

Bridging the Culture Gap: Conflict management programs between immigrants and French
society in marginalized communities in Paris

by

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BRIDGING THE CULTURE GAP

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Abstract

France continues to see a widening cultural divide between immigrants and the greater French society. The French government and non-governmental organizations have implemented programs to try and address the differences that exist in the French Republic. This study examines programs implemented in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, a suburb of Paris, by non-governmental organizations that impact the lives of immigrants.

To discover what impact these programs are having on the cultural divide in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, interviews were held with seven organizations that deliver programs in the area. These organizations were specifically selected due to the inclusion of Interactive Conflict Resolution components in their programs, namely face-to-face interaction in training, education, or language. The results showed that while face-to-face interaction were seen as having an impact on bridging the cultural divide, the inability to address the cultural differences directly due to France's laws surrounding differentiation and equality, led to superficial and politically sanitized programs that would not prevent the escalation of the conflict into intractability.

The results suggest that while these organizations benefit the quality of life for marginalized people, to have a direct and lasting effect on the escalating cultural conflict in France, they need to go farther than superficial interactions between participants or providing administrative tools that paper the cracks of the French system. To avoid future violence and escalating human security concerns, the Government of France should implement programs that uses dialogue, analysis, and problem-solving to explore the subjective, psychological social identity differences between immigrants and the greater French society. The government can do this by relaxing the stringent laws around gathering ethnic data, creating a central repository for

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program evaluations and oversight, and including the notion of equity in the Republic's definition of equality.

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Introduction

Immigration has always played a significant role in the development of France, from the influx of Europeans during the world wars, to the Northern and Western Africans following the 1960s decline of colonialism (Barou, 2014). For the last four decades, the French government and non-governmental organizations have been trying to find ways to better integrate immigrants into French society and have implemented interventions in an attempt to manage the escalating conflict (Beauchemin et al., 2018). There have been numerous policies, programs, and initiatives that have been tried, but there is still a significant cultural gap between those who are accepted as French and those who are not (Beaman, 2015; Hussey, 2014; Moran, 2017; Hargreaves, 2015). There continues to be a widening divide, physical, economic, and psychological, between immigrants of a non-European decent and French society, specifically those who reside in marginalized suburban areas of Paris and other major cities in France (Hussey, 2014; Sandford, 2015; Packer, 2015; Misra, 2017). This study looks at how those programs, policies, and organizations have implemented their interventions, how they include the social-psychological approach of Interactive Conflict Resolution, and if they are perceived as successfully addressing the divide between immigrants and the greater French society.

The situation in France is particularly interesting because it includes components of post-colonial integration from the colonization of Africa, identity and value-based tension between distinct groups, minority and marginalized populations, and intractable conflict. Additionally, it is a unique study of conflict management due to the many large- and small-scale interventions already implemented, in a context wherein France is a developed country with stable institutions and laws to help enforce policy and law. Although the situation is a well studied and examined issue, the conflict persists, perceived by many as unchanged (Misra, 2017; Fisher, 2014).

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Because this conflict has aspects of post-colonization, is in a developed nation, and deals with ethnic, political, and social principles, findings from this research could be applied to many other conflicts including Indigenous reconciliation, and immigrant integration in Canada. This thesis focuses on the area of *Seine-Saint-Denis* in Paris, where the largest population of immigrants in Paris reside, the highest density of poverty exists, where the riots of 2005 occurred that engaged the international community, and where arguably the most tension still exists today. It looks specifically at the programs that have been implemented in *Seine-Saint-Denis* by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the impact they are having on bridging the cultural gap between immigrants and the greater French society.

Migration has happened throughout France's history, with large influxes of immigrants coming from France's post-war "guest worker policy" to rebuild after World War II, and even more after the colonial wars of the Maghreb, Northern Africa, in the 1950s and 1960s (Newman, 2013). Maghreb and West African colonial immigrants make up the largest immigrant groups in France and their integration into the French identity has been ignored at the best of times, and met with violence and oppression at the worst (Moran, 2017). It is a particularly contentious subject in France's history, and post-colonial present, due to the bloody independence wars in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, and the treatment of colonials in France. It is considered, "the least digestible aspect of France's colonial story," (Packer, 2015). While the majority of immigrants from previous French colonies were granted the title of French citizen and gained all that comes with the values of The Republic, they were generally considered French in name but not in practise (Moran, 2017). They were subject to both social and physical exclusion, and although they ascribe to the national identity of France, they are, "denied cultural citizenship based on their ethnic origins" (Beaman, 2015, p. 37).

