muslim, khalaṣ” (Muslim, Muslim, that’s it). Today, Saleh’s kinship loyalties are primarily
to other “brothers” and “sisters” in the Muslim *Ummah*, both past and present. This loyalty to Muslims, says Saleh, is something he exercises mainly in the realm of education. *Éducation*, he reminds me, is in fact the means through which to arrive at “the veritable understanding of Islam.” Saleh goes on to explain the rigorous process of self-edification he went through in becoming a practicing Muslim: “One has to make the effort to understand, to learn. That is what Islam is about. Lazy people aren’t tolerated! I didn’t know anything, anything, anything! But now I understand.” The efforts Saleh made to educate himself in certain Islamic subjects and languages were only the means to his piety. The ends of his auto-didactic penchant, specifically, were to educate himself as a Muslim in order to then be able to pass this knowledge on to his students. In other words, piety for Saleh lay in the commitment he could show to Marseille’s Muslim community through his educational talent.

Aside from learning about Koran and the other subjects of Islamic knowledge, Saleh was also working to spruce up his French and learn MSA. Speaking about the importance of improving one’s French, Saleh remarked on how the French language can also be a vehicle for Islamic piety: “The Muslim who comes [to Marseille] must speak French correctly, because the Muslim is aiming for perfection; plus, it’s a beautiful language, so to speak vulgarly, well...” Then Saleh cautions that the utmost vehicle for conveying piety is, of course,
MSA: “it is the language that permits access to a truth—to the truth.” He delights in the fact that the school’s director, who is also the in-house Imām, gives his Friday prayer message (khutbah) in MSA, and he uses the opportunity to jot down new vocabulary and try out his listening comprehension. Despite his individual study of the language, Saleh nevertheless pronounces himself “psychologically unable” to converse in MSA with the more educated Muslims around him at the school. He feels as though making mistakes when speaking would be akin to “making mistakes in the religion.”

The significance placed on perfecting one’s French and MSA, and minimizing one’s use of Marseille’s vernacular and regional varieties of Arabic (e.g., Algerian, Tunisian), derives from the potential these languages—in their “perfected” state—hold for strengthening the Muslim community. MSA, in particular, does not simply enable comprehension of Islam’s sacred texts. Rather, says Saleh, when French Muslims harbor knowledge of MSA it safeguards them against possible cultural and religious incursions against them by the French, who might otherwise seek to divest them of their community’s strength. Saleh details his understanding of MSA as a tool for resisting oppression and, by the same token, building Islamic solidarity, in the narrative below. While still on the train, I asked Saleh about which Arabic he was studying in his free time. He replied:
“Fushā [MSA]. Yes the-for me dialect is one-are the languages that were developed and accompanied by uh the colonizers to divide a world that was unified as its origin... They destroyed the Koranic schools teaching the [Standard] Arabic language, the universities, the elites, because that’s how it was done... It’s through force, that’s how it’s always been in order to destroy the elites... During French colonization for example the first thing that they organized was the destruction of the madrasahs, of the Koranic schools, and to bar Algerians from educating themselves... First consequence? Ignorance, diffusion of ignorance. Second consequence? Diffusion of dialects... And not just that, because if there’s something well known it’s that the elimination of elites who mastered this [Standard Arabic] language and who taught it, whether among women or men, scholars or intellectuals... If there is something well understood in history it’s that even a majority of the people who dominated during the 19th and 20th centuries used this procedure to avoid-because it’s always the elite bourgeoisie who carry out the revolts, who spearhead the resistance, etcetera... That’s why we had to wait 50 years in Algeria to see the-to start down the path of resurrection.”

By Saleh’s account, the ignorance and social fragmentation sewn by the French became possible only once they prevented Muslims from accessing Islamic and MSA-medium education. As an educator and parent of young Muslims living in France today, Saleh feels he and other Muslim educators have the responsibility to ensure that youth who belong to the diasporan Sunni community in Marseille never face that sort of crisis in their
education, and their faith, again. He imagines himself and other young adult Muslims carrying forth a historic mandate, passed to them by martyrs like his uncle and a generation of war-time Algerian militants for Islam and independence: to continue educating children in MSA and their faith at all costs. Only thus, he thinks, will young French Muslims retain a measure of intellectual and religious independence amidst mainstream French society.

In the following paragraphs, I delve briefly into the lives and philosophies of piety of a handful of Islamic reformers who resisted European colonialism. This historical detour serves to demonstrate the measure of interdiscursivity between Saleh’s conceptualization of piety and that evidenced in writings by these Islamic reformers. It becomes apparent that Saleh’s vision of piety, as resting on Muslims’ efforts to edify themselves and fortify their community, gathers inspiration from the modernist and militantly community-oriented ideology of piety espoused by these Islamic reformers.

Many historical figures, Algerian and otherwise, participated in identifying Islamic edification and MSA as the twin pillars of—what Saleh terms above—“the path to resurrection” for Muslims under colonial rule. These ideas germinated in earnest much earlier, however, namely during the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, in the first half of the 19th century a group of officials, officers, and teachers began organizing across the East (e.g.,
present-day Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt) to create Islamic reform within the Ottoman Empire (Hourani, 1962). The Egyptian Rifāʿa al-Ṭahṭāwī and the Caucasus-born Khayr al-Dīn laid down a modernization program according to which the future of the Islamic *Ummah* lay in Muslims’ ability to study the modern world, reinterpret Sharia in light of it, and emulate Europe’s justice-based political governance, its free media, and its education system (ibid.). Many living in the Fertile Crescent at the time perceived a failure on the part of (Classical) Arabic to participate in these modernizing tendencies. Thus, in 1836, al-Ṭahṭāwī opened a School of Languages in Cairo with the mission of translating European documents into Arabic and training officials and translators in the expanding language (Holes, 2004). In 1919, the new Damascus Academy was tasked with rendering Arabic capable of expressing modern ideas while retaining its purity (ibid.).

A differing and slightly later generation of Islamic reformers, including the Persian Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, the Egyptian Muḥammad ‘Abduḥ, his Lebanese student Amīr Shakīb Arslān, and the Syrian Rashīd Riḍā, among others, continued to call for reform within Islam but likewise militated for pan-Islamic unity in the face of an encroaching Europe. With WWI impending, these thinkers endorsed solidarity in the *Ummah* as the means of fending off European colonization and restoring Islamic civilization.
According to Riḍā in 1922, the Ummah’s natural bond inhered in MSA, the only adhesive strong enough to unite Muslims across interpretations and cultural differences (Holes, 2004). Perhaps no figure was as complex and influential in the first half of the 20th century, however, as Shakīb Arslān, whose translated French writings were widely circulated and positions often cited within conversations between Muslim orthodox youth.

From an educated Druze family with noble bloodlines, Arslān could be described as an aspiring Ottoman diplomat who, upon the Ottoman Empire’s collapse, riveted his considerable energies on fighting European colonialism through print and his networking abilities. His pro-Ottoman loyalties during WWI led to his branding as a dangerous troublemaker by the French and to his eventual exile to Berlin (Cleveland, 1985). From there, he financed MSA-medium political journals and wrote about the Ummah’s degeneration at the hands of European colonial powers (Arslān, 2008 [1939]). He likewise became an itinerant intellectual, traveling often to advise elite Muslim circles across the Eastern and Western Arab world (or Mashriq and Maghrib) in the ideology of pan-Islamism and resistance tactics, and recruiting writers to his publications. His efforts to unite the Mashriq and Maghrib and active mentorship to younger resistance thinkers in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia during the interwar years brought his
contemporaries to salute him as a “sincere militant” (Riḍā’s preface, Arslân, 2008 [1939], p. 11). His biographer likewise pens that Arslân both believed in and himself embodied a “modern jihād ethic” (Cleveland, 1985, p. 119).

Arslân earned his other moniker, “the prince of eloquence” (āmīr al-bayān), thanks to his skill in MSA and rhetoric (Cleveland, 1985, p. 84). When during the 1930s, for instance, the Salafīyyah Association of Algerian ‘Ulamā’ (Islamic jurists) needed to navigate between their program for MSA-medium progressive Koranic schools and placating the French, it was Arslân they called upon to temper their monolingual MSA approach with the requisite French political strategizing (ibid.).

To return to Saleh’s narration, historical inquiry confirms that the French dispossessed Algeria’s religious establishment and urban elites, even as early as the 1840s, by dismantling MSA-medium education (Cleveland, 1985). In turn, across both the Mashriq and Maghrib intellectuals like Arslân and his predecessors sought to regain political power and Islamic unity by reclaiming MSA as their vehicle of edification. MSA also served reformers like Arslân as a tool for communicating political rhetoric, organizing, and laying the foundations for the Ummah’s pan-Islamic future. The pious ethic

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21 MSA-medium schools with a similar quest for Islamic revival, called “free schools,” were also run by the Salafīyya during the Moroccan Protectorate (c.f., Halstead, 1967).
these reformers embodied, and which Saleh evidently admires, is one whose principal goal was to bolster the *Ummah*. Underpinning their piety, in other words, were political and community commitments in addition to individualized religious goals. As apparent from the emphasis in Saleh’s narrative on keeping Muslims together, the *Ummah* is evidently a key reference for him. Euben (2013) labels this sort of social commitment, which has moral entities rather than the nation-state as a significant frame of reference, “Muslim cosmopolitics” (p. 298). Indeed, both Islamic modernists and Saleh incarnated a measure of openness to the world’s resources as they sought solutions to bolster the *Ummah*. In sum, the ideology of piety spearheaded by modernist Islamic reformers, which was equal parts moral, political, and communitarian, finds a foothold among orthodox youth like Saleh as they use education to militate on behalf of the Muslim community.

*Practices of Piety: Illustrations of Al-Walā‘*

In this final section, I furnish examples of how the concept of piety as a “movement towards” local representatives of the Muslim *Ummah* in fact materializes in the lives of several individuals. Above, I discussed how speaking MSA and Standard French was considered a form of pious behavior due to these
languages’ centrality to keeping the Muslim community strong. Here, I give a handful of examples of how young Muslims turn to these languages to perform piety. Via an example of how a young woman named Halima uses highly standard French, I also demonstrate how youth who ascribe to an ideology of piety as edification may be drawn to edifying themselves in quite French subject matters, displaying a “movement towards” non-Muslims as well as Muslims. Lastly, I present social media instances in which youth visually promoted the Islamic community-based ideals of love, solidarity, and militantism.

As laid out by Saleh, learning and speaking MSA plays a key role in nurturing intellectual and religious community and is a central component of behaving piously. It is in this spirit that several of Saleh’s colleagues at the private Muslim secondary school practice MSA with their young children on a daily basis. One of the mosque coordinators, Ghazzal, for instance, decided that he would always address his children in MSA, while his wife would speak to them in Algerian (he only asks that they respond in MSA while at the dinner table, however). Ghazzal, who is Algerian-born, emphasizes that fluency in MSA will not only enable them to understand Koran and their Islamic studies classes but will also allow his children to be comfortable “in any Arab country” (5.14.13). The school director, Anwar, who also serves as Imam, and

\[22\] (MSA. fi a\textit{\textacuten} mak\textit{\textacuten} fi al-duwal al-\textit{\textacuten}arabiyyah)
his wife Hanan instigated a similar linguistic policy in their household. According to Hanan, the policy was “Anwar: MSA (arabe littéraire), me: French.” Because Hanan was born and raised in Alsace-Lorraine within a Tunisian family and Anwar was born and schooled near Tunis, then obtained his doctorate in mathematics from a university in Nice, both parents had the linguistic skills necessary for educating their children in highly standard versions of French and Arabic. Akin to the sentiment in Saleh’s narrative, their decision to use these languages in the home was specifically motivated by a desire to endow their four children with the educational and linguistic resources to stand on their own two feet as young Muslims in France. Hanan spelled out her and Anwar’s thinking process for me:

“We told ourselves, we both have the capacity. Let’s play the game. And we also harbored that little bit of resentment, hmm, militant at the beginning. So the language of this country [France] and then there was the language of the Koran, which is important.”

Tellingly, even as Hanan reveals her and her husband’s resentment of the French, she nevertheless concludes that utter mastery of the French language will protect her family and assure their position while living in France. Her husband, too, finds French useful for Muslims. Referencing the linguistic policy Hanan set up for the household, Anwar admitted to certain lapses in his MSA-

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23 "Comme on s’est dit on a la capacité tout les deux, on joue le jeu. Puis on avait un petit peu ce côté revendicateur, hein, au début militant revendicatif. Donc la langue, euh, de ce pays et il y avait la langue du Coran. Elle est importante” (Hanan, 4.16.3).
only role. In fact, he emphasized that he more often speaks in ‘MSA-ified
French’ with his children than MSA. Hanan then offered an example of what
this MSA-like French, or Standard French with an Islamic tenor, resembled. She
related how when their infant son arrived at French nursery school:

“He didn’t know how to say ‘I have to go pee-pee.’ He would say ‘I would like to use the
bathroom’ while his classmates would say ‘I have to go pee-pee.’ He would ask me, ‘What
does pee-pee mean?’...I told him ‘Pee-pee means go to the bathroom.’ He didn’t dare say
it.”

The aspiration to outfit oneself and one’s children with the language form
acknowledged to be the most perfect, whether in Arabic or in French, is closely
tied to the ideal of performing piety through edification, as prefaced in Saleh’s
contributions. The more eloquence or balaghah one displays linguistically,
whether in MSA or in French, the greater commitment one demonstrates to, on
the one hand, strengthening the educational level of the Muslim community in
France, and on the other, heightening their status in the eyes of the French.

The experience of Halima, a young woman raised in an Arab Algerian
family in Northern Marseille, adds further reinforcement to the idea that
Muslims living in Marseille use French to perform piety within their community
but also to perform their educational level to others. Though Halima has not

24 (MSA. afdal an yatakallam al-nas al-lughah al-‘arabiyya al-fusha lakin anah la atakallam al-‘arabiyya al-
fusha bal al-franciyah al-fusha fi l-bayt) أفضل أن يتكلم الناس اللغة العربية الفصحى لكن أنا لا أتكلم العربية الفصحى
بل العربية الفصحى في البيت

25 “Il ne savait pas comment dire ‘j’ai envie de faire pipi.’ Il disait ‘j’ai envie d’aller aux toilettes.’
Ses camarades disaient ‘je veux faire pipi.’ Il me disait ‘ça veut dire quoi pipi?’... Je lui dit ‘pipi ça
veut dire aller aux toilettes.’ Il osait pas le dire” (Hanan, 4.16.3).
learned MSA to her satisfaction, she comments on how French can convey piety to Muslims as well as expressive brio to the French:

“I have made it a matter of personal pride (un point d’honneur) to speak [French] as correctly as possible, with people in my community as well as people outside. And maybe even I am more careful, and this is a fault of mine I am trying to correct, maybe I am more careful with people outside my community because I always see myself mirrored in others’ eyes. I see myself as the veiled woman who doesn’t know how to express herself, etcetera. So it’s my special pleasure to show them that, in fact, no! ((laughing)) It’s horrible. Still, they react with a ‘hmm, how about that.’ Well, it’s not like my language is extraordinary but even just speaking without an accent can be surprising.”

Indeed, Halima often doted, if modestly, on her linguistic transformation from a child with a Marseillais accent to an “accent-less” Muslim adult. Having grown up in the projects raised by a Marseille-born gardener (whose parents were Algerian) and an Algerian-born seamstress, Halima smiles to remember the Marseillais working-class accent she inherited from her parents. Over a staff coffee break she recounted, for instance, what her French sounded like as an 8 or 9-year old on family videos. “Maman [mamɑ̃], Amina a laissé ses chaussettes [ʃɔsɛtɔ] dans la salle [salə] de bains [baɲɔ]!” (mom, Amina left her socks in the bathroom!).” Halima says she replaced this “strong accent” with a French approximating the Standard when she began practicing Islam in her late teens.

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26 “Je mets un point d’honneur à parler le plus correctement possible, autant avec les gens de ma communauté qu’avec l’extérieur. Parce que j’ai toujours, euh, le miroir dans les yeux de l’autre. Je me vois comme la femme voilée qui sait pas s’exprimer, etc., donc je prends un plaisir en fait leur demontrer qu’en fait non! C’est horrible. Mais c’est vrai qu’ils se disent quand même ‘oh tiens.’ Bon, c’est pas extraordinaire comme langage mais voilà, rien que de parler sans accent c’est, des fois c’est surprenant” (Halima, 6.19.13).

27 Note that syllable-final schwa, post-velar nasal, and the realization of Standard French /o/ as [ɔ] are stereotypically associated with the way that working-class people speak in Marseille.
and was regularly attending the local university’s classes in biology. “Now it’s true that people think I am from Paris...I go into a store in Marseille and people say ‘you must be coming through on your way to Paris’!”

Halima’s desire to speak French eloquently was made ever keener by her experience working at the same Muslim private school as Saleh, where she began managing accounting after finishing her bachelor’s degree. She and her 23-year old male colleague Fawzi described to me how, if one sought a more immediate role model than the Prophet himself to emulate linguistically, the school was rich in Muslim examples of piety. Fawzi gushed that Anwar the director, for instance:

“So, he uses a [French] language that is mostly sophisticated, very, very, more-never mundane. Utterly sophisticated. Very, very, very, uh, simple to understand and very pleasant to the ear (…). When it’s [Modern Standard] Arabic it’s, it’s (I don’t understand entirely, but) it’s, it’s a symphony! My father, who speaks MSA very well, says he [Anwar] has a magnificent Arabic. He has a subtle kind of [Modern Standard] Arabic.”

Perhaps inspired by these local examples, Halima now says she actively pursues “elevated language, eloquence, and a broader vocabulary” in French via a number of media. In addition to reading poetry and watching speech eloquence competitions (concours d’éloquence) on the Internet, she bashfully admits to watching the 2005 film *Pride and Prejudice* (based on the Jane Austen novel) “on

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28 “Alors, il utilise un langage souvent soutenu, très, très, plus-jamais courant, jamais. Souvent soutenu. Très, très, très euh simple à comprendre, et très sympathique à entendre. (…) Quand c’est de l’arabe c’est, c’est (je ne comprends pas entièrement) mais c’est, c’est une symphonie! Mon père, qui parle très bien l’arabe, il dit qu’il [Anwar] a un arabe magnifique. Il a un arabe subtil” (Fawzi, 12.13.12).

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loop.” The film, which she watches dubbed in French with English subtitles, stands alone in her mind as the prime example of French linguistic elegance, not to mention behavioral and sartorial modesty (pudeur). Indeed, her frequent citation of one of the more intricate French lines from the film, “Père, n’avez-vous d’autre objection que la conviction de mon indifférence?” (Father, have you no other objection than your belief in my indifference?), led me to teasingly call Halima “Lizzy” around school in deference to the film’s heroine and author of the above line, Elizabeth Bennett. Her fascination with the film rested on both linguistic and romantic parallels Halima found between Victorian-era romantic relationships and Muslim courtship. In the film, estimated Halima, “Things proceed as slowly as possible; a touch of the [lover’s] hand is no less than electric... It’s the Muslim relationship par excellence! The only kiss in my book is the kiss on the hand.” Not surprisingly, she was particularly drawn to the film while she was going through her fiançailles (engagement) to her now-husband, posting several images of Elizabeth Bennett to her Facebook page (c.f., Figure 5.5). Although her then-fiancé did not, according to Halima, share in her preference for the film, he did grant her that “Islam teaches modesty” to all its followers.
Halima also spoke of further parallels she found, interestingly, between Jane Austen and the 11\textsuperscript{th} century Andalusian Muslim philosopher Ibn Ḥazm. His Neoplatonic writings on love, which she consulted in a French translation of *The Ring of the Dove: A Treatise on the Art and Practice of Arab Love* (1953), focused on spiritual kinship and its basis in people’s sensory (e.g., visual, aural) recognition of beauty in one another’s appearance or comportment. Basing herself on Ibn Ḥazm, Halima often deliberated on contemporary Muslims’ need to do away with the taboo surrounding love and passion in Islam. As long as love transpires in the elegant, delicately scripted ways typical of Jane Austen’s novels, she maintained, love is nothing if not an example of the Islamic injunction to perfection, edification, and modesty. It occurs to me that Halima’s willingness to
draw connections between pieces of Western popular culture in French and guidelines to Islamic piety shows an openness to finding a pious lifestyle within France. Her focus on love as a religious virtue, moreover, echoes comments by Ahmed (2016) to the effect that it is love that seals Muslim's shared identity within the *Ummah*. He bases this conclusion on a body of literature he argues counts as evidence for the existence of an as yet unorthodox “*madhhab* (school of Islamic law) of love” (p. 41). Given the calls to Islamic solidarity within this local culture of orthodoxy, it appears likely that virtues of love and activism may contribute equally to this local ethic of piety as “association” or *al-Walā’*.

Where local Muslims’ relationships to non-Muslims in Marseille are concerned, many of the comments above describe, perhaps not kinship or a movement towards non-Muslims, but a gentle engagement with them. I am reminded of an outing with a group of young orthodox “sisters” (*sœurs*) on a rainy day. As we were going down the escalator into the Metro, a young man going up opposite us said “How go the umbrellas? (*ça va les parapluies?*) in reference to how the girls looked in their long wet dresses. I recall being surprised when one young woman in the group, Amina, gave him a shy smile, and then turned to us and whispered, “Isn’t it so much better to return an insult with a smile?” According to these and other orthodox youth who wish to stay in
Marseille despite similar bouts of being alienated, politeness and kindness are the hallmarks of *l'éducation*, or being educated, and count as part of one’s pious contribution to the community. When one is nice to others outside the community, Amina says, then the community’s image improves and this results in non-Muslims being nicer to Muslims in turn. In this spirit, Miriam, who goes by “Mimi” among her friends, a nickname but also a pun on the French slang for “cute” (*mimi*), often posts reminders to her Facebook page that Allah prefers gentleness and good manners. Figure 5.6, for instance, reads “The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: ‘Allah is gentle, and he loves softness in all things.’”
Besides showing love to the Muslim community by being polite to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, an important part of building up the Muslim community also lies in being militant for the right causes. In the following three images from Facebook, Halima and Miriam (“Mimi”) communicate militant feelings on behalf of the *Ummah*, and hence display piety. In Figure 7, for instance, Halima emphasizes differences between what Islamic militancy means within Marseille’s Muslim community and from without. Several images represent what certain people think a Muslim “community militant” (*militant associatif*)
does with their time. The translation of the image captions reads: What I think I do; What my father thinks I do; What the State thinks I do; What Muslim brothers think I do; What I really do: “Come on people, no one came to the meeting!!! It’s the third time we’re rescheduling it!!! We have to find another date!” Muslim community organizing, as Halima well knows from her work at the Muslim school, is quite mundane and mostly revolves around getting participating members to come to meetings.

![Palestinian Woman Wearing Kufiyah Slings Rocks in Gaza](image)

**Figure 5.8.** Palestinian Woman Wearing *Kufiyah* Slings Rocks in Gaza

In another Facebook profile picture (c.f., Figure 5.8), Halima turns her militant sentiments to issues abroad that negatively affect the global *Ummah*, like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Figure 5.9, by contrast, shows an image and story reposted by Mimi entitled “In the skin of a thug.” Accompanying the image of a Muslim woman unwaveringly pictured behind a gun barrel is a story telling of how this woman, who is in fact a French convert to Islam, realized the hurtful
ways the French act towards Muslims only once she became a Muslim herself. In this instance, Mimi circulates militant imagery to alert her Facebook friends to the ills experienced by Muslims in France.

Figure 5.9. Mimi’s Status Post: “In the Skin of a Thug”

This section documented ways in which orthodox youth who plan to stay in Marseille take it upon themselves to change the city from the inside-out. As Hanan mentioned in describing her household language policies, there are myriad channels that Muslims in France can use, both to improve their own community and lodge complaints about French non-Muslims. Not all of these channels are typically “Islamic,” however, as Halima’s recontextualization of
Pride and Prejudice in terms of Islamic virtues demonstrated. Rather, these channels—edification, MSA, Standard French, teaching, politeness, militant social activism—are lent an allure of piety insofar as they represent means to the broader end of reinforcing ties within the Muslim community in Marseille.

III. Concluding Remarks: Two Double-Movements

This chapter has examined the role of discourse and practices, both in personal interactions and via social media, in shaping two iterations of the particular figure of personhood I subsume under the rubric of the Islamic militant youth from Marseille. The contrastive accounts of piety given in the first versus the second section reveal this figure of personhood to be neither singular nor unchanging. Rather, youth’s practices and discourses point to increasingly divergent definitions of what constitutes pious behavior. Despite orthodox youth sharing in the sort of prejudice they face in Marseille, they have found differing ways of both understanding and addressing the resulting experience of alienation from their hometown.

Gender, in particular, appears to have played a distinct role in the development of an understanding of piety as requiring relocation. Pious young women are more likely to struggle to visibly fit into their surroundings and to be
excluded from French institutions, like secondary schools, that have a direct bearing on their ability to later integrate the French workforce. Imagining a future for oneself in a country where one does not meet the job market’s barriers to entry is a daunting task indeed. Radya, for example, was unable to find an alternative to French school and thus found herself alone in her apartment year-round at 17. The prospect of moving forward again as she learns about Doha and prepares a life there has been a source of great excitement for her. In a Skype conversation at the close of 2014, for instance, Radya articulated her enthusiasm at finding a new home, whether in London or Doha, with obvious emotion: “Let me tell you something. I hope, well, I hope to be stable. And I’ll be stable in whatever it will be, in one of these places, and I would be very very very happy if you would come visit.”

I find that Hage’s (2005) remarks on types of mobility capture the dynamics of young orthodox women in a particularly elegant and concise way. Hage explains what he calls “existential mobility” (p. 470) as the shared human desire to feel like we are “going places” in our lives. He writes, moreover, that “migratory physical mobility is only contemplated when people experience a crisis in their sense of existential mobility” (p. 471). As such, the young female

29 “Je vais te dire une chose. J’espère, fin, j’espère être stable... Et je serai stable dans quoique ça soit, dans un de ces endroits... Je serais très très très contente que tu viennes là-bas.” (12-31-14)
proponents of *hijrah* that I have presented can be said to be experiencing a crisis in their existential mobility that, at least to them, appears to have few exit routes. This crisis renders a dissociative practice of piety more appealing and leads, ultimately, to their relocation. In the interim, however, which is to say between the moment when youth feel irreversibly alienated and when they actually depart Marseille, online media play a vital role for them in at least two ways. First, networking via online media was shown to help young women lay the social groundwork to facilitate their relocation. This was the case for Radya as she went about getting to know people and seeking jobs in the Arabian Peninsula through Skype and VoIP applications, as it was also the case for Manal and the other subscribers to the Facebook group “*Hijrah to Algeria,*” who scoped out pleasant Algerian cities or good schools for their children through contacts made online.

A second advantage of young women’s activity online was that it enabled them to enjoy a modicum of “existential mobility” (in Hage’s terms above) while still in Marseille. As Qailah disseminated her desire to move to friends on Facebook or Radya chatted about the Gulf with her friends in Doha through BlackBerry Messenger, these young women were able to feel as though they were in the throes of planning to leave Marseille. Such exchanges granted them the sense that they were moving forward, conducting a virtual *hijrah,* as it were.
even as they continued living in Marseille’s housing projects. One sister spoke to the mental importance of this planning phase for French women conducting *hijrah* in a follow-up post to the status post by Qailah analyzed in the first section of the chapter. This woman urged her fellow French sisters to start planning: “A piece of advice for all of you: make a project, get organized, and prepare your departure. (...) I am myself ethnically French, but believe me, this country is no longer mine, and of this I am reminded every day by the French themselves. So come up with some plans. If your intention is in keeping with Allah, Allah will ease your hijra...”\(^{30}\) This young woman’s comments about feeling disoriented within France despite her Frenchness connect to one of the larger points made in this chapter. It emerges from the young women’s stories I have presented that the ongoing apprehensions the French exhibit towards French Muslims, and especially young orthodox women, have deleterious effects on their ability to imagine futures for themselves in their French places of origin. As apparent from these young women’s discourses on piety, their online practices, and their multilingual use of language, home has in effect become a moving target for them.

