Assimilation or exclusion?
Portrayals of ethnic minority characters
in French popular cinema

Abstract
France’s Universalist and Republican traditions state that French citizen must relegate their individual, cultural and ethnic affiliations to the private sphere, and publically embrace French citizenship as their sole cultural identity. This definition of being French is not easily embraced by all however, as the country’s history of immigration has led its population to include individuals from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Have the French found a way to reconcile French Universalism with a culturally diverse population? Despite the country’s history of trying to integrate new populations through a process of assimilation, the rise of France’s extreme right party, the Front National, illustrates the rising anti-immigration discourse present in the nation. Through popular images of ethnicity in French cinema, we aim to examine which individuals are represented as not conforming to national moral values, and the possible reasons behind such portrayals. Our quantitative and qualitative analysis of 28 French movies from the mid-1990s and the 2010s suggests that particular groups such as blacks, nonwhite males, and Arabo-Muslim characters are portrayed as not belonging to the nation, although these depictions may be in the process of shifting to foreigners as a whole. Furthermore, French popular movies portray individuals failing to assimilate as refusing to do so, instead of acknowledging the cultural, social and economic obstacles of this process.

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Introduction

The large number of immigrants in France has challenged ideas about belonging and nationhood within the country. The nation’s tradition of Universalism, which focuses on Frenchness as the single publically recognized cultural and ethnic identity, must be reconciled with the reality of an increasingly diverse population. In 2005, a series of race riots erupted all over the country, raising awareness about tense ethnic and racial relations within French society. In conjunction, France’s extreme right party, the *Front National*, obtained 20% of votes in the 2012 presidential election. Such events denote the French struggle to find a place for immigrants or children of immigrants in commonly held ideas of citizenship and nationhood. On the one hand, France has historically been a country of immigration, and many of its policies aim to integrate new citizens through a process of assimilation. On the other hand, the *Front National*’s strong anti-immigration discourse has forced politicians from all parties to adopt more exclusionary stances on immigration. The tensions between these perspectives on immigration and integration highlight two particular groups susceptible of being targeted as not belonging to the French nation: immigrants, and individuals of immigrant origin. Have French understandings of citizenship led to a complete rejection of all immigrants, or do the country’s ethnic tensions stem from a perceived lack of assimilation of certain groups?

While the French government prevents the collection of racial and ethnic statistics, popular culture, notably through the French cinema, can be revealing of common understandings of ethnicity and identity within the nation. Indeed, a small number of large corporate firms compose the French cinema industry, and the French government subsidizes a majority of projects in the field. This dual influence of for-profit companies and the state may thus lead to messages not only aiming to satisfy the French public, but also to convey particular understandings of French nationhood. In examining the ways in which characters are portrayed
with regards to citizenship and ethnicity, one can come to identify trends in the representations of particular immigrant and racial groups in France. By studying quantitatively and qualitatively how foreigners as a whole and particular ethnic groups are represented, we hope to understand the implications of these portrayals and what they can reveal about ethnic relations in France.

Through our analyses, we find that there is no difference between representations of foreigners and French characters. Moreover, it appears that particular ethnic groups, such as blacks, nonwhite males, and Arabo-Muslim characters have more negative portrayals than others, thus being portrayed as not conforming to French national values. We also find that these negative representations have shifted from the mid 1990s to 2010s, with foreigners as a whole becoming negatively portrayed in comparison to French characters, while the depiction of the aforementioned ethnic groups has improved. Finally, through our qualitative analysis, we find that characters being portrayed negatively are also represented as explicitly refusing to assimilate, thus ignoring the social, cultural and economic obstacles to the integration of foreigners in French society.
**Literature Review**

**Universalism and French identity**

French ideas of secularism are deeply embedded within Universalist and Republican thought. They were founded on principles of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, as illustrated by the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789, stating that all individuals will be respected without distinction of origin, race or religion (Jennings, 2000). The French state views its citizens solely as members of the French nation before the law, and consequently refuses to officially recognize any other groups by treating them differently on the basis of race, origin or religion (Jennings, 2000). This lack of official recognition of any cultural group and the enforcement of secularism in France means that, in the public sphere, all individuals are expected to behave as citizens with the interest of the French nation at heart, regardless of their cultural affiliations. In the private sphere, citizens are free to embrace any religious or cultural traditions, but in the public sphere they must relinquish these affiliations in favor of French civic values (Jennings, 2000). The French national census, unlike that of many other Western developed countries, does not include any questions about race or religion (Blum and Guérin, 2008). Such a colorblind approach to race relations reveals how the Universalist tradition permeates many aspects of life in France. While this perspective may indeed prevent the reification of race in French society, it also prevents individuals from realizing the ways in which certain forms of ethnic discrimination are present in France (Jugé and Perez, 2006; Amiraux and Simon, 2006).
Coming to terms with an increasingly diverse population

Figure 1. Distribution of immigrants by country of birth, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries of the EU</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries of Europe</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries of Africa</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries of Asia</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America, Oceania</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Insee, recensement 2009, exploitation principale.

Because of its colonial past, it has been difficult for France to limit immigration from its former colonies. After Algeria’s independence in 1962, Algerians were still considered French citizens and were allowed to move freely between both countries, leading to large levels of Algerian immigration in France (Hollifield, 2004). From 1968 and 1973, Morocco and Tunisia were also major sending countries. Individuals from former colonies benefitted from a quasi-citizen status, making it difficult for the French state to control immigration from these countries. From 1994 to 2008, the annual number of Maghrebian immigrants more than doubled in France, illustrating the increasing flow of immigrants from the former French colonies of Algeria,
Morocco and Tunisia (INED, 2008). In 2009, 37.7% of immigrants in France were from Europe, with a majority from Portugal, and 42.7% were from Africa, primarily Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Figure 1). Immigrants constituted 8.4% of the French population (INSEE, 2012). With the permanent settlement of North African Muslims after the independence of France’s former colonies, the nation has had to adapt to an increasingly ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse population, thus challenging French identity and the country’s refusal to incorporate multiculturalism in ideas of nationhood.

**National policies of assimilation**

Classic assimilationist theory states that, after immigrants move to a new country, they will, over generations, become more and more similar to the national majority, thus becoming less marginalized as they come to conform to the receiving country’s understandings of national identity (Safi, 2008). As Safi (2008) states, “behind this vision lies the hypothesis that the host society is characterized by a unified core that could be qualified as ‘non-ethnic’ or ‘average.’” (5). While this “average” national identity does in fact have implicit ethnic connotations, the French view the process of assimilation as relegating all personal cultural affiliations to the private sphere. For instance, in a 1997 national study, more than 70 percent of respondents said that immigrants who move to France should “modify their religion to adapt to French society” (Gran and Hein, 1997, p. 373). To facilitate this transition, the French government has historically instituted many policies and mechanisms to facilitate assimilation, through the church, the army, the school and its national curriculum, and citizenship policies (Gran and Hein, 1997).

An instrumental concept for the assimilation of immigrants in France, the idea of laïcité requires the national public sphere to be secular and without cultural affiliations. Jeremy
Jennings (2000) defines this term as a doctrine postulating “the existence of a secular ethic, grounded in science and philosophy, that would act not only as a civil religion and social bond but also the means of educating the free and tolerant citizens required by the new democratic order” (578). Consequently, the French public sphere reflects everyone’s belonging to the French nation rather than individual cultural affiliations. A prime example of the French focus on secularism was the *Foulard* affair of 1989, during which three girls wore headscarves at school, creating a national controversy about *laïcité* in France (Jennings, 2000). The French public interpreted this event as the proof of the Islamic fundamentalist threat to French cultural nationalism, but also viewed it as an open challenge to French Universalist ideals and the principles of the Republic’s secular educational system. Later laws illustrate France’s refusal of a multicultural model and its dedication to Universalism. In 2004, the government banned conspicuous religious symbols such as headscarves, large crosses Sikh turbans and Jewish yarmulkes in public schools (Leane, 2011). Accordingly, to instill a spirit of democracy in its citizens, France’s educational system and public discourse must be secular, so as to focus on the commonalities of French citizens rather than their differences (Laborde, 2001).

With the secularity of the public sphere, the French view individuals challenging the principle of *laïcité* as refusing to put their status as a member of the French nation before their personal affiliations. As a result, France’s refusal of religious, cultural and ethnic representations in the public sphere other than French citizens excludes groups whose identities are rooted in the public expression of their cultural affiliations. Indeed, for Muslim women, wearing the headscarf is an essential element of their religion, family values, and presentation to society (Wing and Smith, 2006). The French assimilationist rarely acknowledges the difficulty of integrating into French society. In a 2013 French study, 55% of respondents agreed that foreigners living in France do not make enough efforts to integrate themselves in France. 55% of respondents also
agreed that integration in France is an easy process for foreigners (Ipsos, 2013). As a consequence, we suspect that France’s perspective of Universalism marginalizes specific ethnic groups with different cultural standards, and blames these groups for refusing to assimilate, rather than acknowledging the structural difficulties of this process.