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The French identity is built on the values of the Republic, liberty, equality, and fraternity, with equality being of particular importance to current tensions in France. The French Republican model means that each individual citizen interacts with the state as an individual not part of a community. French citizen's religion, ethnicity, and values are their own and practiced privately, never in public, and that they are French before anything else (d'Appolonia, 2009). In other words, any differentiation breeds inequality in the Republic, whether that be ethnicity, religion, background, or situation, and is therefore not acknowledged and considered illegal in many cases. There are no Algerian-French, Tunisian- French, Malian-French, Vietnamese-French, or Lebanese-French, there is simply those who are French and those who are not; no hyphenates. This duality – French and those not quite French – creates an ‘otherness’ distinct from, but not unlike the otherness of Indigenous Peoples in Canada or USA's current struggles with racial identity (Chideya, 2014). These circumstances and the specificity of French nationalism have bred an entire generation of non – European, immigrant French citizens with few prospects because of this “otherness”, even though they seemly have all the same rights and opportunities as any other French citizen (Beaman, 2015; Packer, 2015).

This difference in opportunities, success, and quality of life between immigrants of different ethnic backgrounds and the greater French society has not gone unnoticed by the halls of Elysée. Though the values of the Republic do not allow the government to directly target those of immigrant status or of specific backgrounds (Simon, 2008), the government has focused many interventions on the impoverished areas of France, which not-coincidentally house the majority of France's immigrants. The French government has implemented policies and programs to address the lower economic status, the lower quality of life, and the limited physical mobility of those in impoverished areas, most notably through the *Politique de la Ville* started in

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the 1980s. These policies or government interventions primarily address what Maslow's hierarchy would consider the first tier of needs, the physical needs of safety, security, food, and shelter (Maslow, 1943). The government has done this through upgrading infrastructure, providing policing and enforcement for security, and improving housing and transportation (Moran, 2017; Misra, 2017). More recently it has also included an emphasis on employment diversity, access to healthcare and legal systems, and access to education (2018, Rapport du DDCCS). While the *Politique de la Ville* has made an impact on the lives of those living in the *banlieues*, suburbs of major French cities where the majority of immigrants reside (Packer, 2015), these interventions have not moved past basic physical needs.

This thesis examines the interventions implemented by non-government actors in the impoverished *banlieue* of *Seine-Saint-Denis* to determine what interventions are having an impact, what is seen as successful, what part does government policy play, and how success is measured. By using interviews to examine the experiences and perceptions of members of the organizations that work within the community, it can be determined what variables or aspects of the programs appear to be having the greatest impact. Furthermore, these interviews give an opportunity to understand if any interventions are addressing Maslow's second tier of needs, the psychological requirements for identity, belonging, and purpose. Fisher (2014) argued that inter-group conflict, especially those with cultural or identity based concerns, are, "both an objective and subject phenomenon and attempts to address only one set of factors or the other is doomed to failure" (p. 241). The data from this study may well demonstrate that the French have not integrated the subjective side of this conflict, the identity of immigrants, into their interventions. This suggests that addressing only the first of tier of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the physical safety, is not enough and the second tier, the psychological aspects, must also be considered and

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addressed to have any success in managing inter-group conflict. This thesis argues that while the interventions from the *Politique de la Ville*, the government, and NGOs are making a difference to the physical needs and quality of life for immigrants in France, without addressing the psychological and social needs of immigrants, it will be next to impossible to prevent the conflict between France and its immigrants from escalating into violence and reaching an intractable threshold (Fisher, 2009; Fisher, 2014; Coleman, 2014; Coleman 2018).