\(^{30}\) “Un conseil pour tous: faites un projet, organisez vous, et préparez le départ... Je suis moi-même française de souche, et croyez moi ce pays n’ai [sic] plus le mien, et ça c’est les français eux-mêmes qui nous le font comprendre chaque jour. Alors donnez-vous des objectifs, et si votre intention est pour Allah, Allah vous facilitera votre hijra...”. (1-24-2014).
Perhaps another factor shaping youth’s attraction to different poles of Islamic thought on piety, whether Wahhabi Salafism or Islamic reformism, are the peer groups in which they participate or the adults with whom they interact, including parents, religious teachers, other role models, or indeed, the websites they frequent. Saleh, for instance, looked to the model of piety performed in front of him on a daily basis by Anwar, who was both the Imām of the mosque he attends and the director of his school and supervisor for his teaching. A mix of factors seems contributes to whether youth lean in one or another direction on what constitutes piety.

It also appears to be the case that, for the youth who came to view piety in associative terms, as a movement towards Marseille’s Muslim community, this in turns eased their feelings of alienation. Halima’s willingness to engage with myriad facets of French life certainly paved the way to lighter social relations with French non-Muslims and Marseillais, even if her practice of reading Islamic piety into French popular culture or sewing politeness in her public interactions represented a way to turn France into a more pleasant place for herself and her community. I believe that Halima’s kind of outlook might be just what former Interior Minister Pierre Joxe or former president Nicolas Sarkozy intended when they spoke about fostering *un Islam de France*, or a French form of Islam (Bowen,
Meanwhile, the French public has yet to decide on the measure of Islamic community they will tolerate on French soil.

As such, the young proponents of the two types of piety discussed in sections one and two, respectively, can be said to engage in not one but two types of “double-movement” (Polanyi, 2011[1944], p. 136). On the one hand, there is an ideological movement in conflicting directions. While some youth see piety as requiring dissociative al-Barā’, others push back with a notion of piety highlighting association or solidarity, al-Walā’. On the other hand, youth appear to be physically moving in opposite directions where their life plans are concerned. For youth who feel their lack of existential mobility is insurmountable, this crisis renders a dissociative practice of piety more appealing and leads, ultimately, to their relocation. Other youth, meanwhile, are led by their inclination to an associative practice of piety in a movement towards their community via such activities as activism and education within France. These practices in effect grant them existential mobility and a sense of community, and thus they remain in Marseille in spite of the obstacles life there presents to the highly pious. Which of these directions will ultimately come to identify the Islamic personhood characteristic of orthodox youth in Marseille remains to be seen.
VI. The French State Imagines the Mediterranean: The Making of Place and People through Modern Standard Arabic Education and Cultural Programming

I. Introduction

It was December of 2010 and Ben Omar stood to welcome the wide range of guests who had come to participate in the conference being hosted by his community association. Many of the attendees known to him, including Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) teachers from other Muslim community associations and from Marseille’s private Muslim secondary school, raised palms in greeting or offered salaams in anticipation. “On the occasion of our 2010 conference on the ‘Realities and new challenges of Arabic teaching in the region of Provence,’” he began in French, “how fitting to find ourselves convened in the Alcazar Library, in the city of Marseille.” After a meaningful pause, he reframed: “al-qaṣar ǧī l-Marsah, Marsilia” (MSA. the castle in the port of Marseille). A rumble of laughter affirmed that the facilitator’s puns were not misspent at on least some members of this audience, whose minds, upon hearing the name of the
municipal library rendered in MSA, promptly visited the mosaic courtyards of an 11th century Andalusian palace (MSA. al-qaṣar).

Only this palace was located, according to the speaker, not in the city baptized "Massalia" by the Greeks in the 6th century B.C.E but in a Marseille named for al-Marsah. Marsah means “port” in Arabic, but within which port was Ben Omar locating this library-turned-castle? Was he imagining an Al-Andalus-era palace within Marseille's Vieux Port, a possible gesture to Muslim immigrants’ central role in the last hundred years of the port city's history? Or, being from Tunis himself, was he drawing a connection between Marseille and the Tunisian suburb of the capital, Al-Marsah? The neighborhood of Al-Marsah, significantly, lies on the site of Ancient Carthage. The Phoenician city saw protracted battles between its Semitic custodians and marauding Greek and Roman forces from the 6th to 2nd centuries CE (Abulafia, 2011; Naylor, 2015). In either case, Ben Omar began this event about MSA teaching in Marseille by discursively gathering Marseille and North Africa into the fold of a Semitic if not Islamic yore, obscuring the Mediterranean's Greek and Latin heritages in the process.

Over the course of this chapter, it will become clear why Ben Omar, a leader within Marseille's orthodox Muslim community and the secretary for the community association called l'Institut Méditerranéen d'Études Musulmanes, or the
Mediterranean Institute for Muslim Studies, should seek to situate Marseille within a more broadly Islamic Mediterranean. Although his dusting of Marseille in such a light seemed, in a first instance, little more than amusement for the Muslims in his audience, Ben Omar was also laying claim to one of Marseille’s incarnations over another. Those who would dispute this Marseille were also present and comprised mainly representatives of the French State employed in Marseille’s education system and municipal government. Expressly invited by Ben Omar, this coterie of people included tenured Arabists from the nearby University of Aix-en-Provence, teachers appointed to teach MSA in Marseille’s public schools, those tasked with developing MSA curricula by the Ministry of National Education, and also Mayor Patrick Menucci of Marseille’s central metropolitan district. Despite the diversity in their roles for the State, these individuals shared in a common vision of Marseille, namely, as a secular and cultured city whose Mediterranean dimension draws from Classical Antiquity. It was in the spirit of exposing and perhaps negotiating this discrepancy between the Muslim and French State visions for Marseille that Ben Omar had solicited the participation of these functionaries, and his opening remark left little doubt as to the side of the debate he supported.

This chapter examines competing depictions of the Mediterranean’s past, whether Semitic and Islamic or Greek and Roman, as claims upon Marseille’s
present and future. One of these claims appeared in Chapter Five, where some orthodox Muslims imagined Marseille to stand for pan-Islamic solidarity as the Mediterranean stood for it in the past. Thus, the Sunni youth in Chapter Five modeled their social activism in Marseille upon the same commitment to Islamic community-building they understood to have inspired anti-colonial movements around the Mediterranean, as elsewhere (c.f., Morocco: Burke, 1972; Halstead, 1967; Egypt: Suleiman, 1996; Syria: Cleveland, 1985; in Zanzibar: Ghazal, 2010). Marseille was, according to them, another place in which to carry forth the Mediterranean’s Islamic history. This chapter focuses, in turn, on the alternative imagining of the Mediterranean as “Classical” purveyed by the French State’s local arm in Marseille. Specifically, I document how activities undertaken by the Municipality and the local branch of the Ministry of Education both before and during Marseille’s year (2013) as European Capital of Culture functioned to disseminate the State notion of the Mediterranean’s Classical cultural essence. Through an analysis of cultural programming, including museum exhibits and advertising for Marseille’s year in the spotlight, as well as educational policy in MSA public classrooms, I show how State actors’ depiction of a Greco-Roman Mediterranean past is also, in effect, a play for an upwardly mobile Marseille and for the secular nature of its inhabitants.
Textual and visual depictions of Mediterranean Antiquity are analyzable, in this sense, as State-led forms of “place-making” (Bank, 2011; Deumert, 2013; Lefebvre, 1991 [1947]), on the one hand, and “people-making” (Deumert, 2013; Dick, 2010, 2011), on the other hand. For example, the local Ministry of Education’s new initiative to transform the classrooms in which many second-generation youth from Muslim families learn MSA into “Classical Language Workshops,” in which MSA is co-taught alongside Greek and Latin, sought to entail that Marseille was a gentrifying city and that the diasporic youth in attendance were up-and-coming, secular professionals. Meanwhile, State depictions of the Mediterranean also ethnographically illustrate Agha’s (2007) contention that “entextualized projections of time cannot be isolated from those of locale and personhood” (p. 320). Indeed, this selective re-imagining of Mediterranean history by State actors is shown to have very real social effects in Marseille, whether in the guise of ongoing neighborhood renewal projects to “mediterranize” historic immigrant neighborhoods, or in pedagogical practices that de-Islamicize the MSA transmitted to students in public classrooms. The State argument for a particular kind of Mediterranean is, as such, a chronotopic formulation in Agha’s (2015) sense, juxtaposing time, space, and personage in a representation to which people anchor themselves.
Bakhtin (1981) described chronotopes as jointly temporal and spatial backdrops upon which characters’ actions are inscribed. Although Bakhtin mainly used chronotopes to characterize artistic genres of novels, Agha (2007b) reanalyzes Bakhtinian chronotopes, which Bakhtin associated with plot structures in novels, by arguing for the prevalence in social life of “cultural chronotopes,” which Agha relates to discursive semiosis in general. Agha (2007b) shows that people orient to cultural chronotopes when “they engage each other through discursive signs of any kind” (p. 320). He explains the social reality of cultural chronotopes by showing, first, how temporal depictions comport with depictions of place and personhood, and second, how these portrayals may be animated as people give voice to them. Whereas literary chronotopes in Bakhtin’s understanding appeared to live in print artifacts like novels, Agha (2015) describes chronotopic formulations as emerging and perishing through the uptake they receive by others who respond to them. This animation or realization of cultural chronotopes was discussed in a different idiom but similar way by M. Silverstein (1994), when he spoke of how narrators may align to narrated worlds and, in so doing, enable a "break through" (p. 52) of the narrated chronotope into the horizon of real-life social interactions. This breakthrough then allows qualities and characters that were previously only narrated to be leveraged by speakers as resources for social differentiation and
position-taking. To detect this process taking place, however, requires attentiveness to the various statuses social actors assume within a speech event, what Goffman (1979) termed the participant framework of an event, as well as to the roles performed by speakers, what Goffman likewise referred to as the event’s production format. Story worlds do, as such, hold the capacity to unleash new resources for meaning and social or political action in the world in which they are told, vindicating Haroun's father in Rushdie’s *Haroun & the Sea of Stories* (1991), who never once doubted the real-world value of stories that are not (or may not be) even true. Their realization relies, nevertheless, on real-world individuals’ willingness to align themselves with the imaginaries, or cultural chronotopes, circulated by society’s constituents.

This chapter finds inspiration, additionally, in Herzfeld’s (2005) invitation to anthropologists of the Mediterranean to “treat attributions of Mediterranean culture...as performative utterances that can, under the right ‘felicity conditions,’ actually create the realities that people perceive” (p. 50). In this spirit, I view portrayals of the Mediterranean not as representing an “original” Mediterranean history per se, but as instances of “imitation without origin,” in Butler’s (1990, p. 138) concise formulation. In other words, the cultural chronotope of the Mediterranean proffered by the French State is recognized to exist primarily in its performances, whether they take the form of advertised images posted on
billboards or pronouncements on MSA’s Mediterranean dimensions made by the academic inspector of MSA classrooms. Herzfeld’s reflection begs a further question, however. Above and beyond the performance of the Classical Mediterranean performed by powerfully positioned actors within Marseille, is this vision of Marseille in fact seized upon by those who live in Marseille as indicative of their reality? Like in Sufi mysticism, which “never assumes that everyone will always exist on the same plane, even if they physically exist in the same scene” (Varzi, 2006, p. 5), this chapter queries if indeed the diasporic youth who attend the Mediterranean museum exhibits and report every day for MSA class feel that living in Marseille is akin to walking in the footsteps of Alexander the Great or Marcus Aurelius.

The second section, below, discusses various means the State uses to channel their view that the Mediterranean’s singularity lies in its Classical heritage, focusing particularly on the city’s cultural programming during 2012-2013 and its overhaul of MSA educational policy. The third section, in turn, examines the words of public MSA teachers and students for clues as to whether they in fact locate Marseille and themselves in this layer of Mediterranean reality, or perhaps in another. I argue that the State’s chronotopic imaginary did little to “interpellate” youth from Muslim families into the role of secular Mediterranean citizen of Marseille, speaking in Althusser’s (1971)
terms. Instead, I show how youth peered into this distinct imagining of the Mediterranean and Marseille, and then chose not to partake in the State’s script. For, as Varzi (2006) says, the layers of reality people inhabit more closely resemble curtains or veils than walls. Insofar as moving between one and another Mediterranean involves performance, one may slide between alignments or, indeed, opt out of aligning.

II. The State’s Mediterranean: Languages and Images that Interpellate?

“It's just the little pebble I bring,” shrugs Lara Durel in reference to the initiative in Classical languages she began in a handful of Marseillais high schools in the Fall of 2012. Madame Durel is the Academic Inspector for the MSA classes held in Southern France’s public schools, but she spends most of her time in Marseille, where the number of MSA classrooms rivals that in Paris. Her new program, which she describes as “a coupling of MSA and Latin based in the view that MSA is a Mediterranean language, like Latin,” more properly resembles a pebble in a rockslide that has, since at least Napoléon Bonaparte’s landing in Alexandria in 1798, claimed an exceptional Mediterranean bond between France and its Arab neighbors on the southern banks of the Mediterranean. This exceptional bond, argued to lie in France and North Africa’s
common Classical heritage, has long served France as an ideological touchstone in her economic and geopolitical interventions, notably Napoléon I’s invasion of Egypt (1798-1901), the colonial administration of French North Africa, and especially Algeria (1830-1962), and post-independence politico-economic overtures made by France to Arab States around the Mediterranean (e.g., 1995 Barcelona Process, 2008 Union for the Mediterranean). In this section, I explore how various actors on behalf of the French State turn to the chronotope of the Classical Mediterranean yet again, only this time in the context of Marseille’s preparations for its year in the spotlight as European Capital of Culture-2013.

Specifically, I propose that Madame Durel’s new initiative for a “Classical MSA,” along with a Mediterranean imagery campaign coordinated by the Municipality of Marseille, represent concerted efforts by French State actors to locally revive what several authors have termed the French myth of Mediterranean Antiquity (c.f., Basfao & Henry, 1991; Daguzan, 2009; Ruel, 1991). Whereas previously the myth of the Classical Mediterranean had justified France’s interests abroad, namely in North Africa and the Levant, in this more recent case France directs its manifest destiny—to unite the Mediterranean around its common Greco-Roman heritage—inwards, seeking to “classicize” French youth from Muslim backgrounds and wash Marseille of any visible Islamic connotations. If, as I argue, the French State has identified Marseille as
the keystone to France’s Classical Mediterranean destiny, there are at least four factors that further contributed to the city’s strategic importance in 2012 and 2013. I focus on these four factors in the following pages.

The first factor is that Marseille continues to be France’s foremost city on the Mediterranean Sea. As France’s second largest commune to-date, neither Nice nor Montpellier can compete with Marseille in terms of its size and economic importance. The second is that Marseille is a city that, one-hundred and fifty years ago as today, has a population with multi-generational ties to France’s Muslim ex-colonies.\(^1\) The cultural import of the fact that Marseille is home to all manner of people who identify as Muslims, while not immediately clear from demographic data, is often clear to those who live in Marseille as well as those who visit. By people deeply familiar with the city, Marseille has been called the African crossroads (Bertoncello, 2000), an Arab metropole (Tarrius, 1987), and the door to the South (Londres, 1929). Those less familiar, too, recognize that, as noted by reporter Christopher Dickey for National Geographic, Marseille in the near future “may well be the first Western European city with a majority of its residents from Muslim

\(^1\) Census data ill-represent locally born individuals whose parents or grandparents come from Muslim countries as well as undocumented immigrants and, as such, do little to illustrate the French post-colonial legacy in Marseille. In 2008, Marseille was listed as France’s second largest commune, with 859,543 people, of who 34,776 are Moroccan, Algerian, or Tunisian nationals, 11,774 are sub-Saharan African nationals, 61,281 are French by acquisition, and 725,689 are French-born (INSEE, 2008).
backgrounds” (March, 2012, n.p.). These geographic and demographic dimensions of Marseille do not, by default, single out the city for the type of inward-facing measures I will describe. Rather, two further factors are perhaps most helpful in explaining the clip at which the French State set about revamping Marseille and its inhabitants as belonging to a different kind of Mediterranean. They are Marseille’s reputation as overrun by violent Muslim youth, on the one hand, and the financial urgency of making Marseille presentable in time for its Capital status, on the other.

Indeed, in mid-2012 the French State and Marseille’s municipality were concerned that, due to serial reports of criminality, drug traffic, gun violence, and clientelism, the city’s reputation was becoming irrevocably tainted. Only four months before the opening ceremony inaugurating Marseille as European Capital of Culture, for instance, the Mayor of the northern 15th and 16th arrondissements, Samia Ghali, pleaded with Minister of the Interior Manuel Valls to send the French Army to Northern Marseille. She cited turf wars between drug-dealing groups and the mounting number of drug-related homicides. He refused however, saying there was no interior enemy and hence only the police force could resolve the issue. Several weeks later, Marseille was again infamously portrayed in the French media by the magazine Marianne, which published an article entitled “Marseille: Lost Territory of the
Republic” (9.15.2012). The magazine described a city “parceled into willayas” (Arabic for “provinces”), seventeen counts of turf-related homicides by Kalashnikov, and a drought of services affecting poor families from the Northern Quarters, who had neither the benefit of the Metro nor of the free bike system enjoyed by Central Marseille. Marseille’s government went into a tizzy not unlike that of State officials in Rio de Janeiro, who were faced with a wave of violence against the police in the summer months prior to the 2014 World Cup (New York Times, May 30th, 2014). Officials in Marseille were particularly anxious the news might dissuade the millions of expected people from visiting, and they struggled to present a united front. It was within this context that diasporic Muslim youth from Northern Marseille, in particular, became the target of Marseille’s efforts to prove it could effectively control its population.2

This narrowing of the government’s gaze must be understood, furthermore, in the context of a France-wide discussion about Muslim youth’s politically sensitive status. As detailed in Chapter One, a moral panic surrounds the figure of the “lost second-generation youth.” This panic is nowhere more alive than in the French popular media, although it also draws concrete inspiration from conservative academic literature (Brenner, 2002; Finkielkraut, 2002).

2 Documented immigrants and their descendants account for a disproportionate percentage of the population in the Northern Quarters and are also disproportionately poorer than residents of other neighborhoods (Césari, Moreau, & Schleyer-Lindenmann, 2001).
2013) and Republican political discourse (Haut Conseil à l’Intégration, 2000). A surge of sociological studies of urban youth have further filled in this sketch of the generic French Muslim youth who, frustrated with their French birthplace, affiliates him or herself with a vaguely conceived Islam. These surveys have likewise contributed to causally linking two phenomena: on the one hand, the high percentages of secondary school failure, delinquency, and joblessness documented among adolescents of Maghrebi and Sahelian descent, specifically (Lagrange, 2010); and, on the other, that Muslim youth exhibit a greater degree of religiosity and more numerous transnational ties to their parents’ countries of origin than either their first-generation parents or non-Muslim descendants of other religious backgrounds (INSEE & INED, 2010; Brouard & Tiberj, 2005).

In the wake of these circulating concerns, many politicians in Marseille wondered if Islam might be to blame for the violence gaining traction among young men in Marseille’s Northern Quarters. Michel Vauzelle, the president of the Department of Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur, made comments to this effect shortly after his appointment, on December 13th, 2012, to new president François Hollande’s “Parliamentary Mission for the Mediterranean.” In summarizing the Mission’s purpose, he remarked:

“Arab peoples would do best to ponder what their future could be. Today, they have a choice between a Euro-Mediterranean future and a future situated to the East. This is to say either towards Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism, an extreme model of Islam and the worse Islam has to offer in terms of intolerance, or towards a less extreme model, more
like that endorsed by Turkey’s current government. The stakes are high.” (VMarseille, January 2013, p. 72).

To push immigrant descendants in the right direction and break “this vicious cycle” in Marseille, Vauzelle proposed “soft-power” (or “participative diplomatic”) solutions, like organizing “meetings among young Mediterraneans” (p. 73). Another article of the same weekly magazine described how, after young men with guns entered the Diderot High School to get even with a student, the school administration encouraged teachers to take “affective measures” to counter “the economic and familial ruptures experienced by certain students” (VMarseille, January 2013, p. 27). Among the soft-power measures considered useful in revivifying second-generation youth and turning them away from a religious culture perceived as archaic (and violent to boot), perhaps none was proposed with higher hopes than instructing youth in their home languages. Indeed, the European Commission’s Maalouf Report (2008) had previously identified home language instruction as crucial to Muslim youth’s integration into European societies. The authors of the Report had written that, insofar as instruction in one’s heritage language restores communication lines between Muslim youth and their parents, it can act as a “powerful antidote against...various types of fanaticism” (p. 5) and “social dysfunctioning which can lead to violence” (p. 20). I will address the shape that home language instruction took in Marseille after first commenting on the last of the four
factors in Marseille that militated in favor of the State’s Mediterranean intervention, so to speak.

To wit, the violence supposedly tarnishing Marseille’s reputation took place at a crucial moment in the city’s historical trajectory. In 2012 and 2013, Marseille was at the apex of its transformation by three social and economic projects of financial consequence. The first of these was the seven-billion Euro mostly private EuroMéditerranée Project begun there in 1992. Continuing to-date and not projected to finish until 2025, this project is sited along Marseille’s industrial port, in La Joliette. This urban renewal project aims to attract “Neo-Marseillais,” or young professionals and affluent people from outside Marseille, to live or work in its new luxury flats and office towers and spend money in its recently renovated stores and restaurants (Trimaille & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013). Ironically, this “internationalization” of La Joliette has in large part depended upon the eviction and displacement of many of the neighborhood’s long-time residents, mostly immigrants and their descendants, to the less central neighborhoods along the Northern littoral.

The second of these developments is the partnership between 43 states begun in Marseille in 2008 as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) by French ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy. Unlike its predecessor the Barcelona Process (1995-2008), whose membership was limited to the Northern “Club Med”
states, the UfM extended membership to all of the states around the Mediterranean Basin, whether in North Africa, the Middle East, or Southeastern Europe. Perhaps judging they had as little to lose as to gain from accepting Sarkozy’s terms, all states agreed to the UfM’s terms. The UfM nevertheless remained quite vague in its policy architecture, simply requesting member states to cooperate politically, economically, and culturally with the UfM if and when doing so would not interfere with the European Union (Emerson, 2008). In his founding speeches for the UfM, Sarkozy doted especially on the supposition that Europe’s future was in all respects dependent upon its relations with the rest of the Mediterranean, and especially its southern perimeter (Daguzan, 2009).

Sarkozy also called upon Marseille in particular, as France’s second largest city and its industrial and manufacturing beacon on the Mediterranean Sea, to put the country’s best Mediterranean foot forward in this new UfM.

The third development is of course Marseille’s designation as European Capital of Culture 2013 by the Council of the European Union. The radiance wished upon Marseille by Sarkozy was multiplied a hundredfold by the sheer quotient of investment, construction, and specifically “Mediterranean” cultural activity generated between 2012 and 2013. City councils, private sponsors, and the EU itself inverted 90 million Euros into a total of 900 cultural events attended by 11 million visitors (The Guardian, 4.1.13). In addition to the
renewal of investment in Marseille’s EuroMéditerranée Project, 2013 also saw
the construction of several new museums. The most notable among them was
the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations, or MUCEM, with its
190 million-Euro price tag. The city used the budget, additionally, to repave and
remodel Marseille’s historic waterfront, which now connects the Vieux Port via
walkways to the Fort of St. Jean, the new MUCEM, La Majeure Cathedral, and
the Joliette district. This entire stretch was anointed the “Villa Méditerranée” and
is pictured in the two top images of Figure 6.1.

![Figure 6.1. Top: The Villa Méditerranée, Middle: The MUCEM, Bottom: Advertisement in Marseille’s Airport for the EuroMéditerranée Urban Renewal Project](image-url)
It was against this political and financial backdrop that the State affirmed its need for urgent solutions to its problems with violence and drug-trafficking among the young diasporic inhabitants of the Northern Quarters. In the next subsection, I consider two types of State-led activities, Mediterranean cultural programming during 2013 and MSA educational policy over the 2012-3013 school year, and how they together formed a campaign created to encourage Marseille’s young Muslim inhabitants to come to resemble, act, think, and speak like Classical Mediterranean subjects.

*Cultural Programming and MSA Educational Policy: Place and People-Making*

In his speech to inaugurate the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008, then-president Sarkozy proclaimed that, thanks to their common denominator in the civilizations of Antiquity, the “European dream” and the “Mediterranean dream” are one. He continued: “the dream that was once Bonaparte’s in Egypt, Napoléon III’s in Algeria, Lyautey’s in Morocco. This dream which was less a dream of conquest than one of civilization...” (2.7.2008). Among the cultural exhibits put on by the city during MP-2013, as the Capital was called, two in particular further channeled Sarkozy’s vision of how the banks of the Mediterranean would attain unison by recalling their previous union in the period of Greek and Latin civilizations (between the 7th century BCE and the 5th
century CE). These are the permanent exhibit “The Gallery of the Mediterranean,” spanning the bottom floor of the MUCEM, and the exhibit entitled “Mediterraneans: From the grand city-states of yesterday to the people of today,” which ran through the Spring of 2013 at a renovated hangar on the waterfront. The MUCEM’s Gallery boasts objects and maps that trace connections between the Classical civilizations of yore and “the Mediterranean Society” of today, along with a special feature exhibit on Mediterranean citizenship. There, one learns that the foundations of the French notion of citizenship, that of rights and duties institutionalized by the French Constitution of 1793 and continuing to present, are to be found in the Antiquity-era concept of citizenship, which held it was both an ideal and a privilege.

Details about this Mediterranean form of citizenship were disclosed by an ad campaign circulated by the Municipality in promotion of the MUCEM’s exhibit. Indeed, posted on bus stops and billboards throughout the city were portraits of people against recognizably Mediterranean landscapes. Whether the depicted person was wielding a handful of white sand or had donned a Roman Centurion helmet, a floral perhaps Italian print, or a Moroccan kaftan shirt, the caption below announced that the MUCEM was all ears to their stories: “All of the Mediterranean tells its story at the MUCEM.” The people held up as all
types of Mediterranean, however, overwhelmingly appear young, pale in skin color, and free of any indicators as to their religious affiliations. The text of the ad and the models’ juxtaposition with sun-washed backdrops nevertheless insist upon the Méditerranité of this particular group of individuals—and none other. This campaign to represent (and in so doing, perhaps entail) a youthful, secular
Mediterranean citizenry was joined in force by another poster that went up around town for the J1 Hangar exhibit (c.f., Figure 6.4). Behind the words “Mediterraneans: From the Grand City-States of Yesterday to the People of Today” is a man whose shirtless torso and seafaring portrayal suggest the personage of Odysseus. Here, the viewer experiences a physical similarity in landscape between their own location in the J1, looking out onto Marseille’s harbor, and the Mediterranean backdrop of Antiquity implied by the poster. The desired effect, it seems, is to lead the viewer to draw a genealogical link between oneself as a contemporary member of Marseille’s population and the type of person that inhabited such Greek city-states as Ithaca. As a group, these images and their accompanying texts reveal the Municipality’s intention to construct the space of Marseille as a particular kind of Mediterranean place. The
“conversion of spaces into places,” writes Bank (2011, p. 15), is a social, material, and importantly, discursive process. In his famous writings on space and place, Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) mostly described radical anti-capitalist appropriations of space that aimed to open urban places for alternative lifestyles. Place-making can also reflect top-down political subjectivities (Hart, 2002), however, and this seems to be the case in Marseille. Indeed, Marseille was subject to quite material forms of place-making in the name of gentrification, like the creation of an international business district from the ashes of La Joliette’s working-class immigrant port.