*A Growing anti-Immigration sentiment*

Despite many immigration policies focusing on the integration of new populations, France began to experience economic difficulties at the same time as immigrant workers settled permanently into the country in the 1970s. A rise in xenophobic nationalism prompted more restrictive immigration policies (Hollifield, 2004). The rise of the *Front National*, France’s extreme right anti-immigration party, highlights the political and popular exclusion of immigrants from the nation. In 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the party, made it to the second round of presidential elections. Finally, in the last presidential elections in 2012, his daughter Marine Le Pen obtained approximately 19% of votes during the first round, a historical record for the party. With an emphasis on the supposed economic burden placed on the French nation by immigrants, the *Front National* has succeeded in making immigration one of the key contemporary political issues in the country. In a survey of the French population from January 2013, 70% of respondents agreed with the idea that there are too many foreigners in France, compared to 49% of respondents in 1974 (IPSOS, 2013; Lamy, Charbit, Girard, 1974, p.1022). With this blaming of all foreigners in France as a source of economic but also cultural malaise, it is possible that foreigners as a general ethnic category have come to be perceived as not belonging to the French nation.
Definition of ethnicity

In our analysis, we use a definition of ethnicity that includes individuals’ diverse affiliations connecting them to a broader group or community. We identify the primary components of ethnicity as regional origin, language, religion and descent group. Ethnicity allows individuals to define themselves in comparison and contrast to other individuals, by belonging to a group as well as distinguishing themselves from others. In this sense, ethnicity can be a uniting force, but also a source of conflict. The Universalist tradition attempts to circumvent the latter by uniting the nation under a common French identity, relegating all ethnic affiliations except for Frenchness to the private, individual level. In doing so, the traditional French view of citizenship strongly resists the irruption of personal cultural values and affiliations into the public sphere, privileging what is considered to be a “non-ethnic” national French identity (Safi, 2008, p.5). This implies that French identity is not an ethnicity, rather than recognizing that it is a particular ethnic affiliation. Indeed, powerful historical influences make French national identity imbued with notions of being a white, Catholic (in an often implied non-practicing way), and French-speaking individual (Wing and Smith, 2006). Not only do the average French citizens have particular cultural affiliations, they also use these facets of identity to distinguish themselves from others, as exemplified by the Front National’s anti-immigration discourse stating that foreigners cannot assimilate into French culture. We can therefore find the previous dimensions of ethnicity even within the deceptively simple definition of French national identity. In defining ethnicity in these terms, we aim to identify which dimensions are problematic in the French context.
Morality and ethnic stereotyping in the French nation

The French cite issues of criminality, incivility and irresponsibility to justify their perception of immigrants or certain ethnic groups as problematic for the nation. Some French citizens resent immigrant families’ access to the country’s important welfare system as they believe foreigners abuse the system, thus considering them irresponsible and refusing to take part in the French economy (Lamont, 2000). In addition, the 2005 riots and their violence further reinforced the stereotype of young adults from the banlieue as uncivil and aggressive (BBC News, 2005). The French view resistance to assimilation as intolerable, especially with the vision of France as country welcoming refugees and guaranteeing them freedom and human rights. These stereotypes towards immigrants are not new, and once related to ethnic groups which have now assimilated into French society. Indeed, before World War I, Belgians, Italians and Germans were perceived to be irresponsible, dirty, and dangerous (Ponty, 2009, p.9). With the arrival of new populations from North Africa after World War II, the French applied similar stereotypes to this new part of the population. In a study from 1974 about attitudes towards immigrants in France, of the 24% of respondents who declared that foreigners were less well-behaved than the French, 40% placed the blame on the “delinquency and morality” of foreigners living in France (Lamy, Charbit, Girard, 1974, p.1027). In a 1991 French study, 56% of respondents agreed that the presence of immigrants in France contributed to rise in criminality, and 64% agreed that foreigners in France benefitted too much from welfare programs (Ipsos).

We thus identified five main dimensions of French ethnic stereotypes described as relating to morality. Popular stereotypes of ethnic minorities in France portray them as lazy, aggressive, irresponsible, and lacking civility. We thus chose variables relating to aggressiveness, rudeness, egocentrism and lack of work ethic to capture what we believed to be
the most salient stereotypes from Lamont’s research (2000). In addition, because of the recent controversy of France’s ban of the burqa and justifications that this was a way to protect women’s rights, we chose to include sexism as another stereotype measuring an individual’s commitment to egalitarian values.

Complete rejection of immigrants, or marginalization of certain groups?

As a result of France’s strong Republican tradition and the large numbers of immigrants in the country, the boundary between “us”, French citizens, and “them”, the others, has become harder to identify. Are certain ethnic groups, perhaps of immigrant origin, despite France’s integration policies, the ones perceived as not having assimilated? Or have all immigrants come to be seen as not belonging because of ingrained cultural differences preventing complete assimilation into French society? By comparing overall portrayals of immigrants to specific dimensions of ethnicity, we aim to understand how these two contrasting perspectives of exclusion and assimilation affect how individuals from particular ethnic backgrounds are perceived within the nation. The findings of this study indeed support the hypothesis that, while national negative perceptions may be in the process of shifting towards foreigners as a whole, particular ethnic groups are shown as not belonging to the French nation, notably blacks, nonwhite males, and Arabo-Muslim characters. Furthermore, we shall see through our qualitative analysis that not only are these groups depicted as not conforming to national moral values, they are seen as explicitly refusing to do so rather than being unable to because of social, cultural, and economic obstacles.
Culture Theory

For the purposes of this study, we will focus on the study of the production of culture and content analysis in the context of France. The empirical analysis of the depiction of ethnic minority characters will allow us to interpret the motivations and ideological objectives of these representations. The question then, is about the nature of this message with regards to race and ethnicity, and if it simply reflects current French ideas about nationhood and identity or also attempts to create or prevent change in a particular way. While French culture is not restricted to the movie industry, we chose to only study films because of their place in French society. Indeed, France imports a majority of its media, including TV programs, books, music and movies. Nevertheless, compared to other cultural objects, French-produced movies usually fare well in terms of ticket sales, along with American and British films. Consequently, they reach a lot of people while being more relevant to French issues and ideas than foreign films. While the music industry could also be viewed in this way, music with ethnic and racial connotations could be seen as more of a subculture than popular culture, while top ticket-selling movies by definition are viewed by the majority.

It thus is important to understand what it means when particular representations are included within cultural objects, and grasp the intention behind their production. Are all popular cultural objects reiterating contemporary ideology, or can they also lead to social change in some way? Movements like the Avant-Garde movement, or, in the case of ethnic relations in France, Beur cinema, seem to aim to change mentalities. It also could be argued, however, that these are more isolated or specific movements that are not directly a part of popular culture.

Although the culture industry can be seen as promoting change and introducing new ideas to the masses, some also view it as a way for the elite to maintain the status quo and
prevent it from being questioned. Certain scholars view popular culture as an industry controlled by the elite and contributing to the masses’ acceptance of their situation, by providing the illusion of meaningful lives within a capitalistic society and using stories about characters’ rise up the socio-economic ladder to give the illusion of upward mobility (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002). By studying the production of culture and the influences behind the creation of a particular cultural object, one can observe the societal ideas and ideologies transmitted implicitly or explicitly in the object’s message. Cultural objects can be thought to reflect change within society, but not to create it (Kellner, 1990). Popular culture is then simply an expression of ideological change, but never precedes it, resulting in a cultural lag. Moreover, the messages contained in popular culture, despite representing contemporary societal issues and conflict, are always within the spectrum of accepted societal ideas, and exclude any radical ideas susceptible of occasioning true social change. We thus can expect popular French movies to include representations of ethnic minority characters denoting their increasing presence in French society, but we suspect that these will be depicted in ways aiming to promote France’s widely accepted perspective of Universalism and ignoring the true ethnic tensions in the country, rather than encouraging true cultural diversity.

**Production of Culture**

The individuals creating cultural objects, the means through which they do so, and their goal in creating such products all have a great influence on their content. The question of who owns the media and how ownership is exerted is crucial in the study of media objects. It is also important to see who pays for the media product. Most often, consumers but also private investors or subsidy-givers are the ones funding cultural objects. Ownership may influence content, and it is necessary to examine the system of checks and balances involved in the
production of culture. Each source of media has an economic interest and thus will tend to produce products helping this goal (McQuail, 1994). As we shall, see French films are primarily financed by large corporate production companies, but also by the French government, and such sources of funding may affect the type of content that is produced.

Theories of gatekeeping state that certain cultural objects will be selected by media organizations over others, either for organizational or ideological reasons (McQuail, 1994). Some organizations select based on perceptions of the audience’s taste and what will be successful, others choose their content for ideological reasons to try to promote a particular point of view. In the context of France, we can thus expect a large number of popular cultural products to include references to the largely subscribed to ideals of Universalism, in order to appeal to the masses while reinforcing the status quo.

The French approach culture as an imperative part of society, leading to great social regulation, and an aim to preserve French national identity and patrimony. The Centre National du Cinéma et de l’image animée (CNC) is a governmental agency that tries to promote French films abroad, establishes a system of professional certification to regulate labor market, subsidizes research on new technology and serves as a support fund for French films, most of which are subsidized by the agency (Scott, 2000). It is mainly funded by an 11% tax on all movie tickets sold in France. Since many of these films are American, this generates revenue without impacting French movies too strongly. In 2000, subsidies and policy driven investments accounted for 60% of all capital in French film industry. As a result, although an important number of American cultural products are imported, government subsidies allow French cultural objects to count as a large part of the nation’s cultural scene. The government’s involvement in the French popular culture as well as the national context in which it is created thus leads to cultural products that could be expected to reflect official and mainstream views of the nation.
A small number of large companies are primarily responsible for most of the most popular French movies being released every year. Three major corporate groups as well as a number of smaller independent businesses compose the industry (Scott, 2000). There is a very temporary nature of the work in the industry, and a specific unemployment scheme allowing workers to receive benefits when they are in between jobs protects most individuals in the field. The three major corporate groups largely dominate distribution.

The French Cinema industry, unlike that of the United States, is thus composed not only of a small number of large corporate firms, but also heavily subsidized by the state. The CNC insures that French movies have the funding necessary to still be present on France’s popular culture scene. We have also seen that popular culture can be expected to reflect common views and understandings within a nation, but in a way that promotes the status quo and presents it as natural, hypothetically leading to a reproduction of such inequalities. For this reason, we expect that messages found in popular French movies about ethnicity and citizenship to reflect official but also mainstream understandings of ethnicity and associated meanings. By examining the portrayal of characters in these movies with regards to ethnicity, we aim to identify the particular ethnic traits and affiliations that lead characters to be represented negatively. The tension between assimilationist and anti-immigration French policies leads us to ask ourselves whether all immigrants are viewed as problematic because of their not conforming to French identity, or if specific groups which may have more difficulties in fitting in to particular aspect of French identity may be targeted more than others. Through our analysis of 28 French movies from the 1990s and the 2010s, we find that negative character representations mainly target specific ethnic groups, notably blacks, nonwhite males, and Arabo-Muslim characters. This, however, may be in the process of changing, as our analysis over time reveals that the portrayal of these specific
groups has improved, while the portrayal of foreigners compared to French characters has become comparatively more negative.