This research was designed as face-to-face interviews with non-governmental organizations implementing programs in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, Paris. The French government has focused on infrastructure and economic based solutions, therefore this study targets NGOs because they have the ability to focus on people-based solutions which often leads to grass-roots movements and capacity building (Hanlon & Kenneth, 2016). Seven organizations that fit the parameters of the study were interviewed with a set of questions that focused on how they used interpersonal interaction, dialogue, conflict analysis, and problem solving in their programs. They were also asked what they thought was making a difference, what they thought were barriers to their success, and how they measured success.

The study found that there was perceived impact on bridging the cultural divide between France and its immigrants were face-to-face interactions were able to break down social stigma and barriers between participants. It also found that only one of the seven programs interviewed dealt with the psychological and identity issues of being ethnically different in France, suggesting that Maslow's second tier is not being widely addressed by government or NGO interventions. Additionally, all the participants noted a lack of evaluation and data around not only the efficacy of the programs, but also regarding the demographics of immigrant populations. The interviews revealed a consensus for the government to collect and disseminate

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data relating to ethnicity, background, and immigration status to better inform programs and provide more impactful interventions, something currently considered illegal in France. Finally, there was an emergent theme around the definition of equality within the Republic and a need to provide tools and opportunities that create equity within that scope of equality. In other words, there is a need to see people as having differing needs based on their history, ethnicity, and background, and that unique tools need to be developed to help different types of people have equal access to opportunities, services, and benefits of the Republic.

This thesis uses cross-discipline concepts to inform the research and analysis of the data. First, in the Literature Review, it will discuss the historical and current background of the conflict between France and its immigrants, define the issue through systems theory and simplicity science as the basis of conflict analysis, and discuss the use of Ronald Fisher's (1994; 2011; 2015) Interactive Conflict Resolution as the social-psychological approach for research design. Second, the design, execution, and ethics of the research are explained in the methodology section. Third, the data will be delivered in the results section with an emphasis on direct quotations from the interviews. Fourth, the discussion brings together the theoretical background with the results and provides an analysis of what interventions are having an impact, how policy and government are players, and how evaluation and measurement can be included. Finally, this thesis will include a conclusion section with recommendations for further study and consideration.

Literature Review

History and Background

This background provides a base of understanding the forces underpinning the cultural conflict that exists in Paris and France, giving a strong basis for analysis. It looks at the migration of Maghreb immigrants into France, the creation of *les banlieues*, values of *la République Française*, and the escalation of violent conflict in marginalized communities of Paris. Furthermore, this section of the literature review explores the policies and programs implemented to address the cultural divide, demonstrating the focus on infrastructure and objective concerns without addressing the subjective as Fisher's ICR theory would suggest. While literature and statistics on programs that deal specifically with ethnicity in France are rare because it is unconstitutional and illegal for the state to ask for documentation on race, religion, or ethnicity under the values of the Republic, there is a long history of policy regarding the cultural divide in marginalized communities in Paris, the social programs implemented, both government and non, and the conflict theories that support the management of this conflict (Simon, 2008; Tribalat, 2004; Packer, 2015; Fisher, 2009).

Migration Maghreb of Immigrants

The Maghreb is an area of Northern Africa consisting of contemporary Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, and Algeria, and is predominantly Muslim. It was a particularly contentious area in France's colonial history due to the bloody independence wars of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the continued unease over the number of Islamic immigrants moving into France (Packer, 2015). While the migration of Maghreb people into France started as early as the 1900s (Barou, 2014), it was World War I, World War II, and the wars of independence in Northern Africa that brought many immigrants into France (Beaman, 2015). In fact, by the late 1960s, as many as

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800,000 immigrants from the Maghreb alone were living in France (Winant, 2001). In the 1970s a work shortage caused the government to halt immigration of non-European workers, leading to migrant workers choosing to settle permanently in France rather than returning to their homelands (Body-Gendrot, 1993). In the 1980s and 90s, wives and children of existing French immigrants, predominately Maghreb, accounted for more than half of the 120,000 new immigrants registered yearly, many of them settling in the suburbs of the cities (Barou, 2014, p. 10). While France has hosted many immigrants from many different backgrounds, the Maghreb make up the largest ethnic group who settled in France in the 1900s and still hold that position today (Noiriel, 1996; Beauchemin et al., 2018).