In her poignant ethnography of the culture of youth martyrdom in the Iran of the 1980s, Roxanne Varzi (2006) examines how filmic and still imagery were leveraged by Khomeini’s government during the Iran-Iraq War as its primary instrument for simultaneously creating martyrs and Islamic subjects. Only in death, she writes, were Iranian youth interpellated—in Althusser’s (1971) sense—as Islamic subjects. Moreover, she argues it was their numerous deaths which, ultimately, effected the post-War conversion of the Islamic Republic into a consolidated nation. Inspired by Varzi’s analysis of how Iranian youth were visually interpellated to Islamic subjecthood, the question arises of whether the Muslim youth who viewed these images in Marseille, whether on the street or in the exhibits themselves, were also interpellated as subjects of
State’s secular Mediterranean. To use Althusser’s (1971, p. 173) turn of phrase, is this a case of a cultural chronotope that “hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects”? Althusser’s theory of interpellation turns on two recognitions. First, there are the holders of some ideology, who must recognize a human target for their ideologizing. Then, there are individuals in the world who, upon their interpellation by an ideology, recognize themselves as “always-already” subjects of that ideology (1971, p. 176). In Hughes (2014, unpublished), for example, he describes how some scholars in religious studies read a “liberal, inclusive, pluralistic, feminist, gay-friendly” version of Islam into historical data and, in so doing, seek to interpellate Muslims to recognize themselves in this Islamic past. Whether Muslims are in fact interpellated by this scholarly “mythropoesis” (ibid, n.p.) depends, however, on the institutionalization of such views, as through academic hiring decisions or teaching, for instance. To circle back to the case at hand, whether or not Marseille’s Muslims are being “lassoed” onto a coeval plane with this part-hypothetical past, to adopt M. Silverstein’s (2005) expression, can only be discovered through conversing with them about their experiences with such images. For lack of data on youth’s uptakes of these images, in the next section (III) I furnish data collected with youth on their reception of the other main activity through which the State conveyed its Classical Mediterranean imaginary:
MSA language instruction. In what follows I share more details about MSA language policies and programs. I then turn to my uptake data and answering my question above about whether or not youth are in fact interpellated thus.

As prefaced, MSA education in the public system provided the State, in the form of the local arm of the Ministry of Education, with a vital arena for its attempts to create individuals consistent with its Mediterranean vision. In keeping with the recommendations of the European Commission’s Report (2008), the French Ministry of Education surmised that instruction in “Arabic” might speak to youth from Muslim families in a more intimate way than, say, German or Italian. The course of action undertaken by the Ministry of Education in Marseille departs in important ways from that advised by the Report, however, which emphasized instruction in youth’s home languages as the key to de-Islamicizing youth and reconnecting them to peaceful life-ways. Instead, Marseille’s branch of the Ministry invites youth from varied Muslim backgrounds, whose families may speak Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Wolof, or Comorian, to participate in various forms of instruction in MSA, the highly standardized language that nary a person in the Arabic-speaking world would call their home or heritage language.³ One of the two MSA programs available

³ Defined broadly, heritage languages are those languages other than the official language(s) spoken in a territory by an individual, a family, or a community.
within French public schools nation-wide is nevertheless called a “heritage language” program (Enseignement des Langues et Cultures d’Origine, or ELCO). This elective option takes the form of an after-school program, or a pull-out class during the school day, and is mainly offered at the primary level (though it also exists at the secondary level). The second, more commonly pursued option is the MSA as a “foreign language” program (langue vivante étrangère). This is part of the national curriculum and is taught in public schools at the secondary and tertiary levels. The teachers involved in this kind of MSA instruction have likewise passed the requisite exams: the CAPES or l’Aggrégation, for the second and third degrees, respectively.

Marseille’s Ministry of Education has specific goals in mind for its “foreign language” offering of MSA at the secondary level. When I met with Madame Durel, one of France’s three inspectors for MSA classes and the person responsible for the South of France, I hoped she could tell me more about a particular disconnect I perceived. Why, if MSA was being formulated by the Ministry as a “foreign language,” placing it on a par with other languages (e.g.,

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4 The Arabic ELCO programs result from a series of bilateral accords made in the 1970s-1980s between France and North African countries from which France invited large numbers of immigrant workers. They are coordinated by the Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian Ministries of Education, and though each country independently trains, sends, and pays its respective teachers in France, the ELCO programs and the quality of instruction are subject to ongoing evaluations according to standards set by the Council of Europe and applied by the French Ministry of Education (e.g., Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2000).
English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Mandarin) taught in the Hexagon, were there frequently only children from Muslim families enrolled in public school classes? I let her know, by way of illustration, that among the four MSA classes I observed in a northern secondary school (grades 6ème, 5ème, 4ème, and 3ème, or ages 11-14), there was only one student with a Catholic name, and even he had a Tunisian grandfather on one side of the family. Madame Durel half-smiled and replied that this portrayal of MSA is supposed to encourage students to enroll in MSA classes “on motivations that are not exclusively about identity (identitaires) but on motivations that are professional, and cultural only in the broadest sense.” In other words, she used the foreign language label to cultivate in students an attitude of cultural detachment vis-à-vis MSA, but also an awareness of the pragmatic value of MSA for them as future professionals. Madame Durel was in fact pleased, or perhaps relieved, that Muslim-identified students were, at the very least, attending “our classes” rather than those held in prayer rooms or Islamic community associations. She also believed the pedagogic initiatives she had put in place were proving effective against the mass exodus of Islamically curious students towards private religious MSA instruction.

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5 In 2006 the 65,000 youth participating in private MSA education surpassed the 4,800 students enrolled in public high school MSA classes, nation-wide, by a factor of 13.5 (Deheuvels & Dichy, 2006).
—what Falip and Deslandes (1994) have called MSA’s “progressive eviction” from public schools (p. 68).

Madame Durel was responsible for implementing three kinds of MSA instruction in Marseille’s public middle and high schools. One links up with the Ministry of Education’s broader approach to MSA instruction, while the other two represent innovative takes on MSA teaching. The first she summarized in her comments on MSA-as-a-foreign-language above. To solve the issue of parents and students placing their religious hopes on public MSA classes, Madame Durel accepts such students but instructs her teachers to reframe the symbolic value of MSA in the classroom. In what would be recognized within the language policy literature as an instance of “status planning” (Kloss, 1969), Durel strives to have the teachers under her supervision perform a type of MSA that is both communicative and professionally valuable. Durel’s “weapon of revalorization” (arme de revalorisation), as she calls it, is an MSA that, first, stands above the dialectal fray, not sliding towards the dialectal end of the MSA-to-Arabic-dialect continuum, and second, eschews ties to Classical Arabic and, thus, Islam (Suleiman, 2012). Several educational events have been hosted in recent years with a view towards creating curricula suited to this conception of a secular professional register of MSA. These include the Ministry of National Education-led symposium to formulate protocols for Arabic teaching in the
French public system (2006), the Assizes held by the National Assembly in Marseille to regulate Arabic teaching (2008), and more informal workshops to discuss curricular development, like that held by the French Association of Arabisants in Aix-en-Provence (2013). Comments by Bruno Levallois, who is both France’s General Inspector for Arabic (MSA) instruction and Chairman of the Board at l’Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, succinctly illustrate the spirit of these meetings. In his remarks at a Conference for Arabic Instruction in Europe held at the Institut Avicenne des Sciences Humaines in Lille, he spoke to the tonic effects of teaching a forward-looking, communicative MSA, saying, “cultures are only alive if they are able to project themselves into the future; otherwise they don’t give wings to many dreams at all” (7.23.12). Levallois’ goal echoes that of Madame Durel: to make of MSA an international language that promises French Muslim youth opportunities for professional development and social mobility. Several weeks after our initial interview, I saw Madame Durel and thought to show her the cover of French-Maghrebi magazine Le Courrier de l’Atlas from April, 2013 (c.f., Figure 6.5), which features a boy holding the Arabic letter “Lam” and the French letter “T,” alongside a caption that reads “Speaking (Modern Standard) Arabic, now that’s classy!” She nodded and agreed that only changing MSA’s image would “get us out of this mess” (nous en
Within the context of Marseille, the suggestion to change MSA’s image is not just a matter of modifying the language’s social status, an instance of status planning, however. Importantly, revamping MSA is also an exercise in remodeling the youth who take MSA. Indeed, the behavior of diasporic youth from Muslim families was transformed into an obstacle at the precise moment in Marseille’s history when the city was poised to gentrify and become an economic and cultural center of attention. MSA, as such, became the State-chaperoned vehicle of youth’s desired transformation; it was remade in the image of the youth the local government sought to remake. Dick (2010b, 2011) describes this process in terms of “people-making,” or the understanding that people do not necessarily possess identities, but instead perform them, whether
for themselves or for others. Dick (2010b) explains how, not infrequently, the identities attributed to us by others have little to do with the identities we claim for ourselves through cultural practices. I analyze the Ministry’s move to teach a professional, secular kind of MSA as an attempt at “people-making” in this last sense, and in the final section I provide examples of how classroom interactions were carried out partially in accordance with this pedagogic philosophy.

Durel’s two other projects for teaching MSA, while innovative on a national scale, represent variations on the same theme of “people-making” developed above. For one, Durel is testing out an initiative she calls International or Excellence Sections. The one class she has opened to-date specifically targets “students other than (dialectal) Arabophone students” (or French-origin students) from middle and upper-class neighborhoods. This type of section, she thinks, shows a real potential to free MSA from its dual connotations: with Muslims on the one hand, and with economically disadvantaged Arabophone youth, on the other. For the large majority of currently enrolled MSA students who do in fact fit this description, however, she has developed a second strategy that goes above and beyond the professionalization of the MSA that is taught. This strategy is the “Mediterranean sections,” which make of MSA classes, in Durel’s words, “a real cultural project” (un vrai projet culturel). If the MSA-as-a-foreign-language
program’s goal was to reorient youth from their cultural and religious identities towards a professional one, the “Classical Language Workshops” Madame Durel set up in 2012 and 2013 in a handful of high school classrooms embrace culture, as she says, albeit a particular notion of what counts as Mediterranean culture. Specifically, these classes require that Latin and Greek be taught alongside MSA, with all three teachers cycling through the classroom to present their respective materials and, occasionally, teaching co-taught lessons. In Transcript 6.1, below, Madame Durel fills me in on the vision of “culture” that underpins her Mediterranean MSA classes.

**Transcript 6.1. Mediterranean MSA Class Sections**

(CE: Researcher/LD: Lara Durel (Academic inspector for MSA)

CE: How might one call these classes?
LD: We call them “Mediterranean Sections for Mediterranean language and cultures”
CE: I see... And how does it work, exactly?
LD: Well, it’s a co-taught project between teachers of languages from Antiquity: Greek and Latin, and MSA. But other teachers can also join the project. A history teacher or someone else. Me, in the project I have at Cézanne [High School] a teacher of Provençal wants to join. I’m sure we’ll be able to do interesting things: on music, on love poetry, things like that.
CE: That’s a great idea. Is it recent then?
LD: Yes, yes.
CE: And where did it come from th-
LD: -it began as a shared reflection between people of good faith ((scoffs)) who think that uh Classical languages are in danger here, just like MSA is in danger. And that we must unite these forces. So it’s that kind of perspective, of the Mediterranean. Which is to say, specifically, that it’s all that that thinking about the Mediterranean, you know, Braudel uh but even the Union hmm for the Mediterranean, et cetera. All this is to reflect on-we’re anchoring anchoring France in a European geographic space but there is another space that has a real coherence, which is the Mediterranean.
CE: Where France has been present for much more than a century!
LD: Indeed. Yes, yes. So the Mediterranean, in sum, it’s a very Braudelienne inspiration. By way of saying that there is a Mediterranean culture. Exchanges have taken place. It’s a very ancient theater for life, a space of sharing, combats, and of ties-
CE: -yes, political ones-
LD: -and that all of this it creates a shared culture, one we don’t make sufficient use of.
CE: And the students, how do they respond to-
LD: -well in the experiences we’ve had so far, very well! No problems to report. They’re happy. For example, in the project at Victor Hugo [High School], where two Classical language teachers and Norah [the MSA teacher] are collaborating, it’s neat mmm! They did some stuff on Aristotle, on Alexandria, on-they went to Paris to see those manuscripts, from the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Greek and Latin manuscripts that passed through Arab hands, that were brought to the Occident by the Arabs. We try to put our little rock on the pile.
CE: ((long pause)) And does this idea of the Mediterranean exist in other non-local MSA programs elsewhere?
LD: No, no, it’s just a within-France thing. It’s local. I mean, outside of us, who is interested in MSA instruction? Nobody! In scientific terms? Nobody! In the Arab World there hasn’t been any development of MSA didacticism, of a scientific pedagogy for MSA. Nor in the other European countries. Nope! Because they, no, they don’t have-they just have university-level instruction. We have a real French specialty, we do. On the one hand, the long years of experience teaching MSA in France... it goes back to the 16th century. On the other hand uh, the colonial history as well. We can’t exactly omit it. To be exact, we have had a colonial history in the Arab World, mostly in the Maghreb, which has meant that the study of Arabs-of the culture of Arabic has been well developed. And it has given rise to a real thought process: which is, how can we teach MSA as a living foreign language? We are the only ones thinking about that.
CE: In Europe, you mean?
LD: Or even in the Arab World. Who in the Arab World is thinking about that? Nobody!6

Madame Durel, who was born in Morocco, of course knows that MSA is not a Classical language but rather a language whose base variety lies in the language of the Koran and the pre-Islamic as well as early Islamic poetry of the Arabian Peninsula (Suleiman, 2012). She holds, however, that the language’s own history has made of it a stale, archaic language. In order to concoct an MSA with communicative potential as a “living language,” she quite intriguingly reasons that it might need to be coupled to a different past, namely that of

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6 This interview was carried out in French on 4.3.13. The French original can be found at the end of this chapter.
Antiquity. The idea to wed MSA to a pre-Islamic, Classical past maintains sight lines, indicates Madame Durel, with the perspective animating both the Union for the Mediterranean and the œuvre of French Mediterraneanist Fernand Braudel. Indeed, in his speeches to inaugurate the UfM Sarkozy was anxious to speak of Mediterranean unification, depicting himself as “president of a France that places the Mediterranean on the pathway to reunification after 12 centuries of division and heartbreak” and the Mediterranean as “the first fraternal civilization” (Daguzan, 2009, p. 396). The historical portrayal of the Mediterranean as a unitary object is often traced back to Braudel (1985), who along with certain French contemporaries, like Louis Bertrand (1921) for instance, counterposed a unitary Mediterranean before Islam to a Mediterranean marked by civilizational clashes after Islamic expansion. This comparison is a fascinating one and is explored in more detail below in the context of Bertrand’s writing.

In his book *Les Villes d’Or: Algérie et Tunisie Romaines* (Golden Cities: Roman Algeria and Tunisia, 1921), Bertrand presents an early formulation of the contrast between a fraternal Latinate Mediterranean and a barbarous, derelict Islamic one. Bertrand is especially remembered for his vivid arguments in favor of the Latin character of North Africa, without which, notes Lorcin (2014), French settlers would have lacked the requisite “title deed” to North Africa (p. 267).
Indeed, his book reads as an homage to North Africa’s Roman history. He writes in the preface, for example, that, “in entering Africa, we have done nothing but recover a lost province of *Latinité*...Inheritors of Rome, we invoke rights previous to Islam. Faced with the Arab usurpers...we represent...the true inheritors of this land... We represent the most exalted and most ancient Africa” (1921, p. 9). Likewise, in his descriptions Greco-Roman foundations peer out from beneath the Arab baths and cafés of Algiers, awaiting their liberation from Islam’s “white shroud of silence and death” (p. 31). Bertrand’s writings can, in fact, be recognized as ideologically underpinning the binary at the heart of the contrast the Ministry of Education formulates between religious MSA and professional MSA contrast. If religious MSA is silent and unmoving, ensconced in the blind alley of Islamic identity, then the communicative, professional MSA is—to borrow Bertrand’s description of the “golden cities” of Greco-Latin North Africa—“entirely exposed, external, public, welcoming, wide open...with windows and porticos looking out on the vast world, letting in air and light” (1921, p. 30). It appears that Madame Durel and her colleagues within the Ministry of Education erected their dream of a professionally mobile and fraternal MSA precisely upon Bertrand's dream of a Mediterranean that is alive with the ferment of Antiquity.
Notwithstanding Madame Durel’s varied strategies for boosting MSA instruction and making youth into secular Mediterranean citizens, these initiatives appear not to have had their intended effects. In the next section, I show how students enrolled in MSA instruction within a northern secondary school failed to believe that their futures would be improved by this professional register of MSA. Their continued understanding of MSA in religious terms and their articulation of forms of cultural citizenship other than Classical Mediterranean citizenship suggest that the State’s interpellation of them “flopped.” Teachers, too, displayed little commitment to this non-cultural philosophy of MSA, often using their respective regional varieties of Arabic (e.g., Moroccan, Syrian) and making unsanctioned asides about religion in the classroom. As for Madame Durel’s “Classical Languages” initiative, it looks as though it will remain a passing experiment conducted during 2012-2013, as it garnered success neither with teachers nor at the ministerial level. In what follows, I describe for example how one MSA teacher in a Mediterranean Section did not understand why she was being coupled with such different subject matters. Perhaps the greatest obstacle posed to the longevity of Madame Durel’s “Classical Languages” initiative, however, is a recently passed measure targeting secondary school funds called *La Réforme du Collège*. In April of 2015, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, the Minister of Education since 2014, pushed through a
reform that is supposed to become active in 2016. Beginning then, each secondary school’s principal will have the option of deciding whether or not to offer Latin and Greek. Even if they choose to offer these ancient languages, the reform reduces the weekly hours that can be allotted to their instruction (Eduscol, 2015). Figures 6.6 and 6.7 below depict the calendar created by Latin and Greek teachers to protest this reform, in which they dressed up as Greek gods and captioned themselves as “the immortals.” For the reasons intimated here and detailed in the last section, it looks probable that any subsequent professionalization and “mediterranization” of Muslim youth will have to pass through other means than MSA offerings at the secondary level.

Figure 6.6. 2015-2016 Calendar of Olympic Gods
III. Reactions to the State’s Mediterranean

The previous section captured a contradiction in how Madame Durel sought to cordon off MSA’s symbolic functions from its practical use. Her MSA language policy aimed to dissociate the language from its historical religious and cultural dimensions and foreground its professional utility, and yet she described the co-taught (Greek, Latin, and MSA) Classical language workshops she instigated as a ministerial project to “bring culture” to MSA students. In what follows, I show how this intention to “replace” young Muslims’ culture was, not only typical of Marseille-European Capital of Culture-2013 more broadly, but also recognized as such by diasporic youth from the city, who contested it on the public stage as well as more intimately in the classroom.
I begin, first, by describing the forceful public response to the State’s re-imagining of the city’s cultural heritage penned by Minna Sif. A young woman who was born in Corsica and raised in a Moroccan family, Sif currently makes a living as a novelist in Marseille. She also works with second-generation youth from the Northern Quarters, where she lives, and supports their creative development by organizing writing workshops and spoken word performances. Perhaps three weeks after Marseille’s inauguration as Capital, Sif contributed an article entitled “Marseille: Capital of Another Culture” to the daily newspaper Libération (1.20.2013). In it, she deplored the disconnect between the Municipality’s “talk” (bouche) and their actions. Why was Marseille-European Capital of Culture-2013 sold to us as a capital “for all” (pour tous), she asks, when in fact its programming reveals a more exclusive definition of culture? She rages at the lack of spaces dedicated to hip-hop and the cultural production of Marseille’s youth of color, for example, and quizzes the city’s officials thus:

“The ignominy of our decision-makers, those fearfuls of a culture for all, was to instrumentalize the multiculturalism at the heart of this city during the period of Marseille’s candidacy, only to better deny it after the fact [of Marseille’s election to European Capital of Culture]. (...) Where did the poets and poetesses of rap disappear to? (...) To not offer them a platform from which to declaim their high hopes, rap about love and the fear of drugs, and denounce social injustice is non-sensical. (...) People talk to us about violence in our neighborhoods (quartiers). The worst violence is to prevent the other from expressing their singularity, to deny them precisely the opportunity to manifest their cultural wealth.” (1.20.2013, n.p., my translation).

According to Sif, Marseille is not the next node in a series of Greco-Roman Mediterranean moments, with stops in Egypt and colonial Algeria along the way.
Sif describes her Marseille, rather, as “an emblematic place for the kind of multiculturalism I myself exemplify.” She and other youth from Marseille have great-grandparents who, in their time, “roamed the douars (Arab villages)...with a shoulder bag to denounce the injustices and ridicule the extravagances of this or that caïd or col blanc (white-collar person)” (1.20.2013, n.p.). Sif’s Marseille, in other words, has a heritage that is working-class, multicultural, and opposed to being blindly directed from above.

Teachers and students in the MSA classrooms I observed between 2012 and 2013 incarnated the spirit of tongue-in-cheek humor in the face of top-down policies that Sif transmits above. They were similarly aware of their cultural heritage and, although they may have imagined themselves as professionally bound, they did not recognize themselves—in Althusser’s second sense—as the secular citizens of a city defined by its Classical Mediterranean heritage, as the Municipality would have it. As will be highlighted by the transcripts below, how students and teachers perceived MSA and other languages, like English or Spanish, often flew in the face of the distinction formulated by the Ministry of Education, namely, between languages with symbolic functions and ones that are purely instrumental. Moore (2011) identifies this distinction as “the fundamental dichotomy that organizes the language consciousness of EU
He cites the European Commission’s Maalouf Report (2008), which reads:

“... we would encourage Europeans to take two separate decisions when it comes to language learning, one dictated by the needs of the broadest possible communication, and the other guided by a whole host of personal reasons stemming from individual or family background, emotional ties, professional interest, cultural preferences, intellectual curiosity... (European Commission, 2008, p. 11).

The European Commission’s recommendation that Europeans label varieties within their linguistic repertoires in such a way (e.g., home language, international language) is reflected within Madame Durel’s relegation of dialectal Arabic to the home and consecration of MSA to the professional and international realm. She envisaged, for example, that MSA students in her districts might capitalize on their Arabic skills to become interpreters at the United Nations, business men and women who exchange with the Arabic-speaking world, or perhaps flight attendants on any number of Arab airlines. The picture she paints of a professionally mobile, communicative MSA with an elite, international sphere of possibilities is not echoed from the receiving end, however, as becomes clear from teachers’ and students’ comments below.

The conversation in Transcript 6.2 takes place in Class 3B, the MSA classroom whose students I discussed in Chapters Three and Four, as I am tutoring three female MSA students during their break hour. The three students, Maisara, whose parents are Muslim Comorians, Fouhda, who is third-generation
Algerian on both sides, and Sabrina, who is half second-generation Algerian and half third-generation, have taken MSA for the four years of collège both to please their families and because the school ushered them towards this particular bilingual track. They had little previous experience with the language, with the exception of Maisara, who attended a private religious preschool where she was taught to read MSA in order to memorize parts of the Koran. The conversation that unfolded resulted from my questioning them about why they take MSA. I was frustrated with the three girls because, although they had expressly pleaded with me to hold MSA tutoring sessions, sometimes they would sleep through first period and not attend, and other times they would come but not apply themselves. The girls defend themselves by stating that MSA is both difficult to learn and useless where their professional futures are concerned.

Transcript 6.2. MSA is Good for Nothing

Maisara: Ça sert à rien l’arabe
Fouhda: C’est vrai, ça sert à rien
Cécile: Pourquoi?
Fouhda: Parce que déjà chez nous on parle pas arabe. Ça sert à rien-
Maisara: {ouais eh eh}
Fouhda: {Et en plus} si chez nous on parle arabe c’est pas le même. Là c’est c’est l’arabe littéraire et, chez nous, c’est pas pareil

Maisara: Modern Standard Arabic is good for nothing
Fouhda: It’s true. It’s good for nothing.
Cécile: Why?
Fouhda: Because already we don’t even speak (Modern Standard) Arabic at home. It’s useless-
Maisara: {Yeah eh eh}
Fouhda: {Plus} even if at home we speak “Arabic” it’s not the same one. In this case it’s Modern Standard Arabic and, at home, it’s not the same one

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7 This transcript dates from 4.3.13.
In a first instance, Maisara states that MSA is not worth a dime. Fouhda nods and adds that MSA does not help her to communicate with Algerian, *darijah* or Algerian Arabic-speaking family members. Maisara clinches their case further, sighing at the many grammatical details that require study for MSA. Sabrina then contributes that perhaps the only utility of MSA is to read Koran “and all,” which likely captures the other religious duties for which MSA might be useful. Fouhda finishes off the topic of conversation by commenting on how whereas MSA is not useful “for later,” Italian and Spanish may prove themselves more bankable, so to speak. These three young women appear to easily dodge the Minister’s hailing of them as professional Mediterranean subjects in-and-through a revamped MSA. Instead, they follow their parents’ lead, understanding MSA as a language that, while not useful in the home, remains useful insofar as it can provide a deeper knowledge of scripture. In a word, these students perceive MSA’s utility to coincide precisely with its cultural and religious symbolic value. Were it not good for “reading Koran and all,” it would serve very little purpose at all (indeed, it seemed that even that purpose held
meager interest for Maisara, Fouhda, and Sabrina). These young women were hence similar to Madame Durel because they, too, placed high importance on their future professional options; where they differed, however, was on the languages they thought would guarantee them these futures.

Transcript 6.3 takes place with another group of female students from the same MSA class, named Sheyreen, Kenza, and Siwar. All three are second-generation young women from Arab families who speak Algerian at home. This conversation took place during a video-taped interview at the end of the 2012-2013 school year while we four were discussing how they felt about spending time with their extended families in Algeria over the summer. Sheyreen goes off on what is construed, by Kenza, as a tangential rant about her Algerian cousins’ paltry language skills. Sheyreen draws explicit comparisons throughout between the efforts students in Marseille make to learn “other languages” and the lack of effort she believes her cousins show in learning to speak anything but “Arabic,” which I understand broadly to refer both to the MSA that Algerians learn at school and the Algerian *darijah* spoken in most other contexts.
Here, Sheyreen places special emphasis on the year 2013. As soon as she says “we’re in 2013,” the video shows that Kenza, who was doodling on a piece of paper, jerks her head up, laughs, and throws up a hand in exasperation as she says “what to do about her, hmm?” Kenza’s strong reaction to Sheyreen, I believe, relates to the fact that in her speech Sheyreen animates several catch-phrases the students have heard from politicians and educators about 2013.