**Methodology**

**Sampling**

For our sample, we selected the first seven top box-office French movies, meaning the movies listing France as one of their countries of production that sold the most movie theater tickets in France, for the years 1995, 1996, 2010 and 2011. Kassovitz’s extremely influential movie *La Haine* having been released in 1995, we aimed to compare this time period, when French racial and ethnic issues started appearing in mass media, to contemporary representations of ethnicity in popular culture. A sample size of seven movies per year was selected in order to obtain a sample large enough to perform analyses while taking the time frame of this study into account. We thus obtained a total of 28 movies, from which we selected our sample of characters. Within these movies, we selected every character as a part of our sample, provided they had a speaking role or were a meaningful part of the film, through explicit interaction with the main characters for example. After coding, a total of 1089 characters constituted our sample.

**Coding**

As a coding scheme for characters within our sample, we first designed a character codebook which included 48 variables. We conducted a trial run of this coding scheme in order
to examine its validity and reliability. The two movies on which this scheme was tested were *OSS 117: Le Caire Nid d’Espions* (2006), and *La Journée de la Jupe* (2008). We selected *OSS 117* because of its content: as a French parody of James Bond movies, we expected that the movie would not include many references to ethnic and racial issues in France, and that it would also include a large number of characters. We selected *La Journée de la Jupe* because, as a movie about a high school teacher in a troubled neighborhood dealing with issues of ethnicity, religion, and civil unrest, we expected the plot to include many references to France’s ethnic climate, as well as characters of diverse backgrounds that would correspond to the focus of our study.

After this trial run, we made a number of modifications to the coding scheme. A response category of “Other – specify” was added to a majority of our variables, in order to insure the inclusion of all depicted aspects of our variables, even when these did not fit in our response categories. A variable relating to character’s moral orientation was added, with three possible values: good, neutral and bad. We included a race variable, intentionally including broad categories of race applicable to French understandings of race. Despite first concerns about the validity of such a measure in a French context, we decided to include this variable as a way to observe whether these classifications did in fact lead to particular trends. Finally, as previously described, we included five stereotypical traits relating to common perceptions of immigrants in France (Lamont, 2000).

For our complete list of the new coding scheme and how we coded these variables, refer to the Appendix. For most of our variables, we included specific values before coding, along with an “Other- Specify” category in case we found other categories during the coding process.
We also incorporated an “Unable to determine” category in case the information was not included in the movie or difficult to determine by the coder.

**Independent Variables**

For our analysis, we chose to use three particular dimensions of ethnicity to examine whether certain trends emerged among characters on the basis of these characteristics. These dimensions are race, nationality and religion. We hypothesized that, based on France’s definition of citizenship and its refusal to include obvious cultural affiliations in the public sphere, these types of ethnic affiliations, which arguably are the most visible and most likely to be clearly depicted in movies, would be the guiding factors in portrayals of ethnicity and would best help us understand the movies’ stances on ethnic differences.

Because of France’s refusal to officially acknowledge race, the use of this particular variable could be seen as problematic. For this reason, we chose to include categories as broad as possible that could therefore be applied to France’s popular racial climate. Indeed, despite the non-use of the term, French individuals do distinguish between races, although the concept does not match completely the American definition of race. As we have seen, a large proportion of the immigrant population is from Africa, and this statistic does not include children of immigrants. Consequently, we chose to make our racial categories White, Black, Arab and Asian. We also included an “Other – specify” category which, after coding, led us to include two additional categories: Native Americans and Eastern Europeans.

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2 Because of the social construction of race as a concept, we acknowledge that there may be inconsistencies within these definitions. The category “Native American” included all aboriginal populations from the Americas, while Eastern Europeans included immigrants from Eastern Europe who possessed defining physical attributes separating them from the white population. While some may argue that Eastern Europeans are a regional classification rather than a racial one, we chose to include this in our racial categories because, unlike for our nationality category which strictly focus on territorial or linguistic considerations such as country of birth or native language, Eastern Europeans as we coded them often depicted particular physical traits that highlighted their non-belonging to French identity, such as darker skin, strong accents, and other visible markers of otherness.
Finally, we included a category of “not applicable”, which was notably used in the case of supernatural beings or animals in fantastic movies for example, and an “unable to determine” category when the coder was not able to estimate the race of the character. We did not included characters in these last two categories in our analysis. In addition to this breakdown of racial categories, we performed some analyses using a binary version of this variable to identify particular trends comparing white characters and nonwhite characters. In addition to these factors in our coding decisions, the inclusion of our two other dimensions of ethnicity complements the use of race in this way, thus allowing us to explore these various perspective of ethnicity.

Our second measure of ethnicity includes four different variables: country of birth, country of residence, native language, and immigration status. Within our immigration variable, we are predictably most interested in comparisons between French domestics (characters born in France and residing in France) and immigrants living in France. We coded our three other variables (country of birth, country of residence, and native language) in a way that allowed the coder to estimate them when they were not clearly stated in the movie. However, many times, if we were not able to identify the country in which a character lived or was born, we coded these particular characters as “country other than France”, to prevent incorrect estimations. When examining our variables using regional categories, these “foreign” characters were not included, but they were included in the binary versions of these variables composed of only two categories: France and not France. The two nationality variables relating to country, country of birth and country of residence, were coded in the same way, without pre-decided categories. The coder thus had to record the country that applied, and these countries were grouped in regional categories to prevent small samples size after the coding process. Finally, for our linguistic

3 Both variables included the following categories: France, Not France (unable to determine more specifically), Western Europe (but not France), Eastern Europe, South America, North America, Asia, Africa (not Maghreb), Maghreb, Other Planet, Central America.
variable, native language, we chose to maintain the categories in a form that related directly to language rather than a regional classification\textsuperscript{4}. For example, this language variable often reveals different findings for characters whose native language is Arabic than for characters whose country of birth was coded as in the Maghreb, since characters from an Egyptian background for example would be included in the first category but not the second. Once again, we did not include any pre-decided categories of language, and recorded native languages as they appeared.

As for the two previously described categories, we allowed the coder to estimate this variable when coding characters, with a “Not French” category when the coder was not able to identify a character’s particular native language.

Finally, when coding for the character’s religion, we coded this aspect of ethnicity in two ways: whether the character was portrayed as religious or not, and if he or she was, his or her religious affiliation. We did not create categories for this variable during the coding, but recorded the religious affiliations as they were depicted in the movie, grouping them in categories after the coding process. For our analysis, we used data about the character’s religious affiliation solely when it was explicitly stated in the movie, to eliminate any coder biases which would otherwise have led the coder to estimate character’s religion based on other factors such as race or regional origin. We then computed a “religion” variable for our final analysis combining these two subvariables\textsuperscript{5}.

\textsuperscript{4} This led us to include the following categories in our native language variable: French, Not French (unable to determine more specifically), Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, English, Italian, Native American Dialect, and Japanese.

\textsuperscript{5} This final religion variable had four categories: not religious or unable to determine, Christian, Muslim and Jewish. While it is worth noting that characters with explicitly no religious affiliation and characters for whom no information about their religious status was identified could be seen as two separate categories, we chose to combine them for two reasons. Firstly, there was a very small number of characters who were explicitly atheists or even agnostics. Secondly, we assumed that the fact that no religious statement about a character was itself a statement by the movie’s producers that religion was not an essential part of this character’s identity. For these reasons, we considered this category to group together characters for whom religion was not an integral part of their ethnic identity.
**Dependent Variables**

Our analysis focused on four different dependent variables: characters’ moral portrayal, and three different racial stereotypes.

One of our dependent variables, moral portrayal, included three different categories: good, neutral and bad. We coded this variable from a production perspective, meaning the coder estimated the intent of the movie’s producers in portraying a character a certain way, and whether they were attempting to make him or her liked or disliked by the public. While audiences have different ways to interpret the intent of the producers of cultural objects, this variable aims to provide insight into the intentions of the producers of the movie and what they were trying to convey. Consequently, we coded characters as “good” if they were portrayed in a way intended to make the viewer understand them, empathize with them and hope for their success in the movie. While, as we shall see, some “good” characters were not always portrayed in one-dimensional ways and had at times unlikeable or even stereotypical traits, we coded them as such if their reasons for acting this way were explained and meant for the viewer to empathize with them, or if they came to understand the error of their ways by the end of the movie. Bad characters were probably the most one-dimensional category of this variable, and we coded characters as such when they were depicted as truly unlikeable and negative, or engaging in morally despicable actions without an attempt to explain their possibly litigating motivations for acting in this way. Neutral characters included characters who only appeared briefly in the movie and who did not necessarily reveal much about their intentions or personality, or characters who had morally ambiguous stances.

The second and final category of our dependent variables concerns racial stereotypes. We selected these stereotypes on the basis of Michelle Lamont’s research (2000), which identified particular moral values by French workers, as previously described. We included five different
variables in our final coding scheme: aggressiveness, rudeness, sexism, egocentrism and lack of work ethic. All these variables included four different response categories: extremely present, somewhat present, not present, and unable to determine.