Creation of *Les Banlieues*

As wave after wave of immigrants moved into of France, Maghreb and otherwise, the government built massive, austere, and minimalist concrete housing projects in large cities. These housing developments are called *cités*, and while originally thought to be utopias for new immigrants and migrant workers, they have become synonymous with poverty, violence, and communities isolated from the rest of society (Packer, 2015). *Cités* are generally situated in suburban communities on the outskirts of major cities, called *banlieues*, with few social services and poor transportation links, isolated from the greater French society. Manuel Valls, former Prime Minister of France, addressed the social divide between inhabitants of the *banlieues* and French society saying that it is a, "geographic, social, and ethnic apartheid" (Sandford, 2015). Being from these communities, especially from *les cités* of Paris, is not just geographically segregating but psychologically isolating as well, where an Arabic name or address from these communities causes discrimination in employment opportunities, education, and daily life (Packer, 2015). The suburban areas northeast of the centre of Paris are the poorest regions in

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France and house the largest population of immigrants in the Greater Paris Area (Misra, 2017). These areas have become notorious for drugs, violence, and poverty, so much so that in 2015 they became known as “no-go zones” (Moran, 2017). Paris is seen as having a racial and cultural border with the dark-skinned immigrants on the outer ring, outside the periphery road, and the white French society on the inner ring inside the periphery road, in the historical *arrondissements*.

Values of *la République Française*

The history of France and its values of *la République* also play a large part in the growing cultural gap between the immigrant community and French society. The French Revolution of 1789 was the beginning of the much-cherished French Republic, where the principles of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* (liberty, equality, brotherhood) were born and remain concrete pillars of the government. It is so ingrained into French society that adopting the values of the Republic is what makes you French, and “being French is supposed to surpass all other identities, including religious, ethnic, linguistic, and regional” (Bertossi, 2007). This leads to another pillar of French society, *laïcité*, the division of church and state that was developed into law in 1905 to allow religion to be practiced freely by everyone (Moran, 2017, p. 323). Bowen (2008) argued that the laws being enacted in contemporary France, for example the 2004 law against religious symbols in public including headscarves, are seen as a way to protect *laïcité* from Islam and its practices. Numerous journalists, activists and researchers have published articles and essays on how *laïcité* is under attack by Islam and immigrants of France (Fourest, 2016; Hussey, 2014). On the other side, journalists’ activists, and researchers have been saying for years that different ethnicities, religions, and background play no part in *laïcité*. According to Nacira Guénif-Souilamas (2014, interview, at 4:13 minutes), a professor in Paris of Maghreb background, “There is nothing to

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defend, because there is no threat against *laïcité* today in France. This idea has to stop.”

Hargreaves (2015) argued that the laws of *laïcité* have shifted from its original values of protecting religious freedoms, through the division of church and state, to an excuse to repress and control Islam in France and by proxy, French immigrants. A simplistic view of so-called ‘French values’ versus ‘Muslim values’ rose to the surface of local discussions due to the large amounts of Islamic immigrants moving to France, creating further discomfort and distance between the emerging communities, specifically in Paris. From experience, even bringing up these issues in casual conversation leads to uncomfortable silences and a vague response like, “yes, those people have problems”.

Escalation of Violence

France’s bloody colonial past, segregation of immigrants into outlying communities, and rooted values of the Republic have led to a constant escalation of violence in Paris. Chrisafis (2015) asserted that escalated violent activities are a "sign of hopelessness of a generation stuck in dismal *Banlieues*, marginalized and jobless because of their address, skin color or their parents’ immigrant origins." (Third paragraph). Andrew Hussey (2014) wrote an entire book about the growing disenchantment and fundamentalism of the Muslim immigrant population in Paris and French suburban areas. He predicted the escalations of violence in 2015, and in his afterward, added to address the Charlie Hebdo attacks and the shooting at the Bataclan, he noted,

“There is a case to be made that the attacks are all facets of the tortured relationship between France and Algeria. Without bringing the story of France, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia bang up to date, there is no way of understanding the twisted narrative that has led to the darkness engulfing France” (Hussey, 2015, p. 410)

A major driver of this conflict is the assumed requirement of all persons French to adopt the values of the Republic over those of their homelands, religions, or families (Bertossi, 2007).