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This video dates from 6.12.13.
When Sheyreen says “we’re in 2013,” and also “it’s the new generation,” she appears to be taking on the persona of the organizers of Marseille-European Capital of Culture-2013. Kenza’s scoff at this impersonation discloses her negative stance towards that kind of top-down talk about 2013 and what it promises to bring. Interestingly, however, Sheyreen is not completely on the same page with people like Madame Durel. For one, she cites English as the language one must work to learn in order to “speak to the whole world.” Arabic of any sort, she implies, is backwards by contrast and is associated with people who lack international flair. She too, like Fouhda in the previous transcript, craves an international lifestyle. To prove it, she is willing to make the effort to learn languages like English and French. MSA is, tellingly, absent from her list of international languages that befit the people of 2013. In sum, Sheyreen appears to harbor dreams about 2013 and beyond that do not fall too far from the mark of the Municipality’s vision, namely, of a forward-looking, cosmopolitan Marseille. She finds her place within this Marseille, however, not via MSA but through English and other languages she recognizes to be international.

Speaking MSA or regional varieties of Arabic, as she quips, indicates people who wish to “stay in their corner, in their bubble.”

Teachers, too, challenged the State construction of MSA as a professional instrument with few cultural links to the Arab world or Islamdom (Hodgson,
One teacher named Sara commented that the instructions she received, not to speak in Moroccan, her home variety, or broach religious topics, made her feel like “we [MSA teachers] are teaching a fabricated language” (en enseigne une fausse langue). While on the bus one day, she expressed her hope to me that the Ministry would soon find her some “language assistants” from the Arabic-speaking world. In some classes, MSA teachers are coupled with language assistants from Arab countries whose job it is to assist with fostering dialectal Arabic skills in students. Sara as such, who is the teacher for the six students who appear in the transcripts above, often leaned on Moroccan as a way of modeling for students the linguistic reality of dialectal varieties as compared to the type of “fabricated” MSA she was expected to teach. Sometimes, she would switch to Moroccan to get students to comply with her wishes. For instance, most days of the week Sara would seat a student named Ayman at the front right of class so she could keep an eye on him as he did his work. Without fail, he would push his desk backwards away from the front of class at the beginning of the period. Sara disputed this, gesturing and saying “Zidi! Zidi!” (more! more!) to make him move his desk forward again. At other times, she would depend on her students’ home experience with regional varieties of Arabic to help them understand how MSA functions. For example, on a day she was introducing a new lesson and the unknown vocabulary words zawjah (wife) and zawj
(husband), she asked in French “what do these words remind you of?” She put up two fingers, the students paused to think, and then many of them shouted “zujl,” the word for two, or a pair, in Algerian. Sara also conducted impromptu class discussions on such unsanctioned topics as the difference between Arabs and Muslims and on whether she and the students should or should not miss school on Muslim holidays, given the school’s secular (*laïcque*) status (all, including Sara, agreed not to attend on Eid Friday).

Another teacher, named Norah, was one of the MSA teachers named to implement the “Classical Languages Workshop” at the high school where she had taught MSA for many years. Norah ultimately enjoyed the outcome of the workshop, though she explains that her enjoyment derived mainly from the fact that she became friendly with the Greek and Latin teachers, whom she had only seen in passing before. She also, however, admits to being somewhat perplexed at what was expected of her and finding it difficult to really deepen students’ knowledge of MSA within such a framework:

“I didn’t know what I was going to do. Uh, Greek...MSA, really for me it meant nothing. Then we get together the three of us---it was funny because people called us the ‘infernal trio.’ You know, we were three and together all the time... So we would say ‘Okay, what are we going to do today?’ It was good because, as long as we made a connection between Greek and MSA, we were left the freedom to choose our lesson plans. (...) It was like a workshop, if you will. They weren’t my students all year long. (...) For example, at the beginning of the year my colleague did his piece, then the second colleague did hers, then the third month was mine. Because we said that it made more sense to have continuity. I wasn’t going to start the [Arabic] alphabet one week because the class was only once a week. I wasn’t going to start and then leave off and then my colleague comes and talks with them about something else. (...) So I started
with the alphabet, then when I finished the alphabet we did the civilization part. This meant they had to see the link between Greek philosophy and Arab philosophy: how the Arabs transmitted, translated, and explained Greek philosophy, and then passed it along. All of that part was in French. (...) Then we talked about Averroës [Ibn Rushd]. We talked about him. Umm, my Greek colleagues talked about Aristotle. Because, precisely, it was Averroës who translated and commented on Aristotle. So they dealt with that piece. Then they saw films about, I believe Alexander [the Great]. They saw Alexander [the Great], they saw Cleopatra and Antony, things like that. And we mostly talked about Alexandria because it was a link between the Arab world and Greece.”

When I followed up on this, wondering if the students learned to read or speak any MSA, Norah said that no, due to the few hours allotted to her, they mainly learned to recognize letters. She and the other two teachers also brought the class to the J1 Hangar exhibit (“Mediterraneans: From the Grand City-States of Yesterday to the People of Today”) mentioned in Section II. “It was complementary and the students went to see the exhibit, of course. Oh yes, yes, yes, they went to see it,” she assured me.
The examples reviewed here precipitate a handful of observations about Madame Durel’s preference—instilled in MSA classes over the 2012-2013 school year—for an MSA with professional and international utility over an MSA symbolically tied to Islamic history. As apparent from students’ comments, they continued to view MSA in a way that had symbolic as well as instrumental facets. For students, MSA remained a language tied to Islam and hence to their parents’ countries. It was not, as such, simply a language relating to their personal identities (“identitaire” in Madame Durel’s words). Rather, youth thought they might use MSA to read Koran, perhaps garner recognition in religious settings, and please their extended families. MSA was recognized to have an international dimension, not because it would lead to jobs around the globe, but because youth knew this language was admired in Muslim communities everywhere. As Moore (2011) notes with respect to European Union language policy more generally, there is a mistaken tendency to push languages either to the side of the “private person, possessing particular determinations of an ‘identity’” (p. 17), or to the side of the universalist “public citizen.” MSA as understood by youth who participate in public school classes continues, however, to be a language that is neither just private nor insular insofar as it is tied symbolically to Islam. As students’ parents perhaps reasoned
in urging their children into MSA classes, MSA has the potential to help youth maintain ties to the Muslim community within and beyond Marseille.

Just as symbolically laden languages may prove instrumental for those who ascribe to those symbolic values, so may languages thought only to be instrumental also be shown to have significant symbolic dimensions. Underlying Madame Durel’s vision of a practical, communicative MSA was, in effect, more than just a pitch for youth’s socioeconomic mobility. As affirmed by Moore (2011), “mere efficiency and symbolic value will always contradict each other, until we realize that efficiency is a symbolic value” (p. 21). Within the context of Marseille-European Capital of Culture-2013, the State’s move to instruct Muslim youth in a secular, professional register of MSA belies the city’s fear of Marseille falling backwards into social strife, poverty, and Islamic stringency. MSA’s efficiency, as such, lay in its presumed ability to maneuver Marseille’s diasporic youth population towards a more Classical, secular Mediterranean identity. In other words, although MSA was marketed in utilitarian terms to youth, along with it came a bundle of values endorsed by the local government. I have argued here that these values were packaged by the Municipality in the form of a recognizable cultural chronotope: an invitation to believe in a Mediterranean heritage for Marseille that dates to Antiquity. Insofar as MSA policy illustrates that swapping religious symbolism for economic utility
involves more, culturally, than just instrumentality, Minna Sif seems to have hewed very close to reality when she wrote that, in 2013, Marseille intended to become “capital of another culture” than its own. Nevertheless, the examples in this section show that Marseillais youth from Muslim familial backgrounds did not assume footings, or the stances and dreams, aligned with Durel’s MSA and were not, as such, interpellated as secular, Mediterranean subjects.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The premise explored in this chapter is that people may engage in recollections of the past that remain both perspectival and largely hypothetical. What is the significance of the French State recollecting a past that maybe never was, or belonged to someone else, as if it was their own? Can nostalgia be felt for an unlived past, and when it is, what might that indicate about the present? Jameson (1994), for instance, describes the blind nostalgia felt by the Russian characters in Andrei Platonov’s novel Chevengur, who wake in the middle of the night and search unknowingly for what might be signs of a socialist utopia. This “nostalgia mode” (Jameson, 1984, p. 66), which Jameson finds equally in the modernist literature of the former Soviet Union and U.S. films from the post-modernist 1980s, is characterized primarily by “the desperate attempt to
appropriate a missing past” (ibid.) for the purposes of the present. What role might signs circulated by the French State in Marseille, like bits of MSA or contemporary images of Antiquity, play in their nostalgic attempts to bring the past forward?

This chapter focused, in particular, on how the French State in Marseille created “imaginary complicities” (Foucault, 1972, p. 4) between discontinuous nodes in time and space through such means as cultural programming and new MSA educational policies. Marseille’s Municipality turned to the Mediterranean of the past, chronotopically hypothesized to have united the Arabs and the French in a shared Greek and Roman heritage, to sketch a Marseille for the present, where the city’s diasporic and French-origin people come to share in one Mediterranean culture. The political and economic backdrop for the nostalgic reconfiguration of Marseille in these terms is, as described, the context of Marseille’s ongoing gentrification, its period in the public eye during MP2013, and its desire to reshape its reputation: from a city associated perhaps more closely with crime, poverty, and its Algerian population (e.g., Margérie) than with being a highbrow “cultural” destination.¹⁰

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¹⁰ In a reference to Marseille’s numerous Algerians and Algerian descendants, youth sometimes blend Marseille and Algérie, which yields Margérie.
As apparent from the discrepancies in the importance youth versus the Municipality ascribed to Marseille’s status as European Capital of Culture, the city’s residents were engaged during 2012 and 2013 in a protracted negotiation over the definition of “culture.” Commentators like Minna Sif wondered in what sense Marseille was to be cosmopolitan, for instance. Why did city officials not consider diasporic youth to be representative of Marseille’s desired international identity? The material analyzed in this chapter prompts a series of related questions, in turn. Why are the youth socialized into an Islamic milieu not viewed as cultural contributors to the city, to the extent that their culture must be swapped out for a secular Mediterranean one? Is the move to push Marseille’s Muslim youth to identify with a visual appearance and an MSA defined in relation to a Classical Mediterranean in fact a restorative, historically accurate one? Does this move restore MSA and, through it, the diasporic youth who participate in MSA classes, to a long-lost pedigree? And, perhaps most importantly, did the Municipality’s project to “classicize” the infamous Arab and African crossroads, through cultural programming and MSA instruction, successfully entail Mediterranean citizens?

Viewed from a distance, the local Ministry of Education’s elaboration of MSA as a professional, communicative language in many respects resembles the language standardization projects that yielded European standard languages like
French, Spanish, or German (Gal, 2008). Only, interestingly, it is a minority language in this case, MSA, that is being groomed to linguistically represent French culture in Marseille. Likewise, the targets of the standardization project are French Muslims rather than the whole French nation. Madame Durel’s initiatives can be reframed, thus, as attempts to address a specific crisis, among diasporic socioeconomically marginalized youth, at a critical time, during Marseille’s year as Capital, with tools and concepts borrowed from Europe’s long experience with creating national subjects through language standardization.

The Municipality’s efforts notwithstanding, conversations with youth who partake of MSA classes evinced, not only their uncertainty about MSA’s utility for their careers and their preference for English, French, or Spanish, but also a perduring understanding of MSA as a religious language. In sum, then, the invitation Marseille extended to professedly Muslim youth, asking them to claim Frenchness by aligning themselves with the Greco-Roman Mediterranean, appears to have been rescinded by youth themselves. As presented in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, youth articulated their cultural belonging to Marseille and the Mediterranean in ways that differed substantially from the kind of Mediterranean identity described in this chapter. Specifically, how youth positioned themselves culturally with respect to their hometown, their parents’
Mediterranean countries of origin, and the Muslim World more broadly, depended upon their conception of themselves as either highly pious Muslims or else working-class diasporic youth.
Transcript 6.1. French Original

CE: Comment on les appelle ces classes là?
LD: On les appelle "filières Méditerranéennes de langues et cultures Méditerranéennes"
CE: Voilà. Et comment ça marche exactement?
LD: En vérité c'est un travail conjoint entre les professeurs de langues d'antiquité, grecque et latin, et langue arabe. Mais dans le projet peuvent s'adoindre d'autres professeurs. Un professeur d'histoire...(C: Oui) ou autre. Moi, dans le projet que j'ai à Cezanne un professeur de Provençal veut s'adoindre. Moi je suis sur qu'on pourrait faire des choses intéressants, sur la musique, sur la poésie d'amour, choses comme ça.
CE: C'est super comme idée. C'est récent donc?
LD: Ouais, ouais.
CE: Et d'où s'est venue ce-
LD: -C'est venue d'une réflexion commune entre des gens de bonne volonté ((laughs/scoffs)) qui pensent que, euh, les langues anciennes chez nous sont en danger et l'arabe est en danger, et qu'il faut unir ces forces. (C: Oui) Donc c'est une perspective comme ça, de Méditerranée. C'est à dire en vérité c'est toute cette réflexion sur la Méditerranée, vous savez Braudel eh mais même l'Union hein, pour la Méditerranée, etc. (C: Oui). Tout ça c'est une réflexion de-nous ancrons, nous ancrons la France dans un espace géographique européen mais il y a un autre espace qui a une vraie cohérence qui est la Méditerranée. (CE: Où la France est présente depuis bien plus qu'un siècle.
LD: Voilà. Oui, oui, donc la Méditerranée, fin, c'est une inspiration très braudelienne. C'est à dire qu'il y a une culture Méditerranéenne. Il y a eu des échanges. C'est un espace de vie très ancien, un espace de partage, de combats et de (liens?)-  
C: -Politiques aussi, justement-
LD: -Et que tout ça ça crée une culture commune qu'on exploite pas suffisament.
CE: Et les élèves comment ils répondent à ce-
LD: -Bah les quelques expériences qu'on a, très bien! Il n'y a pas de soucis. Ils sont contents. Par exemple, le projet qu'il y a sur Victor Hugo, auquel participent deux professeurs de lettres classiques et Norah, c'est chouette hein. Ols ont fait des trucs sur Aristote, sur Alexandria, sur-ils sont allés à Paris pour voir les manuscrits là, de la Bibliothèque Nationale, c'est à dire les manuscrits grecques et latins qui sont passés par les arabes. Ils ont été apportés au monde occidental par les Arabes. (C: Jmm) On essaie d'apporter notre pierre à cela.
CE: Je commençais à désespérer mais ça me semble une bonne stratégie, pour régler le statut de l'arabe.
LD: En arabe il faut mieux ne pas désespérer. Il faut mieux très pugnace et être comme ça  
C: Oui, optimiste surtout ((long pause)). Et ça existe aussi cette idée de Méditerranée dans d'autres programmes d'arabe qui sont pas d'ici? 
LD: Non, non c'est national. C'est national. Mais en dehors de nous (la France), qui s'intéresse à l'enseignement de l'arabe? Personne! En termes scientifiques, personne! Dans le monde arabe il y a pas eu de développement de didactique de l'arabe, de science pedagogique de l'arabe. Les autres pays européens, non, non plus! Puisque ils n'ont pas-non que l'enseignement qui est universitaire. Nous avons une vraie spécificité française nous. (C: Mmm). De part l'ancienneté de l'enseignement de l'arabe en France. Ça remonte au 16ème siècle. De part euh l'histoire coloniale aussi. Il faut pas non plus l'omettre. C'est-à-dire nous avons eu une histoire coloniale dans le monde arabe, beaucoup au Maghreb, qui a fait que les études sur les arabes-sur la culture d'arabe se sont beaucoup développées. Et ça a créé une vraie réflexion. C'est comment on peut enseigner l'arabe en tant que langue vivante étrangère? Nous sommes les seules à réfléchir à ça.
CE: En Europe vous voulez dire? 
LD: Ou même dans le monde arabe. Dans le monde arabe, qui réfléchit à ça? Personne!
I. Introduction

The idea for this chapter began with a curious incident early during my fieldwork. I was observing a group of twenty students learning MSA in their public school classroom in Northern Marseille’s 16th arrondissement, the same classroom, Class 3B, as appeared in Chapters Three and Four. The teacher, Madame Chérif, asked a student named Mohamed to write a particular sentence on the chalkboard about a hypothetical character named “Nabil.” Mohamed began writing out Nabil “ن - ب - ي - ل” (n-a-b-i-l) beneath his classmates’ neatly written sentences, taking his time and exaggerating the tips on his letters. No sooner had he finished than Madame Chérif, looking displeased, took an eraser to his tall letters. “But my version is more swag!,” protested Mohamed at his typical high pitch. New to the term and skeptical of this new writing method,
Madame Chérif replied, “and what is swag?” Before he could answer, Maisara piped up “It’s homo!” from the back of the room.\textsuperscript{11}

Among the students of Class 3B, being “swag” meant putting the kind of effort into appearance, such as clothing, make-up, and accessories, that was associated with Western pop culture and the global music industry. This definition for the French label swag holds similarities to both its early etymological predecessors in England and its more contemporary use in the United States. First attested in Shakespeare’s \textit{A Midsummer Night’s Dream} at the turn of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century—“What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here, so near the cradle of the fairy queen?” (Shakespeare, 1907, p. 35), the verb swagger pertained to a tremulous or swaying motion in one’s walk, “an affected manner” (Wedgwood, 1865, p. 356). The meaning of affectation appears to have accompanied “swagger” in its passage to the United States, where the verb underwent apocopation and conversion to the noun “swag.” The online freely editable Urban Dictionary features 535 entries for swag (2012). Entry two reads “the way someone presents themselves.’ Eg, whether someone looks cool” (2012). The association of swag with coolness is traceable to the early 2000s, when hip-hop artists Jay-Z (“All I Need,” 2001), Soulja Boy (“Pretty Boy

\textsuperscript{11} Mohamed: “Mais ma version est plus swag!”/Madame Chérif: “C’est quoi swag?”/Maisara: “C’est homo!” (12-12-12)
Swag,” 2010), and Lil B (“Wonton Soup,” 2010), along with pop-music singer Justin Bieber (“Boyfriend,” 2012), put out songs lyrics with swag in the refrain. Swag’s connection to trends in the music industry explains why youth in Class 3B considered pop singers like Rihanna and Justin Bieber, or media personalities like Kim Kardashian, to epitomize swag style.

What is, perhaps, unexpected is how, in this youthful context of Northern Marseille, men having a swag look were often tropically recast as “homo,” or gay.12 Asked the meaning of swag, many of the students in Class 3B would provide the folk etymology “S.W.A.G.—secretly we are gay” along with a definition focused on clothing. I argue that youth’s association of swag style with homosexuality is one that makes sense only in light of contrastive ideologies of personhood and language that youth have developed locally. On the one hand, they evaluated white, Western behaviors, like dressing swag and speaking Standard French, as indexing a “soft” (mou) disposition. To this persona, they counterposed their own image as tough, on the other hand. Among the behaviors thought to index this toughness were youth’s preferred tracksuits-and-sneakers style and a linguistically syncretic register of French and Arabic, which they dubbed Castellanois after their project (c.f., Chapter Three). Given

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12 Within the body of the text, I use quotes to indicate verbatim speech I recorded with youth and English translations of what was said. Italics within the text indicate a language other than English. I provide the original text in footnotes.
these contrastive ideological frames, when a male classmate deviated from his tough persona, peers understood such deviant behavior in terms of a softening of character. In Mohamed’s case, his claim to write Arabic in a *swag* style, together with his high-pitched voice, served to align him with the “softness” of white, Western culture and thus contributed to his construal by Maisara as a “fag.”

The primary concern of this chapter, as such, is to investigate the linguistic and behavioral crossing (Rampton, 1995) practices of diasporic youth from Marseille’s housing projects who have been socialized into Muslim traditions since childhood. The four questions orienting my inquiry are: to which language registers do youth hew as indexical of their various identities; what reasons might they have to cross out of these in-group registers; how are instances of crossing received by their peers; and what role does youth’s socialization into Islam play in these reactions? The data for this chapter were drawn from my fieldwork with three main peer groups: one, the MSA students in public school Class 3B; two, a friend-group of orthodox Muslim-identified female students at a local public university; and three, orthodox youth who either worked or attended the private Muslim secondary school in Marseille’s 15th *arrondissement*.
The anecdote with which I began this chapter introduced the tendency for youth from Northern Marseille to position as queer or sexually non-normative the behaviors they associated with other ethnic, class, and religious groups. To better understand this phenomenon, in Section II below I discuss a handful of analogous ethnographic examples from various minority contexts. These studies show that in contexts where several dimensions of social marginality overlap, where people are for example confronted to substandard living conditions and violence, or they experience economic or religious marginalization in addition to ethnic minority status, forms of group solidarity develop that make it socially delicate to behave in ways that transgress group boundaries. I discuss how the practice of linguistic “crossing” (Rampton, 1995) in particular, when one draws on linguistic resources associated with an (often ethnic) outsider to your social group, carries heavy—and often gendered—consequences for the individual who engages in it. The impression of crossing centrally depends on people distinguishing in their environment between at least two different “registers” (Agha, 2007a), or two separate types of personhood understood to inhere in certain expressive behaviors, including language, clothing, and other signs. These images of personhood may, furthermore, be made of such affiliations as class, ethnoracial or religious group, gender, and age, among others. Viewing cultural identity within a semiotic framework of this sort allows
for a more technical discussion of what has previously been discussed in terms of the intersectionality of identity (Crenshaw, 1992). As such, the studies I review pay particular attention to how, in any event where someone deploys a linguistic or other sign token, “multiple social axes of identification coincide, emerge, or undergo ‘erasure’” (Alim & Reyes, 2011, p. 381), depending upon local conditions and sociocultural understandings.

Following this review of the literature, in Section III I compare two instances of youth from Class 3B crossing from Castellanois into Standard French, one by a young male resident of the project and another by a female student from Class 3B. I demonstrate that youth in this context deployed sexual slurs in reaction to linguistic crossing as a means of policing ethnoracial, class, and religious (or moral) boundaries that they wanted to keep intact. In addition, I offer suggestions as to why instances of young men from La Castellane speaking a more standard form of French prompted readings of gayness, whereas young women from the community crossing in this way on occasion led them to be constructed as sexually easy or “slutty” (i.e., bandeuse, folle, bimbo, crasseuse, ham-ham [ham-ham]). In Section IV, I present two transcripts from a slightly older peer group of female university students who, though also raised in Northern Marseille’s housing projects in North, West, and East African households, identified instead as orthodox Muslims (c.f., Chapter Five). In one, a Muslim
sister, or Islamically pious woman, exhorts other sisters to speak elegantly, in Standard French, as a means of enacting piety. In the other, a lunchtime interaction between several orthodox sisters unfolds in which one of them crosses into a “project French” not unlike Castellanois, an interactional move I analyze as the young woman’s desire to reveal her queerness to her closest friends. Taken as a whole, this chapter captures how youth from this milieu in Marseille, in creating certain ideological frameworks of ethnicity, class, and religion, at times eclipsed gender and sexuality altogether, and at other junctures rendered nothing but gender and sexuality visible.

II. The Language Practices of Minority Groups in Mainstream Contexts: Intersectionality and the Penalties of Linguistic Crossing

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, researchers in the social sciences fell into step with activists for minority rights in challenging assumptions about both the fixity and uniformity of identity. Gender and race, in particular, emerged from this pivotal period understood as societal achievements rather than innate personal qualities. Butler (1990) urged the view that gender, for instance, represented “a normative ideal rather than a descriptive feature of experience” (p. 23). As such, it lacked “ontological priority to the various roles and functions through which it assumes visibility and meaning” (ibid., p. 22).
The destabilization of identity categories instigated by postmodern anthropologists like Butler was pushed further by the arrival of third wave feminists, many of whom were women of color, to the Women’s Movement in the early 1990s. In 1992, Rebecca Walker, daughter of African American activist and novelist Alice Walker, wrote a magazine article in which she disputed “women” as a unified category. She envisioned that third wave feminism would be uniquely attentive to the ways in which female struggles were crosscut by women’s experiences with race, class, age, sexuality, religion, and so forth. Among the sources of inspiration for Walker’s work (1995), and for that of later third wave activists (e.g., Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Rehman & Hernández, 2006), were writings from the 1980s by second-wave feminists of color (Anzaldúa, 1987; Morraga, 1983; Lorde, 1984) in which they alluded to gaping differences between women’s lives depending upon their circumstances. The point that neither “womanhood” nor “blackness” were singular cultural categories was made especially clear, in the case of the United States, by Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1992) revelation of the way in which American blacks and whites reacted to attorney Anita Hill when she accused Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment on the eve of his Supreme Court nomination. Crenshaw argues that educated black women like Anita Hill tend to fall between the cracks of recognizable American stereotypes and face repudiation from all camps as a
result. Hill, shows Crenshaw, was unable to inhabit the figure of the violated white “Madonna” during her hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee (p. 408), nor that of the black individual wronged at the hands of white society, often typified as a black male. She thus remained unaccounted for by the feminist movement, unvindicated by “dominant whites” (431), and vilified by “black people across a political and class spectrum” (p. 433). To summarize, the scholarly and community concern with the politics of minority representation in the late 1980s and early 1990s marked a turning point in how social scientists approached race and gender issues. Postmodernism in anthropology and its sister disciplines meant greater awareness of how people construct social categories in historically and culturally specific ways, many of which articulate and criss-cross dimensions of human identity (Hall, 1992).

Insights from researchers interested in language and discourse both fed into and deepened the postmodern—alias “linguistic”—turn (Canning, 1994). Indeed, nowhere were postmodern foci, like “indeterminacy, performativity, and...the unrepresentable” (Lucas, 2013, p. 640), more apparent than in the interplay between people’s language use and the identities they claimed. Among those whose linguistically oriented research informed postmodern thinking about identity were cultural anthropologists examining fieldworkers’ positionality with respect to their informants (e.g., Briggs, 1986; Crapanzano,
1980; Dwyer, 1982; Rosaldo, 1986); social theorists who argued for discourse as the fundamental medium for the exercise of power in society (e.g., Bourdieu, 1979; 1982; Foucault, 1971, 1972); and linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists who theorized the sociocultural functions of language where gender was concerned (Gal, 1989; Lakoff, 1975; M. Silverstein, 1985a), race and ethnicity (Baugh, 1983; Brice-Heath, 1983; Anzaldúa, 1987; Ervin-Tripp, 2001; Goodwin, 1982; Labov, 1972a; 1972b; Mitchell-Kernan, 1971; Rickford, 1991; Smitherman, 1977; Zentella, 1982), and class and status (Bourdieu, 1979; Honey, 1989; Irvine, 1974; Macauley, 1977). Four key theoretical tools these and other scholars leaned upon in documenting language’s social functions in the various communities in which they worked were indexicality (Silverstein, 1976), ideology (Silverstein, 1979), performance (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; M. Silverstein, 1985b), and register (Agha, 2007a).

The terms indexicality, ideology, performance, and register highlight language’s systematic reliance on cultural context for its meaning. Such terms mark an approach to language quite different from that of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), who attributed a mainly symbolic, decontextualized nature to language as a system. Indexicality, more specifically, refers to language’s ability to presuppose as well as enact social or pragmatic meanings, given specific contextual parameters and ideological set-ups, above and beyond its semantic or...
referential meanings (M. Silverstein, 1976). Certain contextual aspects of a speech event can be brought into “sharp cognitive relief” (ibid., p. 34) when language is functioning indexically, at times strategically and other times through a mismatch of the ideologies at play and contextual factors. Ideologies are key to the ability of linguistic forms to index social meanings. Ideologies, or “native metapragmatic…rationalizations about the use of language” (M. Silverstein, 1979, p. 207), serve to specify the social tenor of linguistic forms, while grammatical rules lay the latticework for speech. Reflexive ideologies about language in effect permit the “enregisterment” (Agha, 2005), or a measure of social concertation about, the social meanings indexed by a way of speaking. A performance and poetics approach (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Jakobson, 1960; M. Silverstein, 1985b), in turn, looks to the poetic organization of a text (e.g., parallelism) in order to read the positions speakers presuppose or create in the elapse of an interaction. If ideologies about language tend to narrow the scope of social meanings available to speakers, then the notion of performance “involves an active process of negotiation [of such ideological meanings] in which participants reflexively examine the discourse as it is emerging, embedding assessments of its structure and significance in the speech itself” (Bauman & Briggs, 1990, p. 69). The authors I cite below have drawn upon these theoretical refinements to illuminate how minority groups in a
variety of locations have created ways of speaking, or “registers” (Agha, 2007a), that index their group qualities.