While the lack of intercoder reliability could be seen as concern with regards to these variables, these measures are internally reliable in the sense that they all conformed to the coder’s particular definitions of these terms. The conclusions from our data are thus drawn not from the perspective that, for example, characters are objectively portrayed as aggressive, but that certain groups of characters are portrayed as aggressive in comparison to other groups not being aggressive. Once again, we approached the coding of these variables from a production standpoint. We collapsed these variables to only include two categories in our final analysis: characteristic present, or characteristic not present. For example, for our measure of aggressiveness, we collapsed “extremely aggressive” and “somewhat aggressive” characters into one category, while “not aggressive” characters and characters for whom the coder was not able to determine this characteristic were grouped together in a second category. Consequently, these variables aim to demonstrate whether characters were deliberately portrayed in an aggressive way, or whether the producers did not intend aggressiveness to be an identifying characteristic of their depiction of a particular character.

Quantitative Analysis

Aggressiveness was defined in our coding scheme as the “tendency toward or practicing aggression, defined as, a forceful action or procedure (as an unprovoked attack) especially when intended to dominate or master. Hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior or outlook especially when caused by frustration. Aggression can be physical or verbal.” (Smith, 1999). Rudeness was defined as “Not having ‘good manners’ and not behaving in a proper, expected way. Disrespecting others, cursing and misbehaving in inappropriate situations.” (see Appendix I). Sexism was defined as “Treating women as people with inferior status, agreeing with this idea or coercing (physically or psychologically) women to behave in certain accepted ways.” (Appendix I). Egocentrism was defined as “Concerned with the individual rather than society. Selfish.” (Smith, 1999). Work ethic, which was the only variable in this category coded on a positive scale, was defined as “Caring for your work and wanting to do well, working hard to achieve professional goals” (Appendix I).
Our findings show that while foreign characters are not portrayed differently from French individuals, particular racial groups, such as Blacks and Arabs, but also more specific ethnic groups such as nonwhite males and Arabo-Muslim characters are represented in more negative ways than other individuals. We also found that while particular ethnic groups are indeed portrayed more negatively than foreigners as a whole, this trend has become weaker over time and the portrayal of foreigners has become relatively more negative in comparison to French characters, while the ethnic groups we identified as negatively represented have benefitted from an improvement of their depictions.

**Portrayals of nationality and race**

*Nationality*

*Figure 2. Portrayal of characters by country of birth for selected indicators.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Born in France/Unknown (n=767)</th>
<th>Positive Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Negative Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Rude</th>
<th>Lack of Work Ethic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Foreign Country (n=304)</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For columns within which there is a difference greater than 5 percentage points, the most positively portrayed group is indicated in green, while the most negatively portrayed group is indicated in red.

The rise of the *Front National* as previously described suggests an increasing national sentiment against the acceptance of immigrants into the French nation. In conjunction with these political tensions, the country’s perspective of Universalism and assimilation may lead immigrants to be perceived as inherently foreign, and thus unable to assimilate into French society. If this were the case, we would expect popular representations of immigrants to be negative and stereotypical, as these individuals would be considered to be too different to blend
into French society. When examining our data, however, we find that there is no difference in portrayals between immigrants in France and French domestics. In fact, there is no difference in portrayal across our five measures of depiction even when comparing characters who were born in France or whose country of birth was not explicitly stated, and characters who were openly portrayed as having been born in another country (Figure 2). This denotes that there is no inherent negative portrayal of foreignness, and nationality in these binary terms does not affect the portrayal of characters in French popular cinema.

_Race_

*Figure 3. Portrayal of characters by race for selected indicators.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Negative Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Rude</th>
<th>Lack of Work Ethic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White (n=904)</strong></td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black (n=62)</strong></td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arab (n=63)</strong></td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For columns within which there is a difference greater than 5 percentage points, the most positively portrayed group is indicated in green, while the most negatively portrayed group is indicated in red.

Of the 1089 characters in our sample, 922, or 84.7% are white. There are 62 black characters (5.7%) and 63 Arab characters (5.8%). Finally, there are 21 Asians in our sample (1.9%), seven Native Americans and five Eastern Europeans.

When examining differences in portrayals across racial groups, we can clearly see that Arabs emerge as the racial group that is the most negatively portrayed, with black characters being stereotypically portrayed as well (Figure 3). Indeed, Arab characters in our sample possess the highest proportion of characters with a negative portrayal, but also the highest percentage of characters being aggressive, rude, and lacking a work ethic. Black characters, despite benefitting from the most positive moral portrayal of all racial groups, are also portrayed as more aggressive
and rude than white characters. Consequently, we can see that race seems to play more of a role in a character’s depiction than nationality.

*Figure 4. Portrayal of characters by race and nationality for selected indicators.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Negative Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Rude</th>
<th>Lack of Work Ethic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in France/Unknown (n=697)</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Foreign Country (n=207)</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in France/Unknown (n=34)</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Foreign Country (n=28)</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in France/Unknown (n=27)</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Foreign Country (n=36)</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For columns within which there is a difference greater than 5 percentage points, the most positively portrayed group is indicated in green, while the most negatively portrayed group is indicated in red.

When we add nationality as a third variable, specific trends emerge (Figure 4). Indeed, there is no difference in portrayal between white characters from France and others. For black characters, the only variable with a difference of over 5 percentage points between character from France and others is rudeness. Interestingly, black characters who were born in France or whose nationality is not specified are more likely to be depicted as rude than other black characters. We find a similar trend in terms of rudeness and lack of work ethic for Arabs, with French characters possessing this characteristic more often than foreigners. For Arabs, however, characters from other countries are portrayed more negatively and as being more aggressive than their domestic counterparts. Consequently, we can see that introducing nationality in our analysis of race depiction does lead to different representations on the basis of both of these variables of
ethnicity, but these do not point in one specific direction. Indeed, while foreign Arab characters have a higher percentage of negative portrayals and aggressive characters than other Arab characters, it is also true that Arab and Black characters from France are in fact depicted as more rude and less work-inclined (for Arab characters) than their foreign counterparts.

These findings consequently do not support our hypothesis that, through France’s focus on Frenchness as the sole national identity, immigrants as a whole come to be perceived and represented negatively. However, we can see that our two racial minorities, blacks and Arabs, are generally portrayed more negatively than whites. Consequently, this would tend to support the hypothesis that French depictions of ethnicity suggest not a total exclusion of all immigrants, but a negative perception of certain ethnic groups, which are viewed as not conforming to French moral values. Despite identifying some contradictory trends when combining nationality and race in our analysis suggesting that nationality does play a role at a certain level (Figure 4), race appears to be a more influential variable in the depictions of characters in our sample, as illustrated by the comparison between Figure 2 and Figure 3.

**Other factors in the portrayal of ethnic minorities**

When examining additional characteristics such as gender, character prominence, religion, and region of origin, specific groups emerge as being the target of negative portrayals. Indeed, when combining race and these variables, we can identify two additional findings from our data. First, the interaction between gender and race shows that nonwhite males are more negatively portrayed than nonwhite females and white characters as a whole. Secondly, there seems to be a consistently more negative portrayal of character associated with a particular ethnicity: Arabo-Muslim characters.

*Interaction between race and gender*
Gender appears to have an important influence on character depictions, but the relationship between gender and portrayal varies on the basis of race (Figure 5). Not only does there appear to be a stigma towards nonwhite males but a more positive view of nonwhite females, these gender differences seem to be more evident for certain racial groups than others. Indeed, while gender plays a much less important role in depictions of white characters, it does for black and Arab characters, with a much greater gender gap for blacks than Arabs.

*Figure 5. Portrayal of characters by race and gender for selected indicators.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Negative Moral Portrayal</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Rude</th>
<th>Lack of Work Ethic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For each sex, for columns within which there is a difference greater than 5 percentage points, the most positively portrayed group is indicated in green, while the most negatively portrayed group is indicated in red.*

With regards to gender, there is a greater proportion of bad male characters for nonwhites than for whites (30.2% compared to 15.9%, respectively). On the other hand, when only looking at female characters, there is a greater proportion of good nonwhite female characters than white male characters (50.0% compared to 41.0%). This does suggest that there is a negative stereotype for nonwhite males, but also a more positive connotation for nonwhite females in understandings of race in popular French culture. Introducing gender does not make a different for white characters regardless of role in terms of aggressiveness. It does, however, for nonwhite characters, with 38.5% of nonwhite males being aggressive compared to 25.7% of nonwhite females. We find once again, therefore, that there is a more positive portrayal at this level for nonwhite females compared to nonwhite males. Introducing gender has no effect on the proportions of rude white characters (both genders having a percentage of 24.0% rude
characters), but it does make apparent gender differences in rudeness among nonwhites, with 24% of nonwhite males being rude compared to 11.4% of females. This difference is greater for blacks than for Arabs. Indeed, there are five times as many rude black male characters than rude black female characters (25.6% and 4.8%, respectively), compared to Arabs for whom there is a percentage of 24.5% rude male characters and 33.3% rude female characters. As the sample size for female Arab characters is small (n=9), it is difficult to conclude whether Arab females are portrayed as being more rude than Arab males, but we can see that there is a greater gender difference among black characters than among Arab characters, suggesting that they may be a more gender-related stereotype of rudeness for blacks than for Arabs.

There also seems to be a greater gender difference among nonwhites for our measure of work ethic (with 7.8% of males lacking a work ethic, compared to 2.9% of females) than among whites (with 2.6% males lacking a work ethic, compared to 1.1% of females). Almost no female characters are portrayed as lacking a work ethic, and consequently this trait appears to apply mainly to male characters, notably nonwhites.

There consequently appears to be a negative perception of nonwhite males, and the role of gender is more prominent when looking at black characters. This could suggest that male ethnic minorities in particular are viewed as not belonging to the French national identity. Indeed, our data shows negative representations of nonwhite males compared to more positive representations of nonwhite females. Arab characters, compared to blacks, have a much smaller gender gap in terms of negative representations, which could be explained by a more general stigma concerning this particular ethnic group.