A register, as per Agha (2007a), is “a reflexive model of behavior that evaluates a semiotic repertoire (or set of repertoires) as appropriate to specific types of conduct (such as the conduct of a given social practice), to classifications of persons whose conduct it is, and, hence, to performable roles (personae, identities) and relationships among them” (p. 147). Any register is organized in three dimensions: it has a “repertoire” of forms (its criterial signs, linguistic and otherwise); it has a “social range” of pragmatic values (the personae and relationships its forms can index) thanks to circulating ideologies; and it has a “social domain” (domains of people socialized to use or simply recognize the register; *ibid.*, p. 169). The following ethnographic examples show how registers of language and conduct serve minority communities as touchstones for community members to communicate significant dimensions of their identities, but also, on occasion, a mooring from which it proves perilous for them to stray. The phenomenon of “crossing,” which Rampton (1995) elaborated in his study of the multilingual practices of English youth of Anglo, Pakistani, and Afro-Caribbean descent in a South Midlands school, is particularly useful in understanding the politics and motives involved when people from a particular ethnic background step out of their in-group register.
and into a way of speaking stereotypically associated with another ethnoracial group.

Rampton subsumes three types of linguistic behaviors under the label “crossing.” In each case, crossing is at hand because youth are moving into the linguistic space of an ethnic other. Of the three behaviors, however, two are intended and received humorously, while one seems to be an earnest attempt to identify with members of another ethnic group. The humorous practices include, first, how youth of Anglo and Afro-Caribbean descent embed fragmentary Panjabi into their speech, and second, how youth of Anglo, Afro-Caribbean, and South Asian descent stylize or exaggerate Indian English. The third kind of crossing is when youth of South Asian and Anglo descent adopted elements of a Creole register to index a “sense of multiracial working class identity” (p. 136). The youth who crossed in this way hailed from working-class families in Ashmead village and were closely tied into black peer groups. Rampton describes black and white Ashmead youth’s use of an English with Creole characteristics as indexing qualities like “assertiveness, verbal resourcefulness, and opposition to authority” (p. 53). It also operated to differentiate Ashmead youth from “posh Anglos” living in wealthier districts, whom were variously classified as “‘posh,’ ‘snobs,’ even ‘posh wimpies’” (p. 61) and were the least likely to attempt crossing. Rampton’s work draws attention
to a great number of phenomena germane to the data I analyze in this chapter, among them the observation that there are social barriers to linguistic crossing, that in-group and out-group uses of language help youth index certain qualities (e.g., Creole register indexing being anti-establishment), and that in this context Ashmead youth disparaged their affluent white male peers in feminizing terms.

Whereas Rampton (1995) analyzed instances of mainly male youth from Anglo and other ethnic backgrounds crossing into varieties associated with minorities, like Jamaican Creole or Indian English, I am also keen to discern what is at stake when minority youth—male as well as female—cross instead into more standard language varieties. What are the stereotypical qualities, personal barriers, and social consequences involved for minority youth who venture into linguistic standards that in Western contexts have historically been the purview of a powerful, lighter-skinned majority? Undoubtedly the crossing dynamic of this sort that has been the most thoroughly documented is that of African Americans crossing into Standard English. Rickford’s (1985) research on the speech of black and white people from South Carolina’s Sea Islands provides useful inroads into this question. Rickford found that black Sea Islanders were much more likely to use black Vernacular English morphosyntax (alias, African American Vernacular English, or AAVE) and participate in certain speech genres (e.g., folk-praying on Sunday morning) than white Sea Islanders. Rickford saw
these speech behaviors as “acts of identity” (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985), meaning black speakers spoke in AAVE to index their ethnic identity in opposition to white people. He also noted that, in this context, “approximation to or adoption of the other [white] group’s linguistic norms may be negatively viewed as crossing-over…and regarded with suspicion or hostility” (p. 116).

What, more specifically, are the stereotypical values that accrue to African Americans who cross into speech practices or behaviors thought to proceed from white American culture?

Mitchell-Kernan (1971), in her work on black speech genres like “signifying,” comments on how crossing is often perceived to be both about wanting to climb the class ladder and to be white. She relays a conversation in which a young black woman challenges another about “being one of those Negroes who don’t eat chit’lins.” The accused woman replies that “I ate enough black-eyed peas and neckbones during the Depression that I can’t get too excited over it. I eat prime rib and T-bone because I like to, not because I’m trying to be white” (pp. 95-96). Here, the charge of acting higher class is shot through with overtones of assimilating to whiteness. The accused woman feels pressed to justify her preference for costlier cuts of meat in order to prove that she is not, in fact, trying to act white. Relatedly, Rahman (2008) has examined the fraught position of middle-class blacks insofar as crossing is a frequent part of their daily
routines. She details how middle-class African Americans, who have access to
standard and vernacular poles of AAVE and mainstream varieties of Standard
English, may be accused of “talking white” if they unduly standardize their
speech in casual community interactions (p. 142), and yet may be
simultaneously criticized for using AAVE in corporate settings. In her work on
black comedic performances, in turn, Rahman (2007) inspects comedians’ use of
AAVE and Standard English for the black and white social personae they index,
respectively. She shows how when black comedians speak in AAVE it is to
perform values like “down-home common sense and resourcefulness,”
“assertiveness and directness,” a “no-pretenses attitude,” “black coolness,” and
“soul,” defined as the emotional depth one gains from having experienced
suffering (p. 67, p. 80). When they imitate white people, by contrast, their
characters show traits like blandness, “mechanicalness” (p. 80), and
“ineffectualness, supposedly the result of a stereotyped life of privilege” (p. 68).
This ideological contrast, between hardened and resourceful African Americans
and soft and ineffectual whites, generates powerful tropes involving gender and
sexuality when black men in particular engage in linguistic crossing.

Baugh (1987), for one, hints at unequal interpretations of crossing for
black men than for black women. Telling of his own experience in Philadelphia,
he writes ”Most of my childhood black peers were openly hostile to standard
English, and boys who chose to speak the standard were usually called ‘sissies’ or worse" (p. 237). Similarly, Fordham and Ogbo (1986) and Ogbo (2004) describe how, in a Washington D.C. high school, black male students who “behaved and talked according to the white definition” (Ogbo, 2004, p. 8), getting good grades and taking Advanced Placement courses, feared being called “pervert brainiacs” and “homosexuals” by their peers (p. 194). Jackson (2005) elaborates further on this link between black success and perceived sexuality. In the context of Harlem’s gentrification, he relates how male “Harlemites” characterized new establishments catering to a clientele with disposable income as “feminized and homosexual” spaces (p. 53). One black male youth, for instance, spoke of the “faggoty” taint of a gourmet bakery in Lower Harlem that was frequented by white and black middle-class patrons (p. 53). Summarizing this man’s position, Jackson explains that “middle-class status is articulated through homosexuality—two equally soft versions of public life—in contradistinction to the more stereotypically hardened performances of lower-class black masculinity” (p. 54). In sum, it appears that at least some African Americans ideologically link whiteness with affluence and personal weakness thus that crossing into Standard English, the language of the mainstream establishment, can lead one to be tropically construed as “gay.” It also seems à propos here to remark upon the documented tendency for African American
communities to ridicule black gay men as individuals trying to mimic white culture (Johnson, 2003, 2004; Sears, 1991). Johnson (2004) writes, for instance, of how he witnessed a black gay man being called “Miss Ann” (p. 252). This man’s likening to a imperious white woman depends, again, on links held to obtain in black cultural circles between effeminacy, an “uppity” class stance, and whiteness.

What is the function, more importantly, of the feminization (e.g., sissies, Miss Ann) or sexualization (e.g., faggoty, homosexual) of men of color’s crossing behavior? Might there be comparable phenomena among young female crossers that shed light on this question? In revealing work on Texan Chicanas, Gallindo (1992, 1993) contests the notion, widespread among Chicanos, that a slang register called Caló is spoken exclusively by Pachucos, male representatives of a Chicano subculture originating in El Paso, Texas. Gallindo unveils that Texan Chicanas of various ages and career ilk also spoke and identified with Caló. The female speakers she interviewed felt that when they crossed into Caló, an otherwise male-dominated register, they sought to inhabit the role of “any woman who is liberated and breaking away from her traditional role” (Gallindo, 1992, p. 16). Given Caló’s radical indexicality, at least for women, it is perhaps not surprising that men in their social circles monitored women’s use of Caló by claiming that only “ putas” (prostitutes), “cantineras” (barmaid), and
“pachucas” (gang women) were wont to use Caló (Gallindo, 1993, p. 27). In sum, by speaking Caló these Chicanas risked having their reputations sexualized by men in their communities. Relatedly, Billiez, Krief, and Lambert (2003) report on the case of suburban diasporic youth from Grenoble who, depending on their gender, speak varying degrees of a local “langage racaille” (lowlife language). When young women chose to dial up their use of this register, by swearing on a par with young men for example, they were singled out by young men and women as being tomboys (garçons manqués), dudes in-the-flesh (des vrais mecs), and unattractive to their male peers (p. 183). In this Chicana Texan and French cases, women who crossed into registers associated with the opposite sex were disciplined by men via assertions of their masculinization and their desexualization.

In all, the review in this section has aimed to diversify perspectives on crossing as a sociolinguistic practice by using theoretical tools from linguistic anthropology and examining cases with an intersectional yet semiotic lens. Crossing may involve, as in Rampton’s (1995) definition, moving partially or entirely into a register indexical of another ethnic group. This movement took place from a majority towards a minority ethnic group in Rampton’s case of Anglos embedding Creole features in their English, but took place in the opposite direction, from an ethnic minority towards a majority group, in the
African American examples. Obstacles presented themselves in both directions of crossing, though I focused particularly on the tools minority groups have developed to hinder people’s transgression of group etiquette and established social boundaries. Notable among these devices are moves to feminize, masculinize, sexualize, and desexualize crossers. In the ethnographic section that follows, I examine what local norms are for language use and behavior in La Castellane and La Bricarde projects and if they vary by gender. I also analyze instances in which male and female youth linguistically deviated from these norms and the different social consequences they faced depending on their gender.

III. Language and Gender among Youth from La Castellane and La Bricarde Projects

Writing in 1990, William Labov summarized a little over two decades worth of quantitative sociolinguistic studies that had examined the interaction between sex and language. He proposed two principles to capture what he saw as the significant tendencies: 1) “For stable sociolinguistic variables, men use a higher frequency of nonstandard forms than women” (p. 210); 2) “In change from below, women are most often the innovators” (p. 215). A corollary of the first principle was that “In change from above, women favor the incoming
prestige form more than men” (p. 213). This corollary meant that women employed more numerous standard language forms than men, but only when they were aware of the relative prestige of linguistic forms. Although this body of research used sex of speaker as a methodological tool (and not the speaker’s gender identity), Labov and others have furnished attempts at explaining these hypothesized tendencies that represent theorizations of gender. For instance, Labov (1990) suggests that women’s greater attraction to standard speech derives from their need to assert dominance symbolically—namely, through language—unable as they are to wield the same “material power” as men (p. 214). In parallel with Labov, Trudgill (1983) contributes the line of reasoning that women are less drawn to the language forms of the working-class because of their characteristic toughness and the links society draws between being tough and being masculine. Much research has revealed, however, that toughness is not a quality to which only men aspire. Data from Trudgill’s (1972) own research in Norwich speak to the need to explore group-specific definitions of femininity. When the lower working-class women from Norwich in his study conversed casually with the interviewer, interestingly they tallied the same number of non-Received Pronunciation forms (i.e., [ən] as opposed to RP [ɪŋ]) as their lower working-class male counterparts. In another context where gender and class intersect, Mendoza-Dentón (1996, 2008) has written about how
Chicana homegirls from Northern California orient their speech and behavior to an ideal of acting *macha*, or tough and demanding of respect. These young women cite intimidating behaviors like “looking in” (looking down past an upthrust chin), wearing long eyeliner, and not smiling as semiotic devices they use to claim more egalitarian relationships with their partners and fend for their families (Mendoza-Dentón, 2008, p. 104). In yet another context, in schools around France, Baines (2007) administered a survey to 483 French youth and found that the quotient of insults reported by young men and women differed little. If these studies are any indication, researchers have already begun reassessing the claim of a one-to-one relationship between male gender and non-standard speech. Though this section intends mainly to explain a particular ethnographic phenomenon, it is certainly the case as well that the findings I present sit at odds with the sociolinguistic “natures” of men and women generalized by Labov and Trudgill above. Further, that the explanations I have found to best account for these data necessarily invoke dynamics of religion, class, and ethnicity likewise reinforces Ochs’ (1983) insight that, insofar as several domains of social reality come together in constituting gender, gender must not be studied in isolation, as an independent variable.
Project-Specific Ideals of Youth Masculinity and Femininity

As described in Chapter Three, La Castellane and La Bricarde Projects perch upon a hillside in the 16th arrondissement of Marseille, overlooking the city from its northern reaches. Both projects are also adjacent to the public secondary school attended by the students of Class 3B. Here, I discuss femininity and masculinity as they were locally formulated by the students of Class 3B. Ochs (1983) writes of the relationship between language and gender that, although there are linguistic forms that directly index or presuppose speakers’ genders cross-linguistically, most typically gender is indexed indirectly, meaning people ideologically link language forms to certain stances or qualities and these in turn feed into images of male and female gender. Similarly, my exploration of the topic of gender in the setting of Class 3B began, not by posing questions about masculinity or femininity per se, but by asking the students to describe their style and dispositions to me. I was intrigued to observe that gender surfaced very little in students’ responses and that replies to my questions overlapped significantly between boys and girls.

Apparel was among the first subjects to arise, and both male and female students, with only a few exceptions, described their fashion norm as “survêtes-baskets,” or tracksuits and sneakers. Asma explained this preference as one of choosing comfort over looks. She spoke of going to door-to-door in La Bricarde
with Kenza and Siwar, distributing *maqrūt*, North African date-filled cookies, to neighbors during Ramadan, and how even on those special occasions the girls avoided the discomfort and hassle of make-up, heels, and dresses (2.14.13). The girls’ emphasis on comfort and going plain by no means translated into less care in selecting clothes, however. Whether during the week or on the weekends, the girls paid careful attention to both their outfits and their hair. Kardiatou preferred Adidas-inspired tracksuits matched to Palladium high-tops (*montantes*), which she finished with Senegalese bangles and a snippy ponytail. Asma tended to go for sweatshirts over jeans and rip-off Nike shoes, avoiding jewelry altogether but straightening her long hair. Siwar wore loose-fitting tracksuits in varying colors, while Anisa loved to wear black and would top off her sophisticated look with a Burberry-inspired scarf and hoop earrings. The boys opted for blue and green tracksuits instead of the pink and purple ones enjoyed by the girls, but shared a liking for puffy vests, scarves, counterfeit-brand sneakers, and coiffed hair with the girls. On a typical day, Kader wore an Adidas-striped tracksuit, razored slits in his eyebrows, and a gelled mohawk. Ayman opted for a modern-day James Dean look, wearing a black leather jacket over a t-shirt, dark tight jeans tucked into high-tops, a scarf tightly wound around his neck, and his hair gelled into a devil-may-care wave. Mohamed summarized the local fashion norms thus:
“The fashion of the northern projects is tracksuits, caps... [soccer] club tracksuits and sneakers: Adidas, Manchester, Lacoste, Chelsea. Lacoste used to be mean-cool but now it’s burned out” (2.11.13).13

The students were unanimous in opposing their “mean-cool” (méchant) tracksuit-and-sneakers norm to the style they called swag, and girls as well as boys had uproarious reactions when I asked them if they personally dressed swag:

Cécile: And you guys, are you swag?
All: Noooo! ((laughing loudly))
Samia: No, no, no ((laughing))
Kardiatou: Tracksuits-and-sneakers
Anisa: And yeah, like, sneakers
Asma: The swag people are more those people who wear knit sweaters, big sunglasses, Jordans...
Kardiatou: Like Americans!
Asma: Yeah! Like Americans.14

These girls, on a later occasion, let me into the negative perceptions they held of certain female students, from another class called Class 3A, whom they considered to be swag (2.10.13):

13 “La mode des Quartiers Nord c’est survêtes, casquettes... des survêtes de clubs [de fut] et des baskets: Adidas, Manchester, Lacoste, Chelsea. Lacoste avant c’était méchant mais maintenant c’est devenu cramé” (Mohamed, 2.11.13).

14 Cécile: Et vous, vous etes swag?
All: Nooooon! ((laughing loudly))
Samia: Non, non, non ((laughing))
Kardiatou: Survêtes-baskets
Anisa: Et ouais, genre, les baskets
Asma: Les swag c’est plus eux qui mettent des tricots, les grosses lunettes, les Jordans...
Kardiatou: Comme les americaines!
Asma: Ouais! Comme les americaines.
Kenza: Do you know, like, Juliette? Anisa: Juliette and (unclear)
Asma: They are always trying to act pretty!
Cécile: In 3B?
Kardiatou: No, no, no
Kenza: In 3A
Asma: Eeeeeh if they [the girls] did that in 3B... (unclear) [The girls in 3A] They have money to dress up and all, but they’re dumb in the head
Cécile: How do they dress?
Kardiatou: They wear foundation
Kenza: How do we say...
Cécile: Lots of make-up?
Kardiatou: Because they’re all full of pimples! (Kenza laughs)
Cécile: Are they Arab girls?
Kardiatou: A Chinese girl, a Cambodian girl, another is an I-don’t-know-what
Kenza: A gypsy
Asma: A gypsy, an Arab
Kardiatou: Another she’s a-a Madagascan
Cécile: But do they dress tracksuits-and-sneakers?
Kenza: Eeeehm no! They dress really swag. They wear skirts in winter
Asma: Plus, they hang around more and all with the boys and all that

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15 Kenza: Tu connais Juliette et tout?
Anisa: Juliette et ((unclear))
Asma: Elles font trop les belles!
Cécile: Dans la 3B?
Kardiatou: Non, non, non
Kenza: Dans la 3A
Asma: Eeeeh dans la 3B ils font ça et... (unclear) [The girls in 3A] Elles ont des sous à sapper et tout, mais elles sont bêtes dans la tête
Cécile: Elles s’habillent comment?
Kardiatou: Elles mettent du font de teint
Kenza: Comment on dit...
Cécile: Beaucoup de maquillage?
Kardiatou: Parce-qu’elles ont plein de boutons! (Kenza laughs)
Cécile: C’est des filles arabes?
Kardiatou: Une chinoise, cambodgienne, une autre c’est une chez-pas-quoi
Kenza: Une gitane
Asma: Une gitane, une arab
Kardiatou: Une autre c’est une une malgache
Cécile: Mais elles s’habillent survêtes-baskets?
Kenza: Eeeehm non! Elles s’habillent bien swag, elles portent des jupes en hiver.
Asma: En plus, elles traînent plus avec tout les garçons et tout ça
Kardiatou: Ufhh
Kenza: Ouais, elles font les populaires
Kardiatou: Et elles vont fumer dans les toilettes avec eux
Kenza: Mais dans le collège. ((pauses)) Notre class en fait on a un bon délire quoi
Asma: Ouais, on n’est pas style trop habillé
Kardiatou: Ufhh
Kenza: Yeah, they act all popular
Kardiatou: And they go smoke in the bathroom with them [the boys]
Kenza: But at the secondary school. ((pauses)) Our class, we’ve got a good style going you know
Asma: Yeah, we’re not too dressed up in our style

In these transcripts, the students of Class 3B identify a specific “project” sartorial style, characterized by tracksuits and sneakers and “not being too dressed up” (pas style trop habillé) as the desirable norm for both girls and boys.

This kind of no-nonsense clothing style was indicative of a more general disposition held by youth in Class 3B, summed up by a student named Kader as the “mentality of the projects” (2.14.13). This disposition was explained to me as the need to show grit and act tough, whether one was male or female.

Mohamed explained this mentality, more specifically, as a quality into which youth from the projects are socialized. When I asked him about where he planned to live in the future, he spoke of staying in La Castellane and teaching his future son about having backbone:

“To stay in the projects that way my—that way my son he has a—he has the project upbringing, that way he has a project upbringing. He won’t let people mess with him… He’s tough, he’s not scared of anybody” (4.4.13).

This orientation to toughness manifested itself quite clearly in the classroom, where both male and female students were willing to face disciplinary action in

16 “J’ai la mentalité des quartiers” (Kader, 2.14.13).

17 “Rester dans les quartiers comme ça mon-comme ça mon fils il a du-il a l’éducation quartiers, comme ça il a une éducation quartiers. Il se laisse pas faire…Il est dur, c’est il a peur de personne” (Mohamed, 4.4.13).
order to prevent a peer from insulting them or having their autonomy compromised. Ayman was notorious among his classmates for not allowing even the most minimal slight to his person. On a Friday in mid-March, 2013, Ayman was barred from class for refusing to follow the teacher’s directions. Ayman had gone to sit at the backmost desk of the classroom and, try as the teacher might to get him to sit in one of the seats closer to her, where she might keep a better eye on him, he would not budge. Ayman was not alone in his efforts to prove he was proud and unafraid of people. In October earlier that year, Nacima received a detention for having yelled profanities at Kader during classtime. Kader and Nacima were in fact friendly more generally, but on this day Kader firmly crossed a line into racist territory when he called her “King Kong.” Nacima, whose parents are Comorian and Maorese, stood up and lunged for Kader, hurling insults in Comorian and French (to the effect of “go get some balls”) and trying to scratch at his face. She had to be held back by two male students and the teacher, and Madame Chérif immediately meted out three hours of detention for Nacima and three days of expulsion for Kader. Once calm returned to the classroom, Madame Chérif walked by my desk and murmured, “I didn’t think a

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18 Nacima began her sentence in French, “va chercher,” and then inserted the object in Comorian. Another Comorian-speaking student glossed the object as a vulgar word for testicles, like couilles in French, but I was not able to write down the Comorian word (10.17.12).
girl could talk like that” (10.17.12). The teacher was not alone in her surprise at these girls’ behavior being on a par with that of the boys. When I brought up the topic with a young woman named Gaëlle, who worked at a nearby community center with a similar demographic of youth, she affirmed that “The girls are obliged to ‘masculinize’ themselves in order to exist” (1.23.13). The concept of girls acting like boys, offered as an account by the teacher and this youth leader, turns on the assumption that boys are normatively exhorted to act toughly, whereas girls are not. I argue, contrastively, that in the particular cultural milieu of Marseille’s northern-most projects, youth enjoined toughness and inviolability upon their male as well as female peers. When the girls in 3B acted with brawn, they were simply acting like project girls.

An ancillary point to this argument is the observation that, if toughness was expected of both the boys and girls in Class 3B, the girls faced the additional expectation that they be modest in their clothing, behavior, and relationships with the opposite sex. Who enforced these rules? Girls themselves played a part, as shown by the transcript above in which the girls from Class 3B commented on the lapses of the girls in Class 3A. The latter, who forsook tracksuits and sneakers for swag style, were negatively judged as contravenors of project

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19 “Je ne pensais pas qu’une fille pouvait parler comme ça” (Madame Chérif, 10.17.12).

20 “Les filles sont obligées de se masculiniser pour exister” (Gaëlle, 1.23.13).
femininity: wearing heavy make-up and skirts showing their legs, smoking cigarettes with boys in the bathroom, and preening ("faire la belle"). The students’ Muslim parents also urged modesty upon their daughters, asking them not to spend time with boys outside of school or to stray too far from home. When for example the girls from Class 3B visited my apartment on the weekends, a parent with a car chaperoned them to and from my doorstep, rather than letting them take the bus and the Métro system. In the video excerpt below, Kader tells a similar story of how Sabrina’s mother restricts her movements. Though told in jest, Kader’s store is based on a premise rooted in a specific reality, namely, that of parents monitoring their teenage daughters’ relationships and movements around the projects in a way unthinkable for their teenage sons.

Cécile: What’s your favorite neighborhood?
Sabrina: None.
Kader: It’s Carrefour Grand Littoral! ((Sabrina laughs loudly)) She’s not allowed to go past it.
Sabrina: No... ((puts hand up in protest))
Kader: I swear to you, her mom made red lines. “Don’t pass these!” Tac, tac, tac ((gesture as if putting down red tape)). “If you pass these, Sabrina…”
Sabrina: No! What’s your problem? Hey Maisara! ((Looking to Maisara, across the table, for help))
Kader: Then the buzzer rings! Here comes the slap.
Cécile: Is it like with Mohammed?
Sabrina: It’s not true!
Maisara: Ayaaaah!
Sabrina: It’s not true. My mom lets me... but not too far away. She’s scared. Hey, my mom is scared, I’m a girl, hein!
Kader: Ah, here comes the slap!21

Girls, in other words, acted tough, and yet they were protected by their parents as if harm could befall them at any turn. There were, I should note, circumstances that would give any parent cause to worry. Students came to school on at least two occasions over the course of the school year with reports of Kalashnikov shots fired between rival groups during drug skirmishes in La Castellane. On another occasion, the teenage daughter of the janitor at the local youth center was admitted to the hospital after sustaining injuries from a gang (une bande) of female teenagers armed with knives and a gun. To summarize this discussion of gender norms for young men and women from these projects, it

21 This excerpt is from a filmed interview with Kader, Sabrina, and Maisara dated 6.12.13. The Carrefour Grand Littoral is the large mall located just above La Bricarde and La Castellane. The students and their families do their grocery and other shopping there, as it is only a walking distance away. When I ask if Sabrina’s situation is similar to that of Mohamed’s, I am referring to a previous conversation I had with a group of boys in which Kader teased Mohamed—who the boys often construct as being girly—of facing the same restrictions on his movements as his female peers.

Cécile: C’est quoi ton quartier préféré?
Sabrina: Rien.
Kader: C’est Carrefour Grand Littoral! ((Sabrina laughs loudly)) Elle n’a pas le droit de le dépasser.
Sabrina: Non... ((puts hand up in protest))
Kader: Je te jure, sa mère elle a fait des traits. “Tu dépases pas ça!” Tac, tac, tac ((gesture as if putting down red tape)). “Tu dépases ça, Sabrina…”
Sabrina: Non! Ça va pas ou quoi? Eh Maisara! ((Looking to Maisara, across the table, for help))
Kader: Il y a la sonnette qui sonne! Alors voilà la claquette.
Cécile: C’est comme Mohammed?
Sabrina: C’est pas vrai!
Maisara: Ayaaah!
Sabrina: C’est pas vrai. Ma mère elle me laisse... mais pas trop loin. Elle a peur. Oh, elle a peur ma mère, je suis une fille, hein!
Kader: Ah, la voilà la claquette!
can be said that both genders valued and oriented to toughness as a stance indexical of a project mentality or upbringing. Local images of male and female gender, as such, resembled one another insofar as they were grounded in working-class values like holding one’s head high, getting things done, and living a no-frills existence. Where they diverged, however, was in the accessory requirement that young women faced to be modest as well, a gendered notion of propriety based in Islamic values, like female modesty and pre-marital chastity, which youth presumably learned about from their parents.

Given these initial remarks on how youth masculinity and femininity took shape in these two projects, I now shift to examining the ways in which youth from Class 3B indexed these overlapping—class, ethnicity, religion, and gender-based—identities in their speech, more specifically. I look, first, at how boys and girls indexed toughness linguistically; second, I consider youth’s relationship to Standard French; and third, I present two examples of a young man and then a young woman crossing into Standard French in anomalous ways, together with their peers’ reactions.

Linguistic Repertoires of the Project Youth and the Paillot

The identification of a linguistic behavior as crossing requires that speakers distinguish between language varieties and their attendant social
personae. Said differently, at least two registers, in Agha’s (2007a) sense, must be afoot when crossing is attested. In the previous section, I introduced male and female youth’s adherence to a demeanor of toughness. Here, I consider how they indexed this tough disposition through the linguistic register of Castellanois (c.f., Chapter Three) and their relation to Standard French as though it indexed an opposing model of personhood. One of my initial observations in this regard was that the students, though I often heard them speaking more standardly in their French class with Madame Massi, consistently sought to mark their lack of ownership over Standard French. When for instance I asked them for their views on Standard French, they would respond that it was a kind of French spoken naturally by others than themselves, those whom they designated “paillots” (c.f., Chapter Four). In the excerpt below, taken from a conversation I had with Sabrina, Maisara, and Fouhda while sitting on the school steps, quite early into the school year and our acquaintance, Sabrina explains how the term paillot describes both a type of speaker and the type of speech associated with them.

Sabrina: Paillot, that’s the Parisians when they talk. They talk well!
Cecile: Are there students from Class 3B that speak paillot?
Maisara and Sabrina: Degunnng!!! [dəɡɔ̃] (‘not a soul’)
Maisara: Madame no one speaks paillot here. It’s more Southern Marseille, over there.
Maisara: ((singing an RnB song)) …et la melancolie fait partie de ma vie…
Sabrina: But Madame if I find—if I could, I would speak like the paillots. But I can’t do it here.
Cecile: You want to speak like that?
Sabrina identifies “les paillots” as people who live in the more affluent southern parts of Marseille, or else in Paris. The paillots, says Sabrina, “speak well” (ils parlent bien), while she and her peers in Class 3B “speak badly” (on parle mal), a point she raised later in the same conversation. In evaluating Standard French versus Castellanois thus, Sabrina would seem to be voicing the French institutional perspective on the country’s linguistic landscape. This is an institutionalized discourse, purveyed by such regulating bodies as l’Académie Française and the Ministry of Education, according to which Standard French is the guarantor of, not merely educational and professional success, but also national unity. Analyzing the character of Standard French in comparison to other standard languages, Le Page (1989) writes that French can be said to be the “most reified, totemized, and institutionalized” language among them (p. 12). In the same vein, Armstrong and Mackenzie (2013) advert that “the

22 Sabrina: Paillot, c’est les parisiens quand ils parlent. Ils parlent bien! Cécile: Et il y a des élèves de la 3B qui parlent paillot?
Sabrina: Degunning!!! [dɛgʊnŋ]
Maisara: Madame, personne parle paillot ici. C’est plus les Quartiers Sud là-bas. ((singing))...et la mélancolie fait partie de ma vie...
Sabrina: Bon Madame si je trouve- si je pourrais, je parlerais comme les paillots mais j’arrive pas ici.
Cécile: Tu veux parler comme ça?
Sabrina: Oui! Mais j’arrive pas ici, vous voyez? C’est trop des gros mots et tout. Donc j’arrive pas a garder...
(Sabrina, Maisara, 11.12.12).

association between writing and formal speaking is perhaps closer in French than in comparable languages” (p. 219). Sabrina was continually exposed to this discourse about French at school, and notably in French class. To illustrate, in one lesson the French teacher focused on helping the students distinguish between “le français familier” (colloquial forms of French, like Castellanois), “le français courant” (everyday educated French), and “le français soutenu” (elevated French). The first, she explained to the students, is proper to peer interactions; the second, to public settings and speaking and writing in her classroom; and the third, to formal writing and rhetoric (2.11.13). The teacher drew further links between Standard French and success when, after the class did poorly on a practice Baccalaureate exam (Bac Blanc), she emphasized that they must study the nuances between such Standard French verbs—featured in the exam instructions—as cite, identify, define, compare, classify, and enumerate. To return to my interaction with Sabrina, I believe it was my presence, as someone she had only seen observing her Arabic classroom and had not yet encountered outside of class, that led her in this interaction to articulate similar thoughts on language as those of her teachers.

24 My husband, for instance, who learned French at an early age in Senegal and later moved to France, was often complimented by French friends who found that he spoke “like a book” (parler comme un livre).

25 Interview with Madame Massi (4.4.13).
Sabrina’s comments about *paillot*, or Standard French, also hint at a more complex set of calculations youth face in regards to this register. Put simply, why, if youth are familiar with an institutional arrangement wherein using Standard French confers social benefits upon the speaker, does Sabrina emphatically state that “not a soul” (*degun*) in Class 3B speaks *paillot*? Should Sabrina’s statement be read as evidence for these youth’s minimal exposure to Standard French and difficulty with its production, or might social calculations and an element of choice be involved when youth deal with this register? Two observations can be made in this respect. The youth in Class 3B did sometimes struggle to master Standard French. Madame Massi, the French teacher, traced this struggle to a relative lack of exposure to Standard French in the home compared to youth from other backgrounds. She remarked that her students had to work extra hard, compared to youth from other neighborhoods, to become fluent in the French misleadingly called “*courant*” (or commonplace) French. On a similar note, a particularly diligent student named Kenza admitted that, when she went to intern in a pharmacy for a week as part of a school requirement, she was insecure in her interactions with customers. She mentioned feeling as though she did not know how to greet clients when they walked in nor which formalities to use while taking their orders. A second observation is that, such difficulties notwithstanding, youth occasionally found it socially perilous to
speak Standard French, depending on their interlocutors and the speech event at hand. In her comments above, Sabrina implies that her location in the projects makes it socially unwise to speak paillot ("If I could, I would speak like the paillots. But I can't do it here"). She adds that a personality contrast exists between Castellanois, which she links to vulgarity ("gros mots"), and the well-mannered French of the paillots. This contrast prevents her from keeping paillot going for very long ("je peux pas garder [l'accent paillot]"). Below, I argue that Sabrina describes her experience with Standard French as fleeting because she and her peers only borrowed its indexicality in moments of strategic need.

When I inquired with Sabrina whether any students in Class 3B spoke paillot, she replied that none did. It is thus necessary to distinguish between what Sabrina understood by speaking paillot, which she vowed "not a soul" in Class 3B did, and crossing into paillot, which every member of Class 3B did on occasion and with certain interlocutors. Speaking paillot was to consistently use the repertoire of Standard French because of an affinity with the social persona of the paillot. The quality youth from Class 3B ascribed to this social persona was, in Mohamed’s words, being soft ("mou"), to which he contrasted the tough persona of youth raised in the projects (4.4.13). Table 7.1 summarizes the salient oppositions between the registers of the project youth and the paillot,

26 “Mohamed: L'éducation de quartiers c'est... il est dur, il a pas peur.” (4.2.13). 327
with regards to speech, clothing, and the stereotypical qualities indexed through the use of these repertoires. Swag, as discussed in the initial anecdote, is one among several clothing styles youth associate with the persona of the paillot.

Table 7.1. Two Registers in Northern Marseille

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Personae</th>
<th>Project Youth</th>
<th>Paillot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repertoire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>Survêtes-Baskets</td>
<td>Swag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Castellanois</td>
<td>Le français paillot (Standard French)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypic Quality</td>
<td>Toughness</td>
<td>Softness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If Sabrina refused the charge that she spoke paillot, in the sense of defaulting to Standard French and the indexicality that corresponded to it locally, the practice of episodically crossing into paillot was one at which she and her peers were quite adept. Mohamed, for example, commented that he crossed into forms approximating Standard French in order to show respect to authority figures around school: “As soon as I have to speak with the principal or vice principal, I talk well. I don’t talk like that [in Castellanois]” (4.2.13).

27 “Dès que je dois parler avec le principal ou la CPE je parle bien. Je parle pas comme ça” (Mohamed, 4.2.13). CPE is an acronym for Conseiller Principal de l’Éducation and is the person in French secondary schools who is in charge of discipline, absences, and student affairs more generally.
study of *tu* and *vous* usage in France, Morford (1996) writes that her informants chose one or the other pronominal form as a means of strategically “defining the setting or the relationship between the speaker and addressee” (p. 24). In the case of Class 3B, similarly, the students turned to a *paillot* repertoire in order to index a soft disposition. Imbuing their demeanor with the quality of softness served, in particular, to express deference to people in their environment from whom they stood to gain or lose something, whether a school vice principal or a potential employer. In the following excerpt from a video interview (6.12.13), for instance, Kader demonstrates the extent to which his use of *paillot* French was goal oriented. He recounts the process of having to make phone calls to business owners in order to arrange a one-week internship. As one of their exit requirements for secondary school (*collège*), the students interned in local businesses of their choosing, including pharmacies, car shops, hair salons, and department and retail stores at the local mall (e.g., Darty).

Cecile: Do you guys speak kinda *paillot* sometimes? ((Sabrina shaking her head no))
Kader: “*Ummm, yes, ummmm*” ((Sabrina laughs))
Sabrina: No but sometimes to goof off, but-
Kader: -That’s all they say, “*Ummm, yes, ummmm*”-
Sabrina: -almost never no, never!
Kader: But it’s true that I, to call the bosses I would do the *paillot*
Sabrina: Yeah, but that, I mean, but {like}
Kader: {“*Oh hello*, are you *2nd person plural* planning on taking-*
Sabrina: But when you’re {asking for internships too}
Kader: -(“*an intern*?”) They tell me non, then *(akhé)* I say, but at the hand ((hand
gesture)) “Well, go fuck yourself *(2nd person singular)*!”
Sabrina: ((laughing)) He speaks *paillot* and then he does that! No....
Cecile: How would you speak to them?
Sabrina: To ask for internships
Kader: First I ask. I ask. If he tells me “yes,” I say “Well, great, thanks and all.” Then (akhé) if they tell me “no,” I say “go fuck yourself” (2nd person singular) or “go fuck yourself” (2nd person singular) and I hang up! ((grinning))

The bolded text in this segment are Kader’s requests and replies to hypothetical business owners in paillot. His use of repetitive interjections of euh [œw] to show polite hesitation, the French uvular voiceless fricative /ʁ/ in bonjour and prenez, and cordial lexis (e.g., oui, allez bonjour, merci et tout alors) together serve to cordon off the voice of the paillot from his regular speech, in Castellanois.

Despite the comedic mood of his retelling, via this story Kader also reveals the strategic, façade-like rapport he maintains to Standard French. Strictly speaking, the paillot register is one he is willing to inhabit with a prospective employer but

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28 Cecile: Vous parlez un peu paillot des fois? ((Sabrina shaking her head no))
Kader: “Euh, ouiiii euhhh” ((Sabrina laughs))
Sabrina: Non mais, des fois pour faire des délires, mais-
Kader: -Ils font que “eeuhh oui euhh”-
Sabrina: -presque jamais non, jamais!
Kader: Et moi c’est vrai, pour appeler les patrons je faisais le paillot.
Sabrina: Ouais après voilà mais {genre...}
Kader: (“Allez bonjour), est-ce que vous prenez-
Sabrina: après quand {tu demandes} des stages aussi
Kader: -(“un apprenti?”) Ils me disent non, akhé je dis mais à la fin ((hand gesture))
“Bah, vas te faire enculer!”
Sabrina: ((laughing)) Il parle paillot après il fait ça! Non..
Cecile: Tu leur parlais comment?
Sabrina: Pour demander des stages.
Kader: D’abord je demande, je demande. S’il me dit “oui,” je dis “bah, ça va, merci et tout alors.” Akhé [axxe] si ils me disent non je dis “vas te faire foutre” ou “vas te faire foutre” et je raccroche! ((grinning))

29 The only notably Castellanois element in Kader’s paillot voice is his affrication in apprenti [apρɑ̃ntɪ]. Despite this example to the contrary, youth from La Castellane generally showed themselves in our conversation to be acutely aware of this particularity in their speech. The ascension of affrication to emblematic status in Marseille has previously been suggested by Gasquet-Cyrus (2004) and Vernet and Trimaille (2007), and they describe the feature as being increasingly associated by Marseille’s residents with youth from Northern Marseille.
only so long as they offer him an internship. When in his hypothetical scenario the internship does not come through, Kader reverts to Castellanois and to tu (va te faire enculer). The insult he tacks on (“Bah, va te faire enculer!”) expresses his disgust at having played the paillot and yet come away empty-handed.

These examples illustrated how, when faced with high-stakes interactions, youth crossed into paillot to index deference and thereby produce certain results. The yield was nevertheless not always guaranteed, as in Kader’s story, and disillusionment or frustration could ensue. More intractable difficulties arose, however, in scenarios when youth crossed into Standard French without what peers perceived to be a clearly defined goal. Two case studies of this type of scenario are examined below. In sub-section 3 below, I analyze how a group of female students constructs a male peer when he transgresses the project’s linguistic norms. Then, in sub-section 4, I trace how male students from Class 3B participated in sexualizing a female peer who tended to speak Standard French.

Qui Parle Tarplin Français?:30 A Case Study of a Male Crosser into Paillot

On Sunday afternoons, a group of six girls from Class 3B often came over to my apartment in La Joliette, at the northern edge of Central Marseille, to

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30 This translates roughly to “who speaks so much (or such an intense degree of) [Standard] French.”
practice their English and chat with me. Of them, three—Asma, Kenza, and Sheyreen—were raised, or diapered ("couche-culotte") as they liked to say, in La Bricarde project. The other three, Anisa, Kardiatou, and Siwar, were from La Castellane project. All but one of the girls was born locally, though their parents came from several countries: Asma’s parents were Tunisian and French (from the North); Kenza’s parents were both Algerian; Sheyreen’s mother was Algerian and her step-father Egyptian; Anisa’s parents were Algerian Kabyles; Kardiatou’s were Pulaar from Senegal; and Siwar’s parents were Algerian. Within this group of young women, Anisa, Asma, Siwar, and Kardiatou were the most admired speakers of Castellanois. Asma saw Castellanois as her default mode: “I always speak like this [in Castellanois], except when I speak with adults” (10.29.12). The girls lauded Siwar’s gab in particular, holding her up as the professor of project-language ("professeuse de la langue des quartiers,” 7.12.13), due to her ability to draw various languages into her speech and riff on rap lyrics. Sheyreen and Kenza, by contrast, were generally recognized to be less project-like in their speech, a fact to which I will return below.

31 Asma and Anisa were also among the most high-achieving students in the Arabic class, often called upon by Madame Chérif to explain difficult points or leave class alone to fetch materials from the main office.

32 “Je parle toujours comme ça [en Castellanois], à part quand je parle avec des adultes” (Asma, 10.29.12).
In the following transcript, the girls were sitting around my kitchen table discussing their impending Arabic fieldtrip to Paris. Though none had ever been to Paris, they nevertheless had some intuitions, likely gleaned from the media, about how Paris would compare to Marseille, and Parisians to youth like them. In an echo of Sabrina’s comments on who speaks paillot, Sheyreen begins by announcing that Parisians speak “French, French, French.” Youth from La Castellane, she compares, “mix all languages, actually creating our own language.” Through spatial and personal deictics, Sheyreen establishes an initial map—or poetic structure (M. Silverstein, 1985b, p. 185)—where certain types of language are naturalized as belonging to particular people and places. Standard French is the domain of Parisians (“they”) and distant Paris, while Castellanois forms the base from which “we” maneuver “here” in Marseille. As Wortham (1996) has noted, the “minimal interactional framework” (p. 344) sketched by these deictics reveals little as to how these respective interactional camps are evaluated. Useful devices for understanding participants’ alignments are what Gumperz (1982) has called “contextualization cues” (p. 131), which are textual indications as to how speakers are interpreting an ongoing interaction. In the next sequence of the transcript, Asma interjects to tell the story of how she overheard a young man using Standard French to order bread in the boulangerie at the foot of La Castellane. Her excoriation of this young man’s behavior and
her girlfriends' supportive reactions of her judgment act as contextualization cues exposing the group's negative stance towards *paillots* more generally but also, quite tellingly, their disapproval of individuals from the projects who cross into Standard French, not to perform deference to others in a high-stakes situation, but to imbue themselves with the qualities of soft sophistication indexed by the *paillot* repertoire.

Transcript 7.1.33 “Bread Please”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheyreen:</strong> Non non, moi j’aime pas trop les parisiens parce que eux ils n’ont pas de culture, tu vois? Nous, ici à Marseilles, on mélange toutes les langues en fait et ça nous fait notre propre langage, alors que eux ils parlent français, français, français. Et nous on découvrez des nouveaux mots. Regarde, et ceux qui comprennent pas l’arabe</td>
<td><strong>Sheyreen:</strong> No no, I don’t really like Parisians because they don’t have any culture, you know? Us, here in Marseilles, we mix all languages in fact and we come up with our own language, whereas they speak French, French, French. And we make-sometimes, we make up new words. Look, {and those that don’t understand dialectal Arabic}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asma:</strong> {Ce que je crains le plus}-</td>
<td><strong>Asma:</strong> {What I really shudder at}-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kenza:</strong> C’est quoi?</td>
<td><strong>Kenza:</strong> Is what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asma:</strong> -C’est les garçons qui parlent tarplin français. Ah l’autre fois j’étais à côté de - tu te rappelles - d’un mec. Akhaaa [ɑχɑː]-t’as vu il était bien stylé et tout mais tu le vois arriver-</td>
<td><strong>Asma:</strong> -is boys that speak lots of French. Ah the other day I was next to-you remember-a guy. Akhaaa [ɑχɑː]-you know he was styled right and all but you hear him come with-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anisa:</strong> -les filles ça va mieux mais les garçons}</td>
<td><strong>Anisa:</strong> -girls are alright but boys}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asma:</strong> {“Bonjour} un pain [pɛ] s’il-vous plait”</td>
<td><strong>Asma:</strong> {“Hello} bread please”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sheyreen:</strong> Ah! {Une drôle de fille}</td>
<td><strong>Sheyreen:</strong> Ah! {A strange girl}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kardiatou:</strong> {On dirait une gadji}</td>
<td><strong>Kardiatou:</strong> {Seems like a girl}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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33 This interview dates from 1.27.13.
When Asma begins recounting what happened, she assumes a project-centric footing (Goffman, 1981) by speaking in *Castellanois*. She affricates her stop consonants, uses a transformed version of the Marseillais vernacular adverb *tarpin* (>“*tarplin*”), employs project slang lexis like *gadjī* [ɡadji] ‘girl’ and the neologism *akha* ([ɑχɑ]), roughly glossable as ‘oh my gosh,’ and most importantly, renounces the *paillot* rendition of *pain* ‘bread’ (with a nasalized vowel: [pɛ]) in favor of the velar nasal in the *Castellanois* version of the word: [pɛŋ]. Asma introduces her story by stating that what she hates the most (*ce que je crains le plus*) are boys who speak French to the nᵗʰ degree (*qui parlent tarplin français*). She then asks Kenza if she recalls how, while waiting in line at the local bakery, they had witnessed a boy ordering at the counter in Standard French.
She imitates his order twice, dwelling on *paillot* elements like the greeting *bonjour*, his overly polite way of asking for bread (*je voudrais alors un pain*), his hesitating use of *euh*, and his nasalization of the final vowel in *pain*. The girls immediately flag the young man’s recourse to Standard French in this casual neighborhood setting as non-normative. All the more so because, as Asma indicates, the boy was likely a resident of La Castellane, judging by the conformity he showed to project fashion norms (*il était bien stylé et tout*). Their negative evaluation of his crossing takes the form of slurs focusing on the young man’s gender and sexuality. Sheyreen opens the commentary with “a strange girl” (*une drôle de fille*), Kardiatou then calls him a slang word for “girl” (*gadji*), and Asma wraps up the story with the slur “fag” (*tapette*). The girls draw several important distinctions, both explicitly and implicitly, between types of crossing into *paillot* here. First, Anisa and Kenza offer the point that crossing into *paillot* is more acceptable for girls: “It’s true with girls it goes over okay hein but you see some guys…” Second, and much more subtly, the girls draw a distinction between their own crossing practices and the crossing behavior of this young man. In the case of youth in Class 3B, as I have chronicled, youth crossed into the *paillot* register episodically, or when interacting with individuals towards whom indexing deference proved socially advantageous in some tangible way. Youth relied on the “soft” indexicality of Standard French in these contexts in
order to demonstrate their knowledge and respect of their interlocutors’ status.
By contrast, the girls suspected that the young man in the bakery was regularly
using *païlot* to self-formulate as being different from other project-dwellers:
perhaps more educated or sophisticated.

This example is interesting because it illustrates what takes place when a young man from the projects contravenes the normative persona of the tough project youth. In the cultural landscape of the 16th arrondissement, local youth are expected to speak in *Castellanois* (and its equivalents in other projects) as a means of indexing values like toughness, grit, and working-class and multi-ethnic solidarity. Crossing into *païlot*, a register typically associated with more affluent, ethnically French people from beyond the projects, is acceptable—even expected—given interactions involving outsiders to the projects. The anecdote related by Asma, however, involved a young man using *païlot* in a non-normative way, namely, with employees at his local breadshop. The result was for the young man’s linguistic non-normativity to be read as his own sociological deviance. Insofar as he failed to index the tough persona normatively enjoined upon him as a youth from the projects, the girls at my dining table were able to tropically construct him as “a fag” (*une tapette*). Given this example’s similarity with my introductory anecdote, in which Mohamed was called a “*homo*” for engaging in *swag* style, I argue that the construal as “fags” of male youth who
personally affiliate themselves with *paillot* behavior has become a “normalized trope” (Agha, 2007a, p. 356), or a trope that has gained wider recognizability within this youth population. Agha defines normalized tropes as “usages that are denotationally anomalous but interactationally felicitous under certain conditions of role inhabitance” (p. 367). In these cases, the denotational anomaly lies in these male youth not in fact being gay yet being felicitously construed as such due to their inhabitance of a persona, the *paillot*, at odds with project-specific formulations of masculinity. Beyond the mere regularization or dissemination of this trope on male sexuality, it is also worth pointing out that these youth turned to non-normative sexuality, in particular, as the means through which to monitor their peers’ social transgressions. Youth’s socialization into Islamic traditions, including ideas about defined gender roles and the abnormality of homosexuality, no doubt informed youth’s choice of tactics with which to police their male peers’ behavior. To illustrate this relevance of Islamic morality to the youth in Class 3B, the following anecdote further explores how Islamic ideas about female reserve surfaced in 3B classmates’ discourse. Specifically, I inquire into how these circulating ideas influenced the way youth read their female peers who, rather than act project-like, used Standard French and dressed *swag*. 
“The une bandeuse!”: The Sexualization of Female Crossing into Paillot and Swag

Leaning back in her chair during Arabic class, Sheyreen peered out the window at a boy named Idris in the recess yard. The teacher was spelling out why the students must learn to read words in MSA without their attendant vowel markings, but Sheyreen’s attention was drawn to a little ditty Idris was singing and which she could just barely make out through the window. “*Ta mère fait du stop-euh sans sa culotte-euh...*” (12-12-12).³⁴ Sheyreen absentmindedly mimed Idris under her breath, “Your mother can get her ride on... without a stitch on...” Sitting near Sheyreen and Ayman, I then overheard Ayman mutter to her: “you’re a slut!” (*t’es* [tɛ] *une bandeuse* [bɔ̃dœz]). Sheyreen’s explosive reaction, and Ayman’s part in provoking it, had them both excluded from classes for the next 24 hours. I analyze the sexual trope of which Sheyreen was a victim in this incident as yet another kind of social policing, only in this case one lead by young men interested in curtailing what they perceived to be overly *paillot* and *swag* behaviors among their female peers. Sheyreen was recognized among her peers as tending in her style towards *paillot* speech and *swag* clothes. This backdrop, together with the suggestive content of the song she sang in class, opened up her up to the normalized sexual trope of the “slut,” which youth in

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³⁴ This translates, literally, to “your mom hitchhikes without her underwear” (Ayman, 12-12-12).
Class 3B captured with various labels, among them bimbo, bandeuse, bimbo, ham-ham ([hamham]), and crasseuse.

Sheyreen, as I mentioned in the last section, was raised in La Bricarde by an Algerian mother and an Egyptian step-father. She was also among the few students born outside of Marseille, in the northern département of Pas-de-Calais. Though she was raised locally and spoke ardently about the virtues of Marseille’s projects, Sheyreen also enjoyed the cachet of being able to claim the somewhat exotic identity of being born elsewhere with her friends. Sheyreen’s speech, too, reflected her attempt to cultivate this allure of being from elsewhere. In the quotes below, Sheyreen sets herself apart from the typical project youth as someone who tends to speak less Castellanois—and more paillot:

“They [the other students] pronounce everything with an Arabic accent, in fact.” (10.29.12)\(^{35}\)

“Here [at school], to tell the truth, I’m not allowed to speak normally. If I speak normally, I know I am going to get whacked around. Because when we speak correctly, well then people make fun of you and it sounds like yeah, “you're a paillote, yadda yadda yadda…” (7.12.13)\(^{36}\)

“When I go home [from school], I am a paillote. So when I go home, I speak French super well. Sometimes, I speak English to practice. And that’s it! And I speak Hindu [sic] too. In fact, I take words from [Bollywood] films and I try to understand.” (10.29.12)\(^{37}\)

\(^{35}\) “Ils prononcent tout avec l’accent arabe, en fait” (Sheyreen, 10.29.12).

\(^{36}\) “Ici, en fait, j’ai pas le droit de parler normalement. Si je parle normalement, je sais que je vais me prendre des claquets. Parce que quand on parle correctement, et ben ça se moque de toi et ça dit oui, “t’es un paillote, nia nia nia…”” (Sheyreen, 7.12.13).

Here, Sheyreen identifies speaking “French super well” as her normal or preferred mode. In front of two female peers and myself, Sheyreen seemed to have surprisingly few qualms about announcing her ease and pleasure in speaking *paillot*, particularly given her cognizance of her peers’ negative perceptions of the persona associated with this repertoire. Sheyreen flouted other norms as well, notably choosing clothing that was recognizably *swag*. She combined elements of the tracksuits-and-sneakers look, like loose-fitting jeans over sneakers and going make-up-less, with such *swag* elements as frilly scrunchies and tops trimmed with see-through lace that exposed her arms and shoulders. She took pains not to call herself *swag*, however. Indeed, youth in Class 3B had come to understand *swag*, not merely as a clothing repertoire begun by stars in the music and television industry, including Rihanna, Justin Bieber, and Kim Kardashian, but also, more significantly, as a Western lifestyle centered on free choices and boundless sexuality.