$arabo-muslim$ characters
Figure 6. Portrayal of Arab characters by selected religious affiliations for selected indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arab</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Rude</th>
<th>Lack of Work Ethic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No religion (n=35)</td>
<td>42.90%</td>
<td>31.40%</td>
<td>31.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim (n=19)</td>
<td>57.90%</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
<td>15.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For columns within which there is a difference greater than 5 percentage points, the most positively portrayed group is indicated in green, while the most negatively portrayed group is indicated in red.

Across the ethnic dimensions of race, nationality and religion, a group particularly targeted by negative portrayals emerges: Arabo-Muslim characters. When examining portrayals of characters on the basis of religion, we found that Muslims were the religious group that stood out in terms of negative portrayal. This finding is consistent with the emergence of a type of character that represented particularly pejoratively in our sample: the Arab, of North African origin or nationality, Arab-speaking and Muslim character. These categories seem to merge together to make up our most consistent ethnic portrayal of characters, which we shall call Arabo-Muslim characters. Indeed, 90.5% of Muslim characters in our sample are Arab characters, and while we can see that when comparing non-religious to Muslim Arabs certain trends emerge (Figure 6), these are not consistent enough to suggest that a Muslim affiliation plays a more important role in the depiction of characters than being of Arab race. Consequently, we can say that being Muslim is associated with being Arab, but that this trait does not completely account for the negative portrayal of Arabs. When examining other measures of ethnicity, we can see that race, nationality, native language and religion all converge to relate to this particular depiction of Arabo-Muslim characters.

Figure 7. Portrayal of Arabo-Muslim characters across ethnic dimensions for selected indicators.
Across all our categories of ethnicity related to the Arabo-Muslim group, we can see that values are relatively consistent. When there is a difference of more than 10 percentage points across dimensions of ethnicity, categories relating to nationality (region of birth and native language) have lower rates of negative racial stereotypes than categories that do not have a direct national component and therefore can be expected to include relatively more characters who were born in France. Overall, Arabo-Muslim characters are portrayed with high percentages of negatively portrayed characters, as well as high rates of aggressiveness. Although there is more variation across measures of ethnicity in terms of rudeness and work ethic, we can see that this percentage is higher for dimensions of ethnicity that are not related to nationality. Consequently, it appears that Arabo-Muslim characters in particular are represented as not fitting French identity. While we have seen that nationality, as an overall marker of ethnicity, does not dictate character portrayals, it is clear that characters originating from the North African region are the targets of negative representations, across a number of dimensions.

We thus can see that while foreign characters as a whole are not portrayed differently from French characters, specific ethnic groups such as blacks, nonwhite males and Arabo-Muslim characters are represented in more negative ways than other groups. Their portrayals match the negative stereotypes of morality, aggressiveness, rudeness and lack of work ethic.
associated with individuals perceived as not respecting the moral values of the French nation. This would tend to suggest that the simple idea of not being French is not what leads to discrimination within French popular understandings of belonging, but that particular ethnic groups are viewed as not conforming to national moral values, thus being represented as not having properly assimilated into French society. With the time component of our data, we can see that these negative portrayals may be in the process of shifting from particular ethnic groups to foreigners as a whole, especially in the context of the rapid and recent rise of the *Front National*.

**Analysis Over Time**

**Nationality**

It appears that there has been an increase in the diversity of characters with regards to nationality, in a direction that matches France’s national ties to economic powers such as the United States and Canada, or colonial ties in the Maghreb, Africa and Central America.
When examining differences in the portrayal of characters based on nationality, we can see that the portrayal of French characters has improved in terms of positive moral portrayal, aggressiveness and rudeness (Figure 8). For characters from other countries, however, there has been no change across all measures of portrayal, with the exception of rudeness, with a decrease in the percentage of rude foreign characters. Interestingly, in the first period, French characters were portrayed as having a smaller proportion of good characters than foreigners in the first period, but in the second period this trend has been reversed. These changes in the portrayal of these two groups may suggest that representations of foreigners compared to the French has become more negative, a finding that would tend to be supported by the rise of the Front National and its anti-immigration discourse. While this conclusion does not match our previous findings that race matters more in negative portrayals than nationality, it is possible that the stigma is slowly reaching immigrants as well.
Race

From our sample, we can observe that from period 1 (1995-1996) to period 2 (2010-2011), there has been a slight shift in the racial distribution of characters highlighting 1) an increase in diversity, and 2) a shift towards certain types of minorities over others. The proportion of nonwhite characters in our sample more than doubled from the first to the second time period (from 7.0% to 16.1%). Indeed, there has been an increase in the proportion of black characters (+2.9 percentage points), followed by Arab characters (+1.9 percentage points) and Eastern Europeans (+ 0.9 percentage points). Additionally, a majority of white characters, black characters, Arab characters, and all of the Eastern European characters in our sample appear in movies from our second time period, while a majority of Asian characters and of Native American characters appear in movies from the first time period. While these changes across time period are heavily reliant on which particular movies are in our sample and themes/countries they involve, there appears indeed to be an increase in the racial diversity of movie characters reflected in our sample, as well as a shift towards racial groups that are the most present in France’s recent immigrant population.

Figure 9. Change in the portrayal of characters by race from 1995/96 to 2010/11 for selected indicators.
According to our sample, there has been a positive improvement in the portrayal of all characters in general, across all our measures of morality and stereotypes (Figure 9). The moral portrayal of black characters has considerably improved, with no bad black characters being represented in the second time period. The moral portrayal of Arabs has also improved, in the sense that there a fewer bad Arab characters, but the increase in the proportion of good Arab characters has been small. The presence of specific racial stereotypes has decreased across all racial groups to a similar degree, with the exception of Arab characters, who show a greater decrease in rudeness and lack of work ethic than other groups. Consequently, it appears that racial minorities are more visible in the second time period, the portrayal of black characters has become more positive, and the portrayal of Arab characters less negative, especially when examining racial stereotypes.

Quantitative Discussion

When examining differences in the portrayal of characters in our sample we can see that particular ethnic groups such as blacks, nonwhite males, and Arabo-Muslim characters are portrayed as not embracing national moral values, rather than foreigners as a whole. When examining our findings over time, we also can see that the proportion of characters from racial minority groups such as Arabs or Blacks, and from Maghrebi nations or countries in North America has increased from the mid-1990s to the 2010s. This thus supports our hypothesis that there is a greater stigma in terms of race than nationality, but also that it may be in the process of shifting towards national rather than racial categorizations, in accordance with the increasingly anti-immigrant political discourse in the nation.
Based on our findings, it thus appears that, while this may be in the process of changing, particular ethnic groups are seen as not fitting French moral values, rather than foreigners as a whole, and by association, immigrants. What can explain why particular ethnic groups, rather than all non-French individuals, are viewed negatively? Official French discourse states that no national distinctions are made on the basis of race, religion or ethnicity, yet we can clearly see specific groups emerge as the targets of negative stereotypes. If this were due to the simple fact of not being French, we would expect nationality to have more of an impact on representations of characters than race, gender and religion, the minority groups of which include characters who were indeed born in France. It thus appears that on the basis of these particular ethnic traits, some individuals are viewed as not assimilating as well as others. This suggests than, rather than being truly culture-blind, French national identity does incorporate certain ethnic understandings related to race and religion, for example. While our data cannot tell us why this is the case, a qualitative analysis of how immigrants but also French characters are portrayed in relation to these other ethnic affiliations in the context of French Universalism can help us understand the rhetoric behind the perception of these groups as not fitting French moral values.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Through our quantitative analysis, we have seen that foreign characters as a whole are not portrayed in a more negative way than French characters. This is not true, however, for specific ethnic groups, notably blacks males, and Arabo-Muslim characters. These findings suggest that, rather than viewing all immigrants and foreigners as not fitting ideas of Frenchness, leading to a strong prejudice against all immigrants, popular understandings of race in France view particular groups as not assimilating into French society and not fitting national moral values. While our quantitative analysis examines the portrayal of these groups in relation of others, it cannot
explain why these groups come to be perceived as such. One main question emerges from our findings: if these particular groups are represented as not fitting French moral values, how can we explain this? We aim to find whether popular culture portrays these groups as being unable to assimilate into French society, or unwilling to do so. If the former were true, it would place the blame on national methods of assimilation, or even assimilation as a method of integration itself. If the latter were true, common understandings of ethnicity in France would tend to blame members of these particular ethnic groups for refusing to adapt to the French Universalist model, rather than acknowledging social, economic and cultural obstacles to their integration into French society. Consequently, examining some of the messages present in movies from our sample qualitatively rather than quantitatively can help us better understand how the groups identified in our quantitative analysis are represented with regards to their integration into the nation and their motivations.

**French Identity and Universalism**

Before we examine the portrayal of racial minority characters from France as well as white and nonwhite immigrant characters, we can find a number of references to France’s democratic values and philosophy of Universalism in the movies of our sample. Indeed, the French Revolution and France’s motto, “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” are often mentioned to paint a portrait of France as a country protecting its citizens and treating them with justice and humanity. This is done in a contemporary context, with references to the nation’s ethnic climate, but also from a historical perspective. For example, *La Rafle*, a movie released in 2010, depicts the roundup of the Vel d’Hiv, a mass arrest of Jews in 1942 by the French and German police. *La Rafle* portrays France as a land of opportunity and refuge for the oppressed, while also acknowledging the collaboration of French citizens and police with the Nazis. When Schmuel,
one of the main characters, explains to his daughter why he moved with his wife from Poland to France, he says: "Tu sais ce qu'on dit en Pologne? La France, c'est le salut des juifs!" (0:25) ("Do you know what we say in Poland? France is salvation for Jews!"). This movie depicts France as a democratic country protecting those in need, despite the Nazi collaboration of the Second World War. While the film explicitly states this collaboration, the presence of French characters putting their own lives in danger to help the captives balances this view and restores the idea of France as a space of resistance and liberty for all peoples. France is therefore portrayed as a democratic nation willing to welcome any individual in search of these ideals and values.