Class 3B youth’s more textured understanding of *swag*, namely, as a clothing style indicative of a free-wheeling, libertine lifestyle, was directly influenced by a particular reality television diva, Nabilla Benattia. Her show, *Les anges de la télé-réalité*, aired over the 2012-2013 school year on the public television channel NRJ-12, and the students watched and frequently discussed the show’s developments. Nabilla is an aspiring model who was born in 1992 in
a French town near Switzerland to an Italian mother and an Algerian father. The show follows, among other storylines, Nabilla’s efforts to land modeling gigs with American agencies while living in a house in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In one episode, she did a scantily clad photoshoot with a magazine in Las Vegas. In another, she invited Kim Kardashian to her house as a consultant in how to become, in her words, further “swaguée.” Other episodes, meanwhile, featured her on-and-off relationships with the men who lived in her house. One student in Class 3B, Fouhda, was exceptional insofar as she dressed swag and identified Nabilla as her role model in doing so. Fouhda dressed noticeably differently than the other female students in Class 3B. She straightened her hair, got French manicures, and wore make-up and tight-fitting sweaters over holey jeans. One day I asked Fouhda what she thought of being labeled swag by her peers. Fouhda replied that she was proud of being swag, like Nabilla: “I’m like Nabilla because I wear what I want and I don’t care if others like it or not” (11.3.12).38 She contrasted her own stance with that of another girl in her year, who after being called swag one day at school went home during lunch break to change out of her tunic and tights. For Fouhda, Nabilla represented the possibility of resisting social pressure to dress modestly. Nabilla also represented the stereotypical

38 “Fouhda: Je suis comme Nabilla parce que je m’habille comme je veux, ceux qui n’aiment pas...!” (4.3.13).
speaker of Standard French. Her performance of this register was made particularly clear to the students after a much-publicized monologue Nabilla gave in an episode that aired on March, 4th, 2013. Nabilla had given a short, but memorably vacuous diatribe on how two other women on the show were capable of traveling without their shampoo. While pretending to be on the phone with one hand, she exclaimed in a ditzy but Standard French: “Hello? Come on, hello! You’re a girl and you don’t have your shampoo?” (Allô? Non mais allô quoi! T’es une fille et t’as pas de shampoing?). Her line became famous thanks to repeated showings on television in the weeks following the episode and much commentary in social media. This and other behaviors of Nabilla’s were circulated and digested by the students of Class 3B, who came to consider her as the embodiment—and thus, the connection—between speaking *païlot*, dressing *swag*, and being sexually loose.
For the students, Nabilla’s sexual behavior stood witness to the possibility that a second-generation female from an Arab and Muslim family background might lapse in her moral socialization. A couple weeks after Nabilla’s famed episode, for instance, I directed a study hall for five male students from Class 3B. With my appreciable encouragement, quiet work quickly devolved into an energetic exchange of tidbits about Nabilla. Amid a deafening chorus of Nabilla “shampoing” imitations, the following conversation took place:

Cécile: Did you guys see the Nabilla thing with “hallo”? What is Nabilla about? ((Nabilla imitations in the background))
Mohamed: She’s a bimbo. She’s all touched up. Her dream is to be an it girl, a girl who gives her body. She’s totally plastified. ((more Nabilla imitations))
Cécile: And is she Arab?
Mohamed: Well, Nabilla she’s not actually an Arab. She said she was an Arab but like she didn’t have an Arab education because her mother was Spanish and her dad, she never saw him
Cécile: So she was never educated as a Muslim?
Mohamed: She’s Muslim but she never-
Elias: -but she’s with Thomas in the pool!!!

In this excerpt, Mohamed appears to struggle with the disjuncture between Nabilla being une arabe—the ethnic and religious category to which he connects

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39 “Cécile: Vous avez vu le truc de Nabilla avec ‘hallo’? Nabilla, c’est qui en fait?
Mohamed: C’est une bimbo et elle est toute refaite. Son rêve c’est d’être une ‘hit girl.’ Elle est en plastique.
Cécile: C’est une Arabe?
Mohamed: Genre Nabilla en fait c’est pas une Arabe. Elle a dit c’est une Arabe mais, genre, elle a pas eu une éducation d’Arabe. Genre parce que sa mère c’était une espagnole et son père elle l’a jamais vu.
Cécile: Donc elle n’a jamais été éduquée en tant que musulmane-
Mohamed: -Elle est musulmane mais elle a jamais-
Elias: -Elle est avec Thomas dans la piscine!”
(4-4-13)
himself—and Nabilla’s dreams of being an “it girl,” her plastic surgeries, and her sexual overtures to Thomas in the pool. He settles on Nabilla being Arab and Muslim but, given her Algerian father’s absence in her life, lacking the requisite socialization into Islamic morals. As shown by Mohamed’s uptake of Nabilla’s persona, whom throughout this conversation the boys called *une bimbo, une folle,* and *une crasseuse,* behaviors like speaking *paillot* and dressing *swag* were sometimes perceived in Class 3B as having a sexual patina.40

Returning to the incident with Sheyreen, then, it can be said that several factors came together to make Sheyreen the unwilling target of a sexual slur. On the one hand, Class 3B was at the time in the throes of a reality television show the heroine of which was a young woman born in Europe to a part-Muslim family and whom, notably, crystallized connections between *swag* style, *paillot* speech, and sexually loose behavior. On the other, Sheyreen herself engaged in some behaviors—such as *paillot* speech and *swag* style, but also singing a playfully “dirty” song in class—that led to her perception as indexing softness and immodesty rather than the toughness at the heart of the project youth’s self-image. This incident reveals youth’s local ideology of toughness to impose unequal or gendered requirements on young women as compared to young men.

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40 Fouhda added to this list of slurs for females the term *ham-ham* [ḥaˈmhaˈm], also meaning “slut.” The term appears to be a neologism created with the Arabic phoneme /ḥ/. 345
Whereas young men were simply required to act tough, young women were expected to act tough and modest. When young women failed to show bodily modesty and sexual reserve, two kinds of female etiquette drawn from Islamic moral discourses, this resulted in their policing through sexual slurs, which were levied at them by their male as well as female peers. Despite these youth’s ready admissions that they would not pray as required nor fast consistently during Ramadan, such instances are pointed illustrations of the continued relevance of certain Islamic norms among these Marseille-born youth. Although youth’s orientation to Islam influenced interactions in a more tacit way, it was also occasionally the case that youth flagged their affiliation to Islam in more tangible ways. In my fieldnotes from the day Ayman insulted Sheyreen, for instance, I wrote “Ayman has Allah written in Arabic on his right hand in purple” (12-12-12).

A last point in this regard pertains to the very real consequences for young women of such sexual name-calling. Towards the end of the school year, I conducted another interview with Fouhda in which we happened to discuss what we each thought of Facebook. Fouhda explained that, “Now that they have made a page for ‘The Sluts of Marseille,’ I’ve closed my account” (4.3.13). She filled me in on how some unknown Facebook users had created a page featuring

41 “Fouhda: Depuis qu’ils ont fait la ‘Page des Folles’ j’ai fermé mon Facebook.” (4.3.13)
local swag girls’ profile pictures and had tagged them with the label folle, or “slut.” Many of these photos were then insultingly commented upon (e.g., “you’re a crasseuse and all”), and some of the male commentators even feigned rendezvous with the depicted girls (e.g., “come at 4 p.m. to the Carrefour”).

Fouhda, who earlier in the year had enjoyed penning the word love on her wrist and dressing how she wished, was now quite concerned about whether her previous labeling as swag would lead to the marring of her reputation, potentially changing it to bimbo. She approached her transition to high school the following year with no small degree of trepidation.

Figure 7.2. (Left) Fouhda Writes “Love” on her Wrist Using Ayman’s Purple Marker (12-12-12)

Figure 7.3. (Right) Phone Numbers for Made-Up “Folles” on a Chair at a Northern Marseille Tram Stop
In the ethnographic examples given above from La Castellane and La Bricarde housing projects, youth from Class 3B were shown to trope on ideological contrasts between local social types, positioning their peers in sexualized ways as a means of policing behaviors thought to be aberrant for the projects. In this section, I present how orthodox-identified individuals, likewise from Northern Marseille, differently orient to these same social types. A few of the examples I draw upon come from the time I spent teaching at a private Muslim school in Marseille 15th arrondissement. The majority, however, derive from my friendships with a group of female youth from Cité La Viste, another project in Northern Marseille. These young women, who were nineteen and twenty years-old when I met them in 2012 and 2013, attended the local public university and were studying to receive their Bachelor’s degree in Arabic language and literature. The majority of the women in this friend group lived with their families while attending the university, mainly in La Viste project, while a few of them also lived on campus. These young women identified as orthodox or Sunni Muslims in the sense I described in Chapter Five. They followed strict prayer schedules, went together to Friday prayer, dressed in
jilbābs, ‘abāyahs, and hijābs, and actively sought out Islamic knowledge.

Throughout the year, I interacted with these young women at the university, attending classes and spending time studying with them, but also on the weekends. We traveled around Marseille to see visiting cheikhs speak on topics of interest, participated in tajwīd courses at a mosque in Central Marseille, went on hikes in Marseille’s calanque cliff areas, and enjoyed women-only events like an Islamic fashion show and an all-girls pool day.

These young women were notable in a linguistic sense insofar as they were raised in the projects of Northern Marseille but chose to speak, not a youth register like Castellanois, nor even Marseille’s vernacular French, but a French closer in phonology, syntax, and lexis to Standard French. As argued in Chapter Five, for diasporic youth who claimed Islamic orthodoxy, a key behavior through which they indexed their piety was to speak in languages they considered cultivated, like Standard French and Modern Standard Arabic. Male and female orthodox youth drew iconic links between these institutionalized and historically valued varieties of French and Arabic, on the one hand, and an ethos of pious personhood based in such qualities as elegance, education, and cordiality, on the other hand.

An intriguing question in this regard is whether young orthodox men and women were equally impelled to follow this ideology of piety. In the transcripts
that follow, which are drawn from this female peer group and a handful of orthodox male acquaintances, I demonstrate how both young men and women try to uphold a measure of linguistic standardness in their speech, and yet community members often judge women who fail to speak thus by a different standard. The examples I present reveal that members of the orthodox community in Marseille tend to read young females’ use of project-like behavior or linguistic features, like those of Castellanois, as not only impious but also abnormally masculine. Young men, too, are typically reminded to act more Muslim when they assume stances reminiscent of the projects, only such reproofs seem to have little bearing on how others interpret their gender or sexuality. In an interesting final twist, I discuss instances in which young women from this friend-group exploited the link between so-called project language and toughness in order to index such interactional stances as humor or even, in one young woman’s case, being gender-queer.

I turn now to discussing the relation between language, piety, and gender in Islam, as understood by a young woman named Amel, one of the young orthodox-identified women who took part in the above-mentioned friendship group at the public university. Amel was somewhat unusual in her peer group in that she was not from Northern Marseille’s projects but was born and raised in the working-class, diverse neighborhood of Aix-en-Provence called Encagnane.
Corsy (alias “La Zup”). After turning sixteen, she and her family moved to Manosque, a large town about 90 kilometers northeast of Marseille, and it was from there that she commuted to the university for classes. Her father, who was born in France to an Algerian family, worked as a janitor, and her mother, who came from Algeria at age nineteen, was a personal aide to the elderly. Among the life experiences Amel did share with her female peers at the university, however, was an early socialization into Islamic traditions, along with a transition towards greater piety at the end of her teens:

“Islam has always been present in my life. I have been immersed in it since very young. I began fasting, praying near six years of age. I had a period of distance with it, between sixteen and eighteen years, where I lived kind of like a youth, before returning to myself in full consciousness, maturity, around nineteen years old. Since that day, I do things and I understand why I do them, hamdulilah.”

Here, Amel plots a timeline in which the period of youth is accompanied by a distancing from Islam, and then entrance into maturity likewise entails a growth in Islamic consciousness. Insofar as she now observes Prophetic Sunnah, Amel feels that she acts knowingly, or with direction. In the following one-on-one conversation I held with Amel (4.3.13), she described what she understood to be Sunnah’s special requirements for women. Some of the requirements she mentions, like having a compassionate and calm demeanor, are recognizable

from Prophetic Ḥadith traditions. Meanwhile, others show locally formulated ideologies of what being a “sister” (sœur) demands, like for instance her point that Muslim women must avoid speaking in the youth registers characteristic of Marseille’s projects.

Transcript 7.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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| **Amel:** L’Islam il peut te-en tant que femme, je veux dire, t’as pas envie de passer pour euh, je veux dire, tu dois être une femme tu dois être posée douce et tu dois, fin, posée, douce. C’est les trucs que, tu vois? Mais je veux dire, tu dois avoir une certaine conduite féminine quoi. Tu dois pas arriver devant quelqu’un et lui parler comme une sauvage. En fin c’est contraire à l’éthique et au comportement quoi. Donc après si tu veux suivre le comportement des des Ṣaḥābāt [sah:ba:t] comme on dit et des-voilà, après t’as un choix à faire quoi. Tu vois? Et là directement tu te places plus ou moins-
| **Amel:** Islam can make you-as a woman, I mean, you don’t want to seem like, uh, I mean you have to be a woman. You have to be calm, gentle, and you have to, well...calm, gentle. Those are the things that you see? But, I mean, you have to have a kind of feminine behavior you know? You shouldn’t appear before someone and speak to them like a savage. I mean, it’s contrary to ethics, to behavior. So then if you want to follow the behavior of the Ṣaḥābāt [sah:ba:t], as we say, and of-there! Then you have a choice to make. You see? And right away you position yourself more or less-

| **Cécile:** -Ṣaḥābah [sah:ba:] je connais. Ṣaḥābah [sah:ba:t] c’est nouveau pour moi. {C’est mignon j’aime bien} |
| **Cécile:** (male companions of the Prophet”) but Ṣaḥābāt [sah:ba:t] is new to me. {It’s sweet. I like it}

| **Amel:** ((laughs)) { Ṣaḥābiyāt} et voilà quoi du coup euhm, tu vois, tu euh te places dans ce contexte la quoi il faut que…je pense que oui, de toute façon quand tu es musulmane tu fais un effort mais l’effort ne-il vient plus naturellement peut-être. Mais après tu vois des soeurs en jilbab. Elle arrive la soeur, “wesh wesh” [wef wef]. Euhhh c’est surprenant franchement, c’est surprenant, parce que tu ne t’y attends pas trop en fait |
| **Amel:** ( Ṣaḥābiyāt) and right away you put yourself in that particular frame of mind. You have to... (.08). I think that for sure if you’re a Muslim woman, then you have to make an effort anyway. But the effort doesn’t comes more naturally maybe. But then you see Muslim sisters in jilbāb [jilba:b]. The sister arrives “wesh wesh” [wef wef] (“what’s up”). Uh, it’s truly surprising. It’s surprising because you really don’t expect it. You don’t expect it because-

| **Cécile:** -tu t’y attends pas parce que il y a un modèle de fémininité dans l’Islam {qui qui euh} |
| **Cécile:** You don’t expect it because there’s a model of femininity in Islam that that uh...

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43 This interview dates from 4.3.13.
In this narrative, Amel explains that there are two types of young female Muslims in Marseille. The first is she who calls herself a Muslim and follows the behaviors expected of the Prophet Mohamed’s female companions, the Ṣaḥābiyyah. These, she notes, include being gentle (douce), calm or patient (posée), and having a certain feminine conduct (avoir une certaine conduite féminine). Amel identifies the second local type of female Muslim as the young woman who calls herself a Muslim but has not yet adopted the appropriate ethic. Such women, says Amel, are liable to wear the Islamically appropriate jilbāb and yet greet people with wesh wesh (“what’s up”) and “arrive before someone speaking like a savage.” This greeting, deriving from the Algerian interrogative word wesh [weʃ],
meaning “what,” is one typical of interactions between youth from Marseille’s projects, and from other suburban locations in France as well (Caubet, 2007). Towards the end of the transcript, Amel clarifies that *wesh wesh* belongs to project ways of speaking, which she does not consider part of the French language (*ce ni du français, c’est du-du truc du quartier, là*). She states that young women who have a “very pronounced accent” of this sort must work hard to banish such ways of speaking from their repertoire, should they wish to enter full-heartedly into Islam. She herself delivers her comments in a French phonologically recognizable as standard, without the affrication of stops, devoicing of uvulars, velar nasals, and word-final schwas that I have discussed as marking Northern Marseille’s youth registers (and Marseille’s historical vernacular, to a certain extent). In sum, in her remarks Amel diagrams two linguistic poles and their corresponding social indexicalities. Speaking softly, and in “French,” indexes the female Muslim persona of the *ṣahābiyah*, understood to be sweet, affectionate, and maternal. Project speech like *wesh wesh*, in contrast, indexes the speaker’s affinity with the subculture of the projects (*quartiers*). According to Amel, this rough-hewn or “savage” persona is antithetical to the ideals of Islamic femininity, if not those of Islam more generally.

Indeed, both the young orthodox women and men I interviewed tended to place project-affiliated behaviors on the opposite side of the spectrum from an
Islamic disposition, regardless of their gender identity. Amina, one of Amel’s orthodox girlfriends, deliberately eschewed “accents” from the projects, though she did not necessarily tie her aversion to gender. She explained her linguistic aspirations principally in terms of a desire to speak in an elegant and educated way: “I don’t like accents. I like all sorts of sophisticated language, so that is how I endeavor to speak” (10-29-12). Amina in fact so exuded gentility that her female friends at the university were moved to nickname her “paradisiacal Amina” (Amina Paradis). This pet name was a nod to Amina’s courteous treatment of others around her but also to her use of a whispery, almost dreamy voice that was often so quiet it prompted people to ask her to repeat herself. The image of sweetness Amina projected stood out to others as well, such as a female employee at the university cafeteria who would greet Amina in particular with “how are you, my little sweetie?” (ça va, ma choupette? [literally, my little female cabbage]). Another friend from this group, Karima, found it particularly offensive when young women engaged in so-called project behavior while wearing jilbāb. She considered it less an affront to Islamic femininity per se than a stain on Islam’s reputation, however: “They laugh loudly, they talk loudly, they insult people, they don’t pay their Métro ticket” (10-29-12). The girls agreed

44 “J’aime pas les accents. J’aime tout ce qui est langue soutenue donc c’est comme ça que je m’efforce de parler” (Amina, 10-29-12).

45 “Ça rit fort, ça parle fort, ça insulte, ça paie pas son ticket de Métro” (Karima, 10-29-12).
that professing Islam meant they could no longer, if they ever did, behave like the stereotypical project resident. Amina thus reminded her friends of their duty—not as Muslim women, but as Muslims *tout court*—namely, to behave well as a means of both upholding their own piety and of educating the wider public about true Islamic values:

“Before putting on the ḥijāb, we weren’t necessarily like this. But now there’s a job to be done, an image to give. We have the impression that we’re ambassadors for Islam” (10-29-12).

These examples have served to show that many of the qualities Amel imputed to the *ṣaḥābiyah*, while seemingly gendered, were often also invoked as virtues to which all Muslims in Marseille should aspire, irrespective of gender.

Indeed, young orthodox men echoed many of these thoughts on what was considered appropriate demeanor and speech. Ramin was a seventeen-year old male high school student whose Algerian mother I had befriended. Though all five children in the family prayed regularly, Ramin, who was the eldest, had become particularly assiduous in his pursuit of Islamic knowledge. In 2012, he had taken to wearing Islamic men’s wear, like short-cropped pants and a cap, and to visiting a nearby prayer room at prayer times and for *tajwīd* recitation

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46 “Avant de mettre le ḥijāb on était pas forcément comme ça. Mais maintenant il y a un travail à faire, une image à donner… On a l’impression d’être des ambassatrices de l’Islam” (Amina, 10-29-12).

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classes. In a boulangerie with me one afternoon, Ramin reflected over a raspberry tartelette on his linguistic behavior as a Muslim:

**Cécile:** Do you keep an eye on your language or not so much?

**Ramin:** Yes, a lot! Because God, he already asks that of us: “believe in Allah and utter words that are *sadidah,*” the opposite of vulgar. I’m at high school and they teach us to speak well, for interviews. So we pay attention to what comes out of our mouths. (...) [Modern Standard] Arabic is the most beautiful. Darijahs (“colloquial Arabics”) are shot. Moroccans, they say “antshi” [antʃi]. They transform the “ta” to be “ch.” like people from Marseille. Literary Arabic is better than darijah. At the mosque, they teach us the value of literary Arabic.47

Here, Ramin retraces ideological linkages parallel to those drawn by Amel above. He aligns himself with well-spoken French and Modern Standard Arabic. These are linguistically correct (*sadidah*) languages, he states, taught by French schools and mosques, respectively. As such, they are among the forms of speech God has ordained. Algerian *darijah* and Marseille’s accent, by contrast, he evaluates as “shot” (*flingué*). He mentions that *darijah* speakers, for example, realize “t” as [tʃ], as in [antʃi] instead of [anti] (‘you’). He then adds that this error is characteristic of how people from Marseille speak French as well.

With this ideological backdrop in mind, I now move to examining cases where orthodox youth crossed into conduct associated with the projects, whether speech or behavior, and the ensuing reactions. Given that I personally

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47 “Cécile: Tu veilles un peu sur ton langage ou pas trop?
Ramin: Oui beaucoup! Parce que déjà Dieu nous l’ordonne: creignez Allah et dites des mots ‘sadidah’ (contraire de vulgaire)... Je suis au lycée ils nous entraînent à bien parler, pour les entretiens, on fait attention à ce qui sort de notre bouche... l’arabe c’est plus beau les darija c’est flingué, les marocains ils disent antshi - le ta ils le transforment en tch (comme les marseillais)... littéraire soutenu c’est meilleur que darija... a la mosque ils nous ont donné la valeur de l’arabe littéraire... avant non” (Ramin, 6.15.13)
witnessed more instances of young women adopting project-identified behaviors than young men, I offer one male example and then focus mainly on young women crossing and the scope of reactions by orthodox-identified community members. I find that, when a young woman’s crossing represented an isolated occurrence, community members often found it amusing or humorous. In some cases, such rebelliousness even inspired a measure of admiration among onlookers. In others, however, and particularly when the young woman took a project-like stance on a regular basis, community members’ remarks evince a tendency to position such women as overly masculine or lacking in piety.

Perhaps due to the nature of my interactions with the young orthodox men I knew, I was privy to fewer situations in which this type of crossing behavior might have been a possibility. One occasion stands out in my fieldnotes, however, and pertains to the private Muslim secondary school where I taught English during the 2012-2013 school year. In April of 2013, I accompanied several teachers and a group of thirty students from this school on a one-week fieldtrip to London. While visiting the city on the first day of our trip, we decided to stop in Regent’s Park for a picnic lunch. The teachers and I sat at the edge of a grassy area with our sandwiches and watched as some of the male students played soccer on the lawn. Rida, one of these fourteen year old boys, got excited and began shouting out plays in a hoarse voice that carried easily to
where the principal’s wife was sitting. She shot to her feet and scolded Rida at close range:

“Stop acting like a North African from the 15th [arrondissement]! Be a good Muslim! Don’t attract attention!”

In her remarks to Rida, Hanan sets up a contrast between North Africans from the 15th arrondissement and good Muslims from the 15th arrondissement, where the school is located and where most of the students live. She signals that Rida’s loud voice and rowdy behavior is representative of the former demographic, while she expects him to act as though he belongs to the latter group. The fact that Rida comes from a Muslim, Algerian family is not enough, she says; Rida must act like a Muslim, speaking quietly so as to perform reserve and respect of others. In this example, therefore, Hanan is able to curtail Rida’s raucous behavior by relating it to a type of impious project person whom he, as a student in an orthodox Muslim school, would be ashamed to resemble.

If Rida met with the threat of impiety for acting in line with supposed project norms on a certain occasion, the cases of two young women from his 8th grade class (3ième) illustrate other possible kinds of reactions to such behavior. Rania was a young woman in Rida’s grade whom the adults at school considered a notorious trouble-maker and who was also among the lowest grade-earning

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48 “Arrête de faire ton maghrébin du 15ième! Sois un bon musulman! Ne te fais pas remarquer!” (Hanan, 4-15-13).
students in the school. In my own classroom, I noticed that Rania enjoyed making cynical remarks and entertaining side conversations with the male students. Rania was likewise an exception to linguistic trends at the school, preferring to speak in the project or quartiers register. I learned about others’ perceptions of Rania and her speech in the following conversation with Fawzi, a man in his early twenties who was the school recess monitor:

Cécile: Generally, I find that students here don’t speak like that.
Fawzi: It’s true that it’s rare here. But there is the student Rania, or Rani as we call her. Rania speaks kind of like this, okay “Stop dahing! Come on, move it! You’ve pissed me off!” (Arrête de dah! Vas-y bouge! Tu m’as soulé! [axɛtɔ da dah vaζi bu:ʒa tfu ma su:lɛ]).
Halima [the school accountant], who is uh very feminine, especially compared to Rania, was shocked when she heard her say that. She told her “Wait, you’re a guy (mec). It’s just not possible. I’m going to call you Rani.” One time, Rania even came to see me and said, “Fawzi, it’s fine. Don’t call me Rania anymore. Now my name is Karim” (Fawzi c’est bon! Tû [ʃu] m’appelles plus Rania. Maintenant je m’appelle Karim [kaxim]). “Euh, okay, if you like! How’s it going, Karim?” “Yeah, yeah, it’s all good (We, we, ça va [we we sa va]).” Okaaay… ((shrugs his shoulders))

Fawzi imitates Rania using many of the devices I have shown to be typical of the project register, including Arabic phonology-influenced neologisms ([dəh] “mess around”), stop affrication, and devoicing of French uvulars. In these comments, both Fawzi and Halima, the school accountant, position Rania as her hypothetical male counterpart, Rani, due to her project-like speech.⁴⁹ As in Amel’s comment about orthodox women who greet with wesh wesh, whom she found “truly surprising,” here Fawzi cues various forms of disbelief. He reports Halima being “shocked” and saying that “it’s just not possible.” Then he himself

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⁴⁹ Many Arabic names for females end in “a,” making the absence of this suffix recognizably male by contrast (e.g., Rashida/Rashid, Karima, Karim).
indexes reluctance after Rania asks him to call her “Karim,” marking his hesitation with “euh” and two instances of “okay,” which he produces with rising intonation and a shoulder shrug.

I argue that Rania’s anomalous linguistic behavior was easily tolerated because the school staff who were familiar with her believed that her parents lacked the schooling to instruct her otherwise. There was relatively less tolerance though for Rania’s knack at creating friendships with boys, a behavior for which adults at school held her personally responsible and for which she was frequently dismissed from class. In other words, when orthodox girls spoke in project-like French it was often not analyzed as crossing at all but instead as a way of speaking to which they were continually exposed, living in Northern Marseille. This account dovetails with Amel’s comment that one must be understanding of young women who speak thus because “it’s something that dates from childhood” and hence requires much effort to change. The case of another girl in this class named Zineb provides further evidence to this effect. Zineb was a vivacious, stubby girl who was among the few female students at the private Muslim school who, during non-prayer hours, opted not to wear the ḥijāb. During an informal conversation while on the London Tube, vice-principal

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50 On our fieldtrip, for instance, Rania was placed in the room furthest from the boys’ room and in which two teachers were sleeping.
Hanan singled out Zineb as a young woman who speaks with “gouaille.” Not knowing this French word, I asked Hanan to explain further. “Gouaille means she is expressive and has a popular sense of humor. She gets it from her Egyptian side,” elaborated Hanan (4-16-13).51 Other meanings given for gouaille place it in the semantic vicinity of words like cockiness, cheek, and gall, all stereotypically related to masculinity. Here, again, a young woman’s “popular” speech is interpreted as a masculine form of behavior. Although Hanan does not fault Zineb for her speech, seeing its origins in the fourteen-year-old’s familial milieu, her designation of “popular” speech as manly and humorous serves nonetheless as an implicit reminder of the more graceful affect typifying pious Muslims in Marseille, and, with it, differences between social groups.

In the accounts of Rania and Zineb’s behavior above, others rationalized their project-like behavior as traits traceable to their environments and were thus able to find it humorous, if understandable. Below, I introduce two further examples that capacitate another version of events. My main point will be that, on occasion, young orthodox women strategically turn to the linguistic and behavioral repertoire of the project register to index certain qualities, such as

51 “Gouaille ça veut dire qu’elle est expressive est qu’elle a de l’humour populaire. Elle tire ça de son côté Egyptien.” (Hanan, 4-16-13).
rebelliousness, bravado, or even queerness, in their interactions with other orthodox female peers.