Other movies show this view of France in a more contemporary context, with reference to the racial and ethnic tensions within the nation. Le Plus Beau Métier du Monde, a movie from 1996, focuses on Laurent, a white French middle school teacher who, because of a divorce, moves from a peaceful and wealthy neighborhood with a successful public school to a troubled banlieue of Paris, leading him to teach students from diverse backgrounds with many disciplinary issues. The film clearly frames its stance for laïcité within French Universalist ideals, as Laurent explains to his class: "Pourquoi dit-on que la France est la patrie des droits de l'homme? Parce que c'est dans notre pays que pour la première fois s'est manifestée une immense, une irresistible aspiration à la justice, à la liberté, au respect de l'autre quel que soit sa couleurs, sa race, sa religion" (0:56). ("Why do we say that France is the fatherland of human rights? Because it is in our country that for the first time manifested itself an immense, irresistible aspiration to justice, liberty, to the respect of others regardless of their color, race, religion"). Once again, the film highlights the idea of equality and public similarity regardless of ethnicity. This discourse justifies the fact that, later in the movie, the school principal announces that, by order of the department of education, female students deciding to wear the veil within school walls will be expelled. Consequently, in addition to being portrayed as a country
guaranteeing all individuals the democratic values of justice and liberty, France is thus depicted as a nation making no ethnic distinctions between its citizens.

Case Départ, a movie released in 2011, frames these Universalist and Republican ideals in a temporal context, by showing how much race relations in France have improved throughout centuries. The movie follows two black brothers who are brought together by the news of their father’s death. They both go to the Antilles, where their father lived, to receive their part of the inheritance. When they realize that all their father left them is the paper that gave their ancestors’ freedom during the time of slavery, they rip it apart in anger. Because of a curse protecting the object, they are transported back to this time period and captured as slaves. After meeting a slave, one the two brothers, Joel, exclaims: "Mais non, ça n'existe plus tout ça! (...) J'suis marié avec une blanche!" (0:26), and later: "Les choses vont changer dans un avenir proche, bientot ce sera la Revolution française, les hommes naîtront libres et égaux en droit, quelque soit leur couleur et leur religion!" (1:06). ("No, all this doesn’t exist anymore! (...) I’m married to a white woman!” “Things are going to change in the near future, soon it will be the French Revolution, men will be born free and equal in rights, regardless of their color or religion!”). By contrasting practices during slavery with France’s contemporary racial climate, the movie states that things have tremendously improved compared to the time when blacks were enslaved. The presence of a bourgeois family owning the slaves makes this contrast clearer: their outrageously racist discourse about blacks’ place in society not only contributes to the comedic aspect of the film, but also serves as a reminder of how far society has come. For example, when Régis reveals that he knows how to read, his master comments “Tu es un nègre plus futé que les autres…c'est normal, c'est ta partie blanche qui te rend plus intelligent" (0:42) (“You are a smarter negro than the others…. That’s normal, being partly white makes you more intelligent”). While the improvement of French race relations since slavery cannot be argued, it also tends to
delegitimize any claim that racism is still present in modern French society and that this
discrimination does affect personal outcomes. This message reinforces the previous idea of
France as a country making no ethnic distinction between its members, by being represented as a
modern nation being past notions of racism and discrimination. When comparing different ethnic
groups, notably immigrants from Europe to other racial groups, we can however encounter clear
differences in the way these individuals and their process of integration into the nation are
portrayed.

**European Immigrants: Easy assimilation into French society**

When we examine the portrayals of white immigrants in our sample, all the primary adult
characters who come from explicitly identified countries are female characters from Spain.
Spanish immigrants were the third largest group of immigrants in France from the European
Union in 2009. The countries’ proximity, both from a physical and cultural perspective, explains
why these characters are all portrayed in a positive way. Indeed, all the women who are white
Spanish immigrants in our sample are depicted as carefree, a little eccentric, joyful and
impulsive. They often represent a certain sense of exoticism, while still being very culturally
accessible: indeed, these characters are white, often Catholic, and all of them speak French. Their
assimilation into French society is therefore uncomplicated, and if they retain certain traits from
the native culture, these are refreshingly exotic and do not lead to irreconcilable differences. For
example, in *Le Bonheur est dans le pré* (1995), the main protagonist, a factory owner who
dislikes his life, wife and job, moves to the countryside pretending he is a Spanish woman’s
estranged husband. Dolores Tivart, the woman in question, has two daughters, and all three
women represent a lifestyle that is worry-free and easygoing. Similarly, in *Les Femmes du 6ème
etage* (2011), a serious upper class businessman’s life takes an interesting turn after meeting the
Spanish maids living on the top floor of his apartment building. They initiate him to the simple pleasures of life: music, dancing, and casual gatherings among friends. Finally, our last character in this category, Loli from *Gazon Maudit*, is a Spanish immigrant married to an unfaithful Frenchman. She is an impulsive, demonstrative and joyful character, who begins an affair with another woman as she feels ignored by her husband. All these movies portray these white immigrant characters in a positive way as they initiate the main protagonists to new, different and more carefree ways of life. It is not surprising that such characters, being women from a country culturally similar to France, are represented more positively than other ethnic minorities. This further supports our quantitative finding that being foreign itself is not the main reason for negative portrayal in popular French movies. As we shall see, ethnic minority characters who differ further from French cultural norms are not depicted as positively as these particular characters.

**Non-white Immigrants: Assimilation and Gender Differences**

When we examine the portrayal of nonwhite immigrants in our sample, we find that, as for our quantitative findings, gender plays an important role in representations of ethnic minority characters. Comparing these three portrayals which all are positive but show different depictions of assimilation, we can see how gender interplays with race in understandings of ethnic representations, further supporting our quantitative findings.

One the most successful French films in recent history, *Intouchables*, tells the story of an improbable friendship between Driss, a young black man from the *banlieue*, and Philippe, a rich middle-aged paraplegic. The film has received very positive reviews overall, and many awards including a César, the French equivalent of an Oscar, for Best Actor for Omar Sy’s portrayal of Driss (IMDB, 2012). The movie’s apparent message is one of tolerance and friendship despite
obstacles and differences. The movie begins by describing Driss as a stereotypical young man from the projects: he is unemployed, just got out of prison, and is only going to job interviews to get rejected and have access to unemployment benefits. Philippe, a rich middle-aged man who became paraplegic in a paragliding accident, challenges Driss to accept a job as his home nurse for a trial period of three days. Driss accepts, and the two become friends. We can examine through *Intouchables* a particular portrayal of a nonwhite immigrant character, as Driss moved from Senegal during his childhood. While the overall message of the movie is a positive one, there are some troubling aspects within these character’s depictions. First of all, despite Driss’ likeability, he possesses very stereotypical interests and habits: he is the one who introduces Philippe to marijuana, prostitutes, and tricking the police. While the movie portrays these characteristics as positive as they bring the two characters together and help Philippe enjoy a life that has become very difficult for him, it nevertheless depicts Driss as a man transgressing the law and focusing on instant gratification. Moreover, while this perspective has the benefit of making people understand these traits under a positive light, some have argued that Philippe and Driss resolve their differences in an unrealistically easy way. There is a clear assimilation process for Driss throughout the movie: although he has been in France since he was a child, the audience can observe his change in habits as he moves from the *banlieue* to Philippe’s apartment. While he steals, does drugs, and ignores much of upper class culture before he meets Philippe, by the end of the movie he is introduced to classical music and even starts selling abstract paintings. For Driss to become likeable and endearing, the producers show a transition from a stereotypical black character from the *banlieue*, to a middle-class individual who likes to drive expensive cars and better understands the habits of the upper class.

In addition, it is worth noting that, in real life, the individual who inspired Driss’ story is Arabic and not black, and one may wonder why the race of this character was changed in the
film adaptation. Consequently, not only is Driss first depicted as an aggressive, rude and law-breaking individual at the beginning of the movie, in order to become likeable he must first assimilate into French middle and upper class culture throughout the course of the movie. This illustrates the Universalist rhetoric of the nation: for Driss to become integrated and live a comfortable and accepted life, he first had to leave the banlieue and start behaving like the “average” French citizen. Additionally, in the beginning of the movie when Driss’ character is depicted in an extremely stereotypical manner, it is explicitly stated that he relies on the French government to subsist. This representation thus places blame on the main character himself, as he is the one who refuses to assimilate by joining the French economy and becoming responsible. Furthermore, once he decides to do so, he is immediately rewarded. This depiction, as we shall see, is one of many of ethnic minority characters which suggests that the main reason why certain individuals are struggling economically and socially is because they refuse to make the effort to integrate into French society.

Compared to the portrayal of Driss, who is the only black primary immigrant character in our sample, the Arab characters in this category are both females, and both can be considered to have assimilated into French society through their occupation. Indeed, Radhia, from Le Plus Beau Métier du Monde (1996), is a teacher of Arabic origin who aims to help students from disadvantaged neighborhoods succeed in the public school system. Nora from Polisse (2011) is a policewoman in the Parisian unit against sexual assault crimes. Both characters share a humanitarian personal mission, and both nourish a certain suspicion for particular forms of Islam. Indeed, Radhia expresses concern after her son becomes increasingly involved with his local Quranic school, and Nora gets surprisingly mad when facing a Muslim father planning an arranged marriage for his daughter. Because of their jobs, friendship circles and discourse, these characters both appear to have well assimilated into French society: indeed, they both are dating
white men. In contrast with Driss’ character, they show fewer signs of aggressiveness or rudeness, which most likely can be explained by their being portrayed as females. This highlights the negative stereotype towards nonwhite males rather than nonwhite females, as found in our quantitative analysis. As we shall see, the negative stereotypes found in our quantitative analysis do indeed appear to be primarily present in characters with particular ethnic traits, as even from a qualitative perspective, the portrayals of nonwhite immigrant and nonwhite French characters are relatively similar and convey the same messages.

**French Racial Minorities: Assimilation or exclusion?**

For racial minority characters from France, we find that all of our primary adult characters are either represented as having considerably assimilated into French society, or as having explicitly refused to do so. When comparing black and Arab characters in our sample, two out of four black characters fit the assimilation model, while all the Arab characters are represented as refusing to embrace French cultural ideals. The previously mentioned *Case Départ* is an example of these two particular representations of black characters born in France. Indeed, while the movies’ two main characters, Joel and Régis, are brothers whose father is from the Antilles, they were both born in domestic France. They represent two very different but stereotypical personalities: Joel is a black man who just got out of three months of prison for theft, smokes marijuana and recently converted to Islam. He is very prone to feeling victimized by Whites, and denounces racism in daily situations, very often excessively. His persona completely validates the claim that blacks are too sensitive about race in an era where racial issues are no longer a problem (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Régis, on the other hand, works at the mayor’s office and completely denigrates his being black. He blames minorities for being lazy and not succeeding, and does not react when explicitly racist statements are made in front of him.
Régis has therefore completely embraced society as it is structured and refuses to acknowledge the presence of racism in France. While the viewer comes to understand both characters’ perspectives, there is no prolonged depiction of a non-stereotypical black character. Consequently, the viewer is exposed to two particular perspectives on integration or non-integration into French society. Régis has decided to completely deny any other ethnic affiliation than French citizenship, and now holds a relatively important public function. Joël, in contrast, blames society for his failures, has gone to jail and refuses to take responsibility for his actions. Once again, we find a strong message in favor of assimilation in this particular movie: the character who has consciously decided to adopt French Universalist values has succeeded, while the character who refuses to do so is still struggling.

We find this dichotomy explicitly stated in Les trois frères (1995), when two of the three main protagonists, brothers who meet after the news of their father’s death, comment on the socio-economic success of Pascal, their brother who happens to be black. Indeed, Pascal is a businessman with a very large apartment in Paris. He has worked hard to achieve this lifestyle, and clearly states it. In response, Didier, one of the brothers, exclaims, “Tu sais, les blacks c’est ou balayeuse, ou président de la république!” (0:43) (“You know blacks, they’re either janitors or presidents!”). These particular representations of a black character who has worked hard to integrate into French society and succeeded in contrast with a black character who refuses to let go of his own prejudices once again tends to blame ethnic minorities for refusing to assimilate rather than acknowledging the socio-economic obstacles of this process.

**Qualitative Discussion**

Our quantitative analysis has shown that, while nationality itself is not a big factor in representations of ethnicity, specific ethnic groups emerge as targets of negative portrayals in
popular French movies. Indeed, black, Arabo-Muslim, and nonwhite male characters all are portrayed more negatively than other groups, highlighting that particular ethnic affiliations, rather than non-Frenchness, affect how minorities are perceived. We can hypothesize that these groups may be the most culturally different from traditional ideas of Frenchness, in terms of skin color, religion, customs, etc. With this in mind, a qualitative examination of the portrayal of ideas of citizenship and portrayal of immigrants in France helps us better understand these trends. Indeed, we can see that white immigrants such as the Spanish women in *Les femmes du 6ème étage* are represented in a much more positive, culturally similar way than nonwhite immigrants such as Driss. Additionally, through the characters of Driss and Joel, we can see that French popular movies explicitly represent some black characters in our sample as refusing to embrace French ideas of citizenship and morality, and rarely show obstacles to assimilation into French society. The films in our sample place these portrayals of minority characters refusing to assimilate in opposition to minority characters who have consciously decided to integrate into French society and, as a result, have attained socio-economic success. This contrast between characters assimilating and succeeding and characters refusing to embrace French values and struggling suggests that in order to be successful foreigners must accept French values and official national identity. As a result, it appears that not only does French popular culture portray specific ethnic groups such as blacks and Arabo-Muslim characters in a negative way, it often glosses over their social, cultural and economic struggle to favor an explanation that suggests that they refuse to accept French cultural and social standards. In combination, popular French films often describe France as a democratic nation willing to welcome anyone and provide justice and equality to its citizens. As a result, those who refuse to embrace the requirement of Universalism in order to become a part of the French nation are blamed even further: not only do they not accept their receiving country’s values, they do so after being welcomed into a country
which will protect them and provide them with benefits that they often did not have at home. This perspective completely places the blame on ethnic minorities for not being able to adapt, disregarding the possible socio-economic obstacles to their integration.

**Conclusion**

France has historically been a country of immigration, with policies focusing on the integration of new populations by assimilating them into French society. Despite this focus on the integration of all peoples under the condition that these respect France’s philosophies of Universalism and laïcité, a strong anti-immigration movement has emerged in France in the past 20 years. The *Front National*, France’s extreme right party, collected 20% of votes in the last presidential election, with a discourse strongly encouraging the reduction of the country’s both legal and unauthorized immigration rates. While France’s colorblind approach towards race and ethnic relations has made it difficult to study these matters, the French cinema industry, more specifically popular French films, can be expected to contain messages in accordance with mainstream understandings of race and ethnicity in France. Consequently, through the portrayal of ethnic minority characters in popular French cinema, we can aim to understand which particular aspects of ethnicity convey negative connotations in French common views. With France’s focus on assimilation as its prime method of integration, we would expect groups that are particularly different culturally from the French norm to be marginalized, while ethnically different characters who share more in common with French socio-cultural norms would be more easily accepted in society. Nevertheless, the rapid rise of the *Front National* could suggest that not only is there a rejection of particular ethnic groups in France, but that all foreigners are seen as not belonging because their being inherently non-French.
From our quantitative analysis, we can see that indeed, French popular movies represent particular ethnic groups more negatively than immigrants as a whole. It thus appears that French popular culture negatively portrays specific ethnic markers, but does not always show foreignness as a negative trait. From our analysis, we found that targeted groups were black and Arab characters, notably black males and Arabo-Muslim characters. Indeed, these protagonists were often associated with being aggressive, lacking civility and work ethic, as well as general negative moral portrayals. This shows that French films, rather than representing immigrants as a general category not assimilating into French society, portrays particular groups in this way. Nevertheless, we also found that there may be a shift, potentially associated with the increasing popularity of the Front National’s discourse, from particular groups being portrayed negatively to foreign characters as a whole being associated with negative traits. Indeed, while the portrayal of black and Arab characters has improved when comparing the movies in our samples released in 1995/1996 and 2010/2011, the portrayal of foreign-born characters has remained stable. In conjunction with an improvement of the portrayal of French characters, the portrayal of immigrants is comparatively worse than that of French characters in the second time period, while it was similar in 1995 and 1996. We can thus conclude from our quantitative analysis that specific ethnic groups such as black males and Arabo-Muslim characters are comparatively negatively represented in popular French movie, although these negative depictions of ethnicity may be in the process of shifting to foreign-born characters as a whole.

Why are these particular ethnic groups associated with negative personality traits? While our qualitative analysis of immigrant and ethnic minority characters from our sample sheds some light on this question, this is an important question emerging from our study. Indeed, it appears popular French movies discriminate most against groups with important cultural distinction compared to French cultural and social heritage, thus suggesting that culturally different
individuals, in accordance with assimilationist theory, are marginalized because of common understandings of nationhood in France. As we have seen, French popular culture represents culturally similar individuals such as Spanish immigrants more positively than other immigrant groups. Furthermore, movies in our samples portray ethnically different individuals such as black or Arab characters especially negatively. French popular messages thus do not acknowledge the obstacles in assimilating for these populations, who not only originate from culturally very different populations, but also possess visible markers of otherness. Indeed, two particular representations of these individuals are present in our sample: those who have chosen to embrace French values and, as a result, have succeeded on a socio-economic level, and those who are portrayed as explicitly refusing to embrace national moral values and thus struggle in French society. By representing France’s ethnic climate as one summarized by the decision of whether or not to assimilate, not only does popular French culture portrays specific ethnic groups as not conforming to French moral values, it also explains these differences as a refusal to assimilate rather than acknowledging the cultural, social, and economic obstacles in doing so in contemporary French society.
References


The Telegraph. 2012. “Marine Le Pen may face charges over comparing Islamic prayers to Nazi occupation.”

APPENDIX : Final Version of Character Codebook

CHARACTER INFORMATION
1. Name or Character Identification
Indicate the character’s name or what makes the character identifiable if the name is unknown.

2. Character ID Number
Assign the character an ID number, starting with the first two digits being the film ID, and the next two digits being the character’s ID number within the film.