A first anecdote relates to a conversation I held with Amina and Miriam, the two female university students, as we were walking towards the Aix-en-Provence train station where we would catch the train back to Marseille. We were discussing my impending wedding, and in particular which shoes I might wear, when the following interaction took place (3-27-13).

Cécile: Yeah, I’m going to wear low heels. Not too high.
Amina: Me, on the day of my wedding, I’m going to wear sneakers!
Cécile: Ahahaah
Amina: Big fat sneakers! I’ve always dreamed of doing that. It’s…to mess around. I’ve always…
Cécile: But why not go barefoot if you want to have a laugh?
Amina: To grind my feet into the ground?
Cécile: ((laughing)) Sneakers…
Miriam: I had a girlfriend who did that. A converted girl, too. She had a wedding dre…
Well, her feet weren’t visible.
Cécile: That’s it! No one ever sees your shoes.
Miriam: When she came down the stairs, I saw her TNs! I swear, I was so shocked. It didn’t seem very…
Cécile: Where was that?
Miriam: It was here, in Marseille. I swear that, from the bottom of the stairs, it was super shocking. You know?
Cécile: Were people laughing?
Miriam: It was just me and my sister. But she [the bride] didn’t give a dam. She owned it! She said it would never work with heels on…
Amina: I think it’s too hard too. I would like some pretty ballerina flats for girls, like when we were little, the little black shoes that sparkled with the little laces...

Above, Miriam regales Amina and me with a story of how a converted Muslim “sister” came down a staircase in a wedding dress only to lift her train and expose a pair of Nike TN sneakers, a favorite brand of sneakers in the housing projects. The contrast upon which Miriam and Amina alight in this story is one between an image of the Muslim woman as modestly feminine and one of the project girl as headstrong and unfeminine. Both young women seem to mark their greater identification with the normative image of Muslim femininity. First, Miriam tells the story quickly and excitedly, as if it were a tale of epic proportions, and thus signals the unusualness of a Muslim person embracing project behavior. She also expresses hesitation at certain points in the transcript,

52 Cécile: Ouais, je mets des petits talons. Pas trop grand.
Amina: Moi, le jour de mon mariage je vais mettre des baskets!
Cécile: Ahahaah
Amina: Des grosses baskets [sic]! J’ai toujours rêvé de faire ça. C’est...pour rigoler. Toujours j’ai...
Cécile: Mais pourquoi ne pas être pieds nud si tu veux rigoler?
Amina: Pour m’écraser les pioles dans le sol?
Cécile: ((laughing)) Des baskets...
Miriam: J’ai une copine qui avait fait ça. Une convertie, en plus. Elle avait une robe de m’en fait, on voyait pas ses pieds.
Cécile: C’est ça! On voit jamais les chaussures.
Miriam: Quand elle a descendu les escaliers, j’ai vu des TNs! Je te jure, ça m’a trop choqué. Mais ça faisait pas..
Cécile: C’était ou ça?
Miriam: C’était ici, à Marseille. Je te jure qu’en bas des escaliers c’était hyper choquant. Tu vois?
Cécile: Les gens rigolaien
Miriam: Il y avait que moi et ma soeur. Mais elle [the bride] s’en foutait. Elle assumait! Elle disait ça va jamais marcher avec des talons...
Amina: Moi aussi je trouve que c’est trop dur. Moi j’aimerais bien les belles ballerines pour filles, comme quand on était petites, les petites chaussures noires qui brillaient avec les petits lacets...

(3-27-13).
swearing upon her dismay ("I was so shocked") and hinting at the deviance of the bride’s shoe choice ("It doesn’t seem very..."). Amina, likewise, wound up our exploration of this particular theme stating that she would prefer to wear “pretty little ballerina flats for girls.” Noteworthy in this interaction as well, however, are certain indications that Amina and Miriam find this transgressive behavior appealing. Amina, for instance, discloses initially that she has always dreamed of wearing “big fat sneakers” on her wedding day (though she later recants). Miriam, too, evaluates the bride in ways bespeaking admiration of her choice to wear sneakers, remarking with uncharacteristic profanity and considerable enthusiasm that the bride “owned” her decision and “didn’t give a damn.” Beyond her own use of profanity, Miriam’s shift to a project register footing in this part of the transcript is further supported by her affrication of the t’s in convertie and tu. In short, this transcript depicts how, for young orthodox women, crossing into behaviors enregistered as “project-like” represented an opportunity for them to index qualities like self-will and defiance.

The second anecdote I use to illustrate these young women’s tactical recourse to the project register concerns a female student at the university named Safia. Arriving at the start of university from her native Toulouse, Safia quickly integrated herself into the circle of orthodox Muslim female students I have been discussing, in which Amel, Miriam, Amina, and others participated.
Like them, she was studying to receive a bachelor’s degree in Arabic language and literature. Where Safia parted ways with her female friends was in her clothing tastes. Safia swore off the long skirts worn by her friends—“I will never wear a skirt”\(^\text{53}\)—and opted for monochromatic “joggings” (or sweatsuits) instead. She did not cover her hair either, which she wore parted down the middle and gathered in a low ponytail. When I asked Safia about her religious practice, she described it as a more recent development in her life. She grew up in a household where Islam was present “but really forgotten,”\(^\text{54}\) and it was only once at the university that she settled into a semblance of an Islamic routine, praying more consistently and cutting down on cigarettes, with notable help and motivation from her newfound orthodox girlfriends.

*Safia*: It’s true that here [at the university] I’m more surrounded by Muslim women.
*Cécile*: Here? And why? Do you also have French or non-Muslim friends or not really?
*Safia*: In Toulouse, lots!
*Cécile*: But not too many here?
*Safia*: Not here.
*Cécile*: And why?
*Safia*: Dunno, I wanted to settle down ((Safia laughing))
*Cécile*: To settle down? Were you less relaxed before?
*Safia*: Yeah! That’s it! That’s it! I actually like the fact they they [her girlfriends at the university] keep an eye on me, that they remind me of things. Do you know what I

\(^{53}\) “Je mettrais jamais des jupes” (Safia, 12.4.12).

\(^{54}\) “J’ai grandi dans l’Islam mais c’était vachement oublié quoi. Mon père il m’en parlait pas tout les jours. La prière on l’a appris toutes seules. Fin, de mon grandpère” (Safia, 12.4.12).
mean? “Stop smoking!” “Pray!” Because it’s true that sometimes I neglect my prayers. So, for lots of reasons.55

Safia was aware, and even seemed to enjoy the fact, that her friends considered her an unusual addition to their friend group. She played up her atypical clothing choices, offering for instance to “walk” (défiler) in an all-female Islamic fashion show that was being organized in Northern Marseille. Somewhat consternated by Safia’s suggestion, her friends played along so as not to offend her. When however Safia finally revealed her planned outfit to be a “tracksuit-and-sneakers” (survêts-baskets), all lapsed into relieved giggles and there was no further serious talk of her participation.

Quite interestingly, Safia was unconventional in her speech as well.

Although Safia had only spent two years in Marseille, she reported that many of her acquaintances found her speech to resemble that of a person from Marseille’s projects.

**Cécile:** And in terms of accents, do you think you have a Marseillais accent or not? I’m just asking, I don’t know.

Safia: I don’t know. No. Well people tell me that, but I don’t have that impression.

Cécile: Everyone tells you that you have a Marseillais accent?

Safia: C’est vrai qu’ici je suis plus entourée de musulmanes.

Cécile: Ici? Et pourquoi? T’as aussi des amis français ou non-musulmans ou pas trop?

Safia: À Toulouse, énormément!

Cécile: Mais pas trop ici?

Safia: Non ici.

Cécile: Et pourquoi?

Safia: Ch’ais pas, j’avais envie de me poser ((Safia laughing))

Cécile: De te poser? T’étais moins tranquille avant?

Safia: Ouais! C’est ça! C’est ça! J’aime bien le fait qu’elles me surveillent, qu’elles me fassent des rappels, en fait. Tu vois ce que je veux dire? “Fume pas! Prie!” Parce que c’est vrai que ça m’arrive de la délaisser. Fin, plein de choses. (12-4-12).
Safia: Eeeeveryone!
Cécile: How can that be? You told me that it’s been, what, two years since you got here?
Safia: Dunno.
Cécile: What do they tell you?
Safia: You seem like a girl from Marseille.
Cécile: And what do you think of the accent here?
Safia: Horrible ((Cécile laughing)). Vile. Listening to that accent is not pleasant in any way. It shatters your ears.56

Above, Safia’s negatively characterizes the accent of Northern Marseille, assuming a similar ideological position as her orthodox friends, and yet she admits to others’ perception of her as having just such an accent. Tellingly in this regard, there were several occasions on which I observed Safia deploying linguistic features associated with the register of Marseille’s Northern projects, seemingly to point to her non-normative gender and sexual identity.57 In the following conversation, for instance, Safia uses the quartiers register to index bravado and, seemingly, to suggest her queerness to her closest girlfriends.

56 Cécile: Et niveau accent, tu trouves que t’as un accent marseillais ou pas? je te demande, je sais pas
Safia: Je sais pas. Non. Mais on me le dit mais j’ai pas l’impression
Cécile: Tout le monde te dit que t’as un accent marseillais?
Safia: Touuuut le monde!
Cécile: Comment ça se fait? Tu m’as dit que ça fait, quoi, deux ans que t’es là?
Safia: Ch’ais pas
Cécile: Ils te disent quoi?
Safia: On dirait une fille de Marseille
Cécile: Et comment tu trouves l’accent ici?
Safia: Horrible ((Cécile laughing)). Immonde. Il y a aucun plaisir à entendre cet accent. Ça ruine les oreilles.

57 Although Safia was not “out” to any of her friends, based on her comments and my ongoing interactions with her, I have reason to believe she identifies as queer, if not gay. Given the stigmatization of such an orientation in the Muslim milieu of Marseille, Safia had good reason to be circumspect.
The conversation transcribed below took place while Safia, five of her orthodox friends, and I sat around a circular table outside the university cafeteria having lunch. In the interest of clarity, the sequence of conversational moves is the following. After a long silence, Safia declares that a friend of hers, Miriam, who is eating lunch at the table next to her, is “hers.” Safia then takes back her declaration of love to Miriam and pledges herself to Bushrah instead. This reminds Bushrah of a recent conversation she had with Safia. Safia had asked Bushrah whether she would understand her were she a man. Safia denies instigating that conversation, retorting that Bushrah was the first to raise the idea of Safia being the perfect mate for her, if only Safia had been a man. Safia then pulls out a cigarette and is rebuffed by Bushrah for smoking against her orders. I intervene and jokingly turn the conversation to a hypothetical scenario where Safia brings her future bride, played by Bushrah, home to meet her parents.

Transcript 7.3. “Miriam, You Are Mine”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(French Original)</th>
<th>(English Translation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miriam: ((giggling softly)) Je t’ai dit qu’elle me draguait tout à l’heure.</td>
<td>Miriam: ((giggling softly)) I told you that she was hitting on me earlier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Safia: Mais TOUT le temps [təŋ] je la drague [dsəgə], “tout le temps [təŋ].” Za’ama [zaʃma], j’ai des chances [ʃaʃ], tu sais? Za’ama [zaʃma]… ((laughs)) J’y crois [kʃa], tu [tu] vois? Je crois [kʃa] à “notre amour.” NON [naŋ], je suis avec Bushrah
Nour: Ah ((laughing)) T’as [ta] vu ce qu’elle raconte?
Bushrah: {Hier elle me disait}
Nour: {Non je ne sais pas}
Bushrah: Ouais, hier elle me disait, “Oui, si j’étais un homme est-ce que tu me comprendrais et tout?” Je pense à °notre amour.°
NON [nɑŋ], je suis avec Bushrah.
Nour: Ah ((laughing)) T’as [ta] vu ce qu’elle raconte?
Bushrah: {Yesterday she was saying to me}
Nour: {No I don’t know}
Bushrah: Yeah, yesterday she was saying to me, “Yes if I were a man would you understand me and all?” Now I’m thinking about that.
Safia: Wait, wait, wait, wait!
Bushrah: {You can’t act like a hypocrite when I’m not here to my face.}
Safia: {No, since…} ((laughing)). No, no, but listen!
Cécile: She’s not embarrassed. ((laughing))
Safia: Me and her one day we were in the caf and, I dunno why, she goes to me, “If you were—if you had been a man, za’ama, I would have been perfect.” Now I’m thinking about that. 
Safia: Attends [atəŋ], attends [atəŋ], attends [atəŋ]!
Bushrah: {Faut pas faire hypocrite quand je suis pas là-en face de moi.)
Safia: (Non, puisque…) ((laughing)) Non, non, mais écoute!
Cécile: Elle a pas honte. ((laughing))
Safia: Moi et elle, un jour on était dans le caf et, je sais pas pourquoi, elle me dit “Si t’étais, si t’avais été un homme, za’ama [zaʃma] je l’aurais été parfait.” Tu vois? Eh ben du coup je lui ai reposé la question, za’ama [zaʃma], pour voir si c’est resté ce sentiment…
Bushrah: ((harrumphs)) Mmmm…
Safia: Qu’elle a dit si j’avais été un homme est-ce que-tu comprends [kɔpʁəŋ]? ((Safia raises a cigarette to her lips))
Bushrah: ((chuckling)) Mais je t’ai toujours interdit ça.
Safia: Mais tu te rappelles, Cécile, tu [tʃu] m’as—
Bushrah: ((to Safia)) Mais je t’interdis ça. C’est bon!
Safia: Ah oui, il fallait-il faut que j’arrête de fumer. Mais dans tous les cas ça:s, j’ai pas de zizi, donc je peux continuer à fumer.
Cécile: ((unclear)) Et la dote c’est combien?
Bushrah: “Dans tout les cas je suis pas un homme donc je peux continuer à FUMER.” Hhhhh!
Miriam: Bushrah, c’est quoi la dote?
Cécile: “Ouais, c’est quoi la dote?
Safia: AH t-alors là, Cécile tu m’as manqué. ((laughing)) Je suis dans une cité et tu dis ça à
Safia: But ALL the time I hit on her, “all the time.” Za’ama, (“like” in Algerian) I’ve got a chance, you know? Za’ama ((laughs,)) I believe it, you see? I believe in “our love.” NO, I’m with Bushrah.
Nour: Ah ((laughing)), can you believe what she’s on about?
Bushrah: {Yesterday she was saying to me}
Nour: {No I don’t know}
Bushrah: Yeah, yesterday she was saying to me, “Yes if I were a man would you understand me and all?” Now I’m thinking about that.
Cécile: She’s not embarrassed. ((laughing))
Safia: Me and her one day we were in the caf and, I dunno why, she goes to me, “If you were—if you had been a man, za’ama, I would have been perfect.” You know? So then I just returned the question, za’ama, to see if the sentiment had stayed…
Bushrah: ((harrumphs)) Mmmm…
Safia: What she said about had I been a man would-you see? ((Safia raises a cigarette to her lips))
Bushrah: ((chuckling)) But I’ve told you not to do that ((unclear))
Safia: But you remember Cécile you had—
Bushrah: ((to Safia)) But I don’t want you doing that. Enough!
Safia: Ah yes I was supposed to—I’m supposed to stop smoking. But I don’t have a dick in any case, so I can keep smoking.
Cécile: ((unclear)) And how much is the bride price?
Bushrah: “I’m not a man in any case, so I can keep on SMOKING.” Hhhhh!
Miriam: Bushrah, what’s the bride price?
Cécile: “Yeah,” what’s the bride price?
Safia: AH y, well now, Cécile I missed you ((laughing)). I’m in a housing project and you say that to your dad. You say that “I”… You say, you’re a girl, and you say. “I’ve ((unclear)), I’m Moroccan” ((conversation continues about how Safia will run away)).
There are, in a sense, two texts coming together in this transcript. One is a denotational text in which Safia and her friends speak in hypothetical or joking terms about love between Safia and her girlfriends. The second is an interactional text where Safia, by crossing into the speech register associated with the toughness of Marseille’s projects, is able to take on a masculine or “husbandly” gender role. As flagged in the bolded IPA renditions in the transcript, Safia uses several features and elements of project speech throughout this conversation. She affricates her ‘t’s’ and ‘d’s,’ makes liberal use of the velar nasal, and devoices the French uvular fricative /ʁ/. Significant, too, are her uses of the Algerian discourse marker “za’ama” [zaˈma], the legendary Marseillais.
curse word “putain” [putɛ̃] (or “fuck”), and language considered blasphemous (zizi/“dick,” je vais me la faire celle-là/I’m going to get her, that gal). Her language in this segment is noticeably different from that of her friends. Nour uses the uncontracted, academic form “je ne sais pas” (I do not know). Bushrah translates Safia’s comment about not having “a dick” (un zizi) by euphemistically stating that Safia is “not a man” (pas un homme). Safia’s friends, in turn, speak French more standardly, without stop affrication, nasal velarization, or uvular devoicing. This contrast in register between Safia and her lunchmates parallels an opposition in social indexicality as well. Whereas Safia asserts herself as masculine by using a project register stereotypically indexical of brawn, her friends assume a footing of Islamic propriety according to an ideology linking standard speech and practicing Muslims. Safia’s assertion of masculinity is reinforced, too, by a role playing sequence in which she engages with Bushrah. After some back-and-forth with her friends, Safia pulls out a smoke, as if to take a break from all the tiresome arguing. Bushrah promptly reminds Safia of their agreement that Safia should not smoke. Safia concedes Bushrah’s point, but then recants and vows to continue smoking. Here, Bushrah and Safia fall easily into the roles of the nagging wife and the ornery husband. Even after Safia suddenly awakens to the husbandly role she has been playing, and moves to reject her
duties (to stop smoking) by claiming to lack male genitalia, she continues to enact the husband-and-wife script by ultimately rejecting Bushrah’s advice.

This example with Safia showed how, despite not being from Marseille, she was able to draw upon her knowledge of the way in which her orthodox female friends normatively mapped gender to the language options present in Marseille in order to create a gendered trope of queerness. As a member of this friend group, Safia was aware that when Muslim females crossed into project-affiliated apparel and speech, this was interpreted as masculine or impious behavior. She nevertheless consistently crossed into behavior connected to Marseille’s projects, a tendency that I have argued served to position her as gender-queer. Due to the close connection between gender and sexuality for those socialized in an Islamic cultural milieu, it may be that it was enough for Safia to create a disjuncture between her sex and her gender image in order to convey information about her sexuality as well. In Salima Amari’s (2013) groundbreaking study with Franco-Maghrebi lesbians living in Paris, she notes that the Maghrebi relatives of these young women infer their sexuality from gender roles the women do or do not uphold. When women do not hold to certain Arabo-Islamic ideals of femininity, refusing to marry or wear their hair long, for example, the tie that scripture has naturalized between gender and sexuality is sundered. In other words, her lesbian interlocutors’ silence on the
gendered tasks they are expected to perform as women marks a tacit “coming out” to their families and friends. In sum, through various ethnographic examples this section has captured how orthodox Muslim youth both reinforce and trope upon ideologies marrying options on Marseille’s linguistic palette to gradations of piety and gender.

V. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has examined, in a first instance, the ideologies that variously positioned youth from Muslim households in Northern Marseille have created about languages in their environment, whether standard languages or project youth registers like Castellanois. My objective, in a second instance, has been to scrutinize why, when youth crossed into the registers thought to be typical of other social groups, peers often foregrounded these speakers’ gender or sexuality as non-normative.

In the first series of ethnographic examples, I discussed how fourteen-year-old adolescents from two northern projects, who were students in an Arabic class in a public secondary school, negotiated their identities by claiming particular speech and clothing styles. In their talk about themselves and others, the students from Class 3B drew dividing lines between an in-group
“project” (quartiers) register and an out-group register, paillot, which they associated with ethnically French, affluent individuals from outside the projects. Youth pitted their own register, indexed through Castellanois speech and track suits-and-sneakers clothing style, to that of the paillots, indexed in turn through Standard French and clothing styles such as swag. Interestingly, when describing what it meant to be from the projects the young men and women in Class 3B did not flag gender as something needing to be especially addressed. Both male and female youth saw toughness as their disposition and sought equally to maintain it through the aforementioned behaviors. Thus, it can be said that, in ideologizing their own project mentality, youth erased gender differences within their ranks. Gal and Irvine (2000) define erasure as when “facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away” (p. 38).

Significantly, it was when individuals from Class 3B contravened the norms of project behavior, that differences in how young women and young men were expected to act returned with the most clarity. One of these salient norms with respect to language was that it was acceptable for youth from the projects to cross into Standard French when an important gain or loss might be made in doing so. Hence, I reported on how, when youth were faced with authority figures at school or potential employers, they relied on the softness
stereotypically associated with Standard French to index deference to such people. Another norm held that defaulting to Standard French, without regards to context and interlocutor, was anomalous behavior. Thus, peers negatively judged the young man in the bakery who addressed others from La Castellane in paillot, as well as Sheyreen and Fouhda’s ongoing exploration of paillot speech and swag apparel. Transgressions in project norms of this sort consistently led to young men being called “fags” and young women “sluts,” a fact warranting my argument that sexual tropes have come to represent normalized ways for youth to construe such behavior. I contend, further, that if youth have normalized such tropes—involving the sexualization of their peers’ anomalous use of semiotic resources, and with consequences differing by gender—this is because these slurs serve as an effective means of policing boundaries between social groups. When youth deploy such labels as “fag” or “slut,” they appeal to cultural coordinates with which youth are familiar due to their socialization into Islamic values. Hence these slurs act as potent warning signs, effectively likening youth’s anomalous behavior to culturally unacceptable sexual modes of existence. Moreover, that youth react in such trenchant ways to their peers’ displays of earnest affiliation with other social groups would appear to indicate the importance, in this milieu of economic duress, of showing solidarity to one another through semiotically tangible means.
A similar dynamic, of the ideological erasure but interactional foregrounding of gender and sexuality, was also evident among youth from Northern Marseille’s projects that identified as orthodox or practicing Muslims. Attributing qualities like elegance and piety to the use of Standard French and MSA, Muslims in Marseille encouraged young women as well as men to embody these qualities through this kind of speech. For youth who grew up in the projects to the north of the city, this often meant working to actively rid their speech of phonological and lexical indicators of having been socialized in the projects. I compared instances where young men and young women exhibited project-like behavior and demonstrated that, whereas young men were rebuked for lacking in piety, young women were typically positioned as overly masculine, in addition to lacking in piety. Although within the orthodox community such female behaviors were rationalized as deriving from these young women’s surroundings, and hence humorously tolerated, I also offered a different account whereby this behavior might be considered purposeful crossing. Leaning on the case of Safia, I proposed that occasionally young women crossed into project-like speech and apparel in order to index, not only the masculinity stereotypically attributed to this register, but also stances of audacity or, possibly, queerness.

When the case of youth from Northern Marseille is compared to the ethnographic cases I reviewed initially, one question that arises is whether
sufficient evidence exists to support the generalization that, in minority contexts, in-group languages tend to carry a stereotypic indexicality of toughness and masculinity, while standard languages are routinely evaluated as soft and feminine. Although such a hypothesis may hold true for certain contexts, it remains important to dwell on the specificities of local categories and how they are invoked in interaction. For one, the orthodox youth I described in my latter examples represent a clear illustration of minority youth negatively evaluating what some might imagine was their in-group register and positively regarding national standard languages. Specifically, in an instance of register reanalysis (Agha, 2007a), they reframed the stereotypical values that Standard French is widely recognized to have, like softness or educational sophistication, as the hallmarks of Islamic piety. It follows that labels like “in-group” and “out-group” must be used in a highly emic way if they are to be useful. A second observation is that labels for behavior may resemble one another across ethnographic contexts and yet comport with differing socioindexical values. In Denmark, for instance, Madsen (2013, 2015) describes a “street” register used among youth of diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, as well as their identification of an “integrated” Standard Danish register. The street register was similar in some respects to Castellanois, such as in its devoicing of Danish’s uvular “r” (/ʁ/) and in its ability to index youthful toughness and “panethnic
minority street culture” (Madsen, 2013, p. 133). In other respects, the Copenhagen street register differed notably from project culture in Marseille. Madsen (2015) describes heavy make-up and large jewelry, for instance, as part of the Copenhagen street register, both behaviors which young women from Class 3B would have labeled *paillot* and looked down upon as being linked to the sexual easiness of the mainstream French population. Likewise, at the level of indexicality, Copenhagen street register is associated with masculinity and lack of academic skills. Marseille’s project register, by contrast, was a resource to which young men and young women alike turned to index toughness. By the same token, the youth in Class 3B ascribed values like smarts, creativity, and resourcefulness to being from the *quartiers*; it was being *paillot* and dressing *swag* that indexed vacuousness.

Broader implications of these findings for sociolinguistics are that, as mentioned previously in regards to Ochs’ (1983) work, language does not necessarily index gender in a one-to-one manner. Images of male and female gender are tied up with other axes of belonging, like ethnoracial group, religion, and class, *inter alia*, and complex semiotic processes may result in either the erasure or the highlighting of sex and gender, depending on the ideologies people hold and the resources upon which they draw. As for the concept of intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1992), the evidence adduced in this chapter
helped illustrate how people are not simply *situated*, in a passive sense, at the crossroads of multiple hierarchies: economic, racial, class, and gender marginalities. Rather, with the aid of theoretical tools like register, ideology, performance, and indexicality, inroads may be made towards understanding people’s responsibility in creating ideologies. The youth in this chapter at times aligned with ideological figures, other times found themselves at their mercy, and in yet other instances were able to trope upon them, generating unexpected permutations. It is within such a space of indeterminacy that we can imagine young men and women from Northern Marseille tinkering with the social meanings of labels like *quartiers*, *paillots*, *swag*, and *ṣaḥābiyah*, and opening up novel ways for youth from the projects to exist.
VIII. Conclusion

This dissertation demonstrates that diasporic youth from Marseille are, culturally speaking, not beyond the pale of the French Republic. Due to prevailing social dynamics, however, youth from Muslim households, and particularly youth who practice Islamic orthodoxy in Marseille, appear not to garner the wider public’s recognition as cultural citizens of France. Will youth have to take it upon themselves, either to change or to employ different strategies to increase their national legibility? Or must the French mainstream find ways to be more attentive to the historically contingent and emic ways in which such diasporic youth perform variations on Frenchness? Only French society can determine the answers to these questions.

In the meanwhile, this dissertation has challenged the notion, which I recently read in the news was the basis for many Western countries’ counter-terrorism and surveillance efforts (Malik, 3.30.16), that to qualify as a “pre-radical” Muslim one need simply belong to a Muslim community. Being Muslim, as an examination of fewer than a hundred youth from Muslim households in Marseille has clarified, takes countless guises, many of which recontextualize what are often thought of as more orthodox Islamic traditions. Certainly all of
these behavioral takes on the so-called Muslim category, when considered together, defy attempts at homogenization.

The findings presented here also point to further directions for possible research. I plan, in the future, to travel to locations like Algiers and Doha, where some of my female orthodox research participants have resettled, in order to investigate the challenges posed by their relocation. Foreseeable among these challenges, for example, is the mismatch between their French version of Islamic piety and the host country’s practice of Islam, something these young women have already indicated in their more recent conversations with me. How do these young women’s life paths unfold as time moves on: what careers do they pursue, what links do they maintain with France, and how do their convictions potentially change as they build families? These are some of the questions I plan to raise in the near future.
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