3. Time of first appearance
Specify the time in the movie at which the character first appears, under the format HHMM.

4. Role in the movie
Indicate the prominence of the character’s role in the movie (Neuendorf, 2000).
   1-Primary character, featured in more than 50% of film
   2-Secondary or recurring character, essential to plot but less present than primary character.
   3-One or two scenes with dialogue
   4-One or two scenes without dialogue
   5-Other (specify)

5. Moral Orientation
Indicate the character’s moral orientation.
   1-Benevolent
   2-Neutral
   3-Malevolent

DEMOGRAPHICS
6. Gender
Report the gender of the character.
   1-Male
   2-Female
   9-Unable to determine

7. Age
   a) Write in the number corresponding with the apparent age of the character (Smith, 1999).
      1-Infant, 0-2 years old
      2-Child, 3-12 years old
      3-Adolescent, 13-19 years old
      4-Young Adult, 20-39 years old
      5-Middle-Age Adult, 40-54 years old
      6-Mature Adult, 55-64 years old
      7-Senior Adult, > 65 years old
      8-Other (specify)
      9-Unable to determine
8. **Race**
Indicate the broad racial category of the character.
- 1-Caucasian
- 2-Black
- 3-Arab
- 4-Asian
- 5-Other (specify)
- 9-Unable to determine

9. **Occupation**
a) Write in the number corresponding to the apparent occupation of the character (Smith, 1999).
- 01-None identified
- 02-Athlete
- 03-Attorney
- 04-Businessperson
- 05-Educator
- 06-Entertainment Industry
- 07-Factory Worker
- 08-Farmer
- 09-Homemaker
- 10-Law Enforcement
- 11-Physician/Medical
- 12-Restaurant Business (owner, waiter/waitress, bartender)
- 13-Sales
- 14-Secretarial/Clerical
- 15-Student
- 16-Writer
- 17-Artist
- 18-Hotel/ Hospitality Management
- 19-Spy/ Government Agent
- 20-Independently Wealthy (does not need to work)
- 21-Unemployed
- 22-Criminal/Convict
- 23-Prostitute
- 24-Military
- 25-Service-Oriented (Any other occupation not listed which is customer focused. For example, a flight attendant, hairdresser, consultant. Write in occupation).
- 26-Other (and write in)
- 99-Unable to determine
10. Educational Level
a) Indicate the educational level of the character only if explicitly shown or mentioned. If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 9.
   1- No high school diploma
   2- Profession diploma, but not baccalaureate level (e.g. CAP, BEP)
   3- Professional or technical baccalaureate
   4- License (BAC +3)
   5- Master (BAC +5)
   6- BAC +6 or higher
   8- Other (specify)

11. Residential status
a) Indicate the residential status of the character only if explicitly shown or mentioned. If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 9.
   1- Owner
   2- Renter
   3- Squatter
   4- Other (specify)

12. Neighborhood
a) Indicate the type of neighborhood the character lives in only if explicitly shown or mentioned. If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 9.
   1- Urban neighborhood
   2- Suburb, but not banlieue
   3- Banlieue
   4- Rural neighborhood
   5- Other (specify)
   9- Unable to determine

13. Socioeconomic status
Report the character’s socioeconomic status as estimated by the coder (Neuendorf, 2000).
   1- Upper/upper middle class: An individual who is well to do or moderately well-to-do; this individual typically has a high level job, and will not be dependent on his/her weekly or monthly income in order to live.
   2- Middle class: An individual who works for a living, has all the necessities and some luxuries, but is dependent on his/her working for his/her livelihood.
   3- Working class/lower class: An individual who does not have the necessities of life, or just barely has the necessities and no luxuries. He/she may be unemployed and on public assistance.
   9- Unable to determine
**RELIGION**

14. Religious status  
   a) Indicate the character’s religious status. If unable to determine, code as 9.  
      1-Religious  
      2-Not religious  
   
   b) Indicate whether the character’s religious status was explicitly stated in the program or estimated by the coder (1 = explicitly stated, 2 = estimated by coder; 9 = unable to determine).

15. Religious affiliation  
   a) If religious, specify the character’s religious affiliation. If unable to determine, code as 9. If not applicable, code as 8.  
   
   b) Indicate whether the character’s country of residence was explicitly stated in the program or estimated by the coder (1 = explicitly stated, 2 = estimated by coder; 9 = unable to determine).

16. Religious customs  
   If religious, list religious customs or traditions observed by the character. If not applicable, code as 8. If not, leave blank.

**NATIONALITY**

17. Country of residence  
   a) Indicate if the character’s country of residence is France.  
      1-Yes  
      2-No (specify country if mentioned)  
      9-Unable to determine  
   
   b) Indicate whether the character’s country of residence was explicitly stated in the program or estimated by the coder (1 = explicitly stated, 2 = estimated by coder; 9 = unable to determine).

18. Country of birth  
   a) Indicate if character was born in France.  
      1-Yes  
      2-No (specify country if mentioned)  
      9-Unable to determine  
   
   b) Indicate whether the character’s country of birth (France or not) was explicitly stated in the program or estimated by the coder (1 = explicitly stated, 2 = estimated by coder; 9 = unable to determine).

19. Ethnic or national customs  
   Indicate whether the character observes any national, tradition or ethnic customs, and describe them if yes. If not, leave blank.

20. Citizenship Status  
   a) If character resides in France, indicate the citizenship status of the character **only if explicitly shown or mentioned**. If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 9. If not applicable, code as 8.  
      1-French citizen by birth
21. Immigration Status
a) If character resides in France, indicate the immigrant status of the character only if explicitly shown or mentioned. If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 9. If not applicable, code as 8.
   1-1st generation immigrant
   2-2nd generation immigrant
   3-3rd generation immigrant
   4-French origin, other origins unspecified
   5-Other (specify)

LANGUAGE
22. Primary Language
List primary language: language spoken the most during the course of the movie. If non-speaking role or not applicable, code as 8.

23. Native Language
a) Indicate if French is the character’s native language.
   1-Yes
   2-No (specify language if mentioned)
   9-Unable to determine

b) Indicate whether the character’s native language was explicitly stated in the program or estimated by the coder (1 = explicitly stated, 2 = estimated by coder; 8 = not applicable; 9 = unable to determine).

24. Other Languages
List any other languages the character speaks, if not applicable, code as 8. If none mentioned, leave blank.

DEMEANOR
25. Speaking Style
Describe the character’s speaking style, if he uses slang and what kind, if he uses words from other languages, etc.

26. Clothing Style
Describe the character’s clothing style.

SOCIAL LIFE
27. Living situation
a) Indicate who the character lives with (in terms of relationships: mother, brothers, friend, etc.)

b) Indicate the character’s children only if explicitly shown or mentioned. If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 9.
c) Indicate the character’s siblings only if explicitly shown or mentioned. If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 9.

28. Marital Status
a) Indicate the character’s present marital status (Neuendorf, 2000). If not mentioned or unable to determine, code as 99.
   - 10-Married, no other information
   - 11-Married first time
   - 12-Remarried after divorce
   - 13-Remarried after widowhood
   - 20-Separated
   - 30-Single, no other information
   - 31-Single, never married
   - 32-Single, divorced
   - 33-Single, widowed
   - 77-Engaged
   - 88-Other (specify)

29. Relationships
List all the corresponding numbers to all the apparent roles/relationships the character has with other characters (principal, supporting, and minor) in the film (Smith, 1999).

For example, a character who is a wife, mother, and child of a parent herself would be coded as 04, 03, 01.
   - 01-Child
   - 02-Sibling
   - 03-Parent
   - 04-Spouse
   - 05-Boyfriend (Implied Romance)
   - 06-Girlfriend (Implied Romance)
   - 07-Fiancé
   - 08-Friend (No Implied Romance)
   - 09-Business Associate/Co-worker
   - 10-Other (and write in)
   - 88-No relationships with other characters.

Specify the IDs of characters for each category, in order of each relationship, separating the IDs for each category by a slash, “/”.

NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR
30. Criminal behavior
List criminal behavior.

31. Government benefits
List all government benefits that the character receives only if explicitly shown or mentioned.
32. **Alcohol use**
Describe all instances of alcohol use, the circumstances and type of alcohol.

33. **Drug use**
Describe all instances of alcohol use, the circumstances and type of drugs.

34. **Other negative behavior**
Indicate if the character took part in any other specific negative behavior that did not fit in previous categories.

**DISCOURSE**
35. **Discourse about race and ethnicity**
Write down all quotes about race, racist or anti-racist discourse, discourse about someone with racial connotations, etc.

36. **Discourse about immigration**
Write down all quotes about immigration, immigrants, foreigners, members of a specific country, etc.

37. **Discourse about French identity**
Write down all quotes about being French, what it means, the French heritage, traditions, references to someone as being French/not French and why, etc.

38. **Discourse about national identity**
Write down all quotes revealing the character’s sense of his/her own national identity, or ideas about other countries, etc.

39. **Discourse about religion**
Write down all quotes discussing religion, or religious customs.

**PERSONALITY TRAITS** (Digman, 1990)
Code for these traits only in the case of a primary and secondary character.

40. **Openness**
Indicate the quality that closest corresponds to the character’s personality.
   1-Inventive/curious
   2-Neutral
   3-Consistent/cautious

41. **Conscientiousness**
Indicate the quality that closest corresponds to the character’s personality.
   1-Efficient/organized
   2-Neutral
   3-Easy going/careless

42. **Extraversion**
Indicate the quality that closest corresponds to the character’s personality.
1-Outgoing/energetic  
2-Neutral  
3-Solitary/reserved

43. **Agreeableness**  
Indicate the quality that closest corresponds to the character’s personality.  
   1-Friendly/compassionate  
   2-Neutral  
   3-Cold/unkind

44. **Neuroticism**  
Indicate the quality that closest corresponds to the character’s personality.  
   1-Sensitive/nervous  
   2-Neutral  
   3-Secure/confident

**RACIAL STEREOTYPES**

45. **Aggressiveness**  
Estimate the character’s level of aggressiveness (Smith, 1999).  
   **Aggressive**- Tendency toward or practicing aggression, defined as, a forceful action or  
   procedure (as an unprovoked attack) especially when intended to dominate or master.  
   Hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior or outlook especially when caused by  
   frustration. Aggression can be physical or verbal.  
   1. Extremely present  
   2. Somewhat present  
   3. Not present  
   9. Unable to determine

46. **Rudeness**  
Not having “good manners” and not behaving in a proper, expected way. Disrespecting others,  
cursing and misbehaving in inappropriate situations.  
   1. Extremely present  
   2. Somewhat present  
   3. Not present  
   9. Unable to determine

47. **Sexism**  
Treating women as people with inferior status, agreeing with this idea or coercing (physically or  
psychologically) women to behave in certain accepted ways.  
   1. Extremely present  
   2. Somewhat present  
   3. Not present
9. Unable to determine

48. Egocentrism
Estimate how egocentric the character is. (Smith, 1999)

   Egocentric - Concerned with the individual rather than society. Selfish.

   1. Extremely present
   2. Somewhat present
   3. Not present
   9. Unable to determine

49. Work Ethic
Caring for your work and wanting to do well, working hard to achieve professional goals.

   1. Extremely present
   2. Somewhat present
   3. Not present
   9. Unable to determine