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An example is the tension between the laws of freedom of speech and the ability to depict the Prophet Mohammad, prohibited by Islam to ward off idol worship (Burke, 2015). This was allegedly the catalyst in the Charlie Hebdo attacks in 2015 and was particularly polarizing in France, creating the #JeSuisCharlie hash tag on social media, implying that anyone who was not with Charlie was against Charlie. This led to a divide in public opinion between being French and being Muslim where people who defended the values of Islam were seen as justifying the Charlie Hebdo attacks. Anything other than outright condemnation, without caveats, was considered against freedom of speech, France, the values of the Republic, and thus against French identity (Moran, 2017, p. 318). This adds to the simplified us versus them mentality of Islamic values as a direct opposition to the values for France.

Vidal (2005) asked why French society blames the inhabitants of *les banlieues* rather than turning that finger towards a society that does not offer equal rights and opportunities to all (p. 20). Downing (2017) asserted that the Islamic immigrants of France were so rejected from and disillusioned with French society, that they found a sense of community in the fundamental extremism of ISIS and Al-Qaeda. In research aimed at finding the roots of radicalization, it was found that resentment and failure to identify with the host society are indicators on the path to fundamentalism and terrorism (Kundnani, 2012, p. 9). Integration into the broader French community was not available, so a new community of frustrated extremists was formed outside the host society.

French Policy

Under the values of *la République*, there is a voluntary recognition that citizens are French before anything else and that French values are more universal and stronger than any other held beliefs (Barou, 2014, p. 3). Before the 1980s, there was not substantial talk about

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integration because it was assumed that everyone who immigrated to France would follow the ideals of the Republic and assimilate to adopt the French way of life. In the mid-1970s, political offices began to talk about integration rather than assumed assimilation due to the influx of predominantly Islamic immigrant families settling in the *banlieues*, and experiencing halted upward social mobility due to failing education systems, segregation in the suburbs, and racial discrimination (Dubet and Lapeyronne, 1992). These circumstances led directly to the urban riots in the 1980s and caused the newly appointed socialist government of Francois Mitterrand to question the validity of integration over assumed assimilation (Barou, 2014). In 1982, a new policy, eventually called the *Politique de la Ville*, was put forth with the sole aim of addressing negative aspects of marginalized communities like crumbling infrastructure, lack of public services and facilities, unemployment, violence, educational decline, and delinquency (Donzelot, 1991). In 1990, the High Council for Integration was created, stating, “neither assimilation nor insertion, integration refers to the participation of the whole French people, and not only of immigrant descent, in the public sphere of the national community” (2005: 34 translation JB).

Under the *Politique de la Ville*, marginalized communities are chosen by socio-economic status to receive funding with aims to minimize the wealth gap. These communities are called *les quartiers prioritaires*. By 2004, the results of the urban policy were not entirely insignificant with housing, public services, transportation improved (Estébe, 2004). However, the unemployment rate for immigrants in *les quartiers prioritaires* was still much higher than the rest of Paris, violence and delinquency had increased, with identity towards the values of Islam over those of France starting to become the norm (Fitoussi et al. 2004). In a 2012 study of France economic statistics, it was found that the second-generation immigrants, born French citizens, had a stronger attachment to religion than their parents and significantly stronger that of

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a French National (Algan, Landais, and Senik, p. 13). Packer (2015) stated that, “more jobs and better housing won’t put an end to French jihadism” (p. 37). In 2005, after riots consumed the suburban communities again, President Jacques Chirac vowed to fight the marginalization of immigrants, saying, “*Vous pouvez compter sur ma détermination*” (Chirac, public speech) translated as ‘you can count on my determination.’ In the years that followed, truly little was done, making the President’s promises empty and the effectiveness of the *Politique de la Ville* was put into question. (Moran, 2017). The empty promises of the French government led the immigrant populations to continue to escalate the cultural segregation into violence (Hargreaves, 2015). Packer (2015) stated that, “the sense of exclusion in the *banlieues* is an acute problem that the Republic has neglected for decades.” A study was instigated called Trajectories and Origins (TeO) by the National Institute of Demographic Studies (*Institute national d’études démographiques INED*) to gather data, both quantitative and qualitative, from France’s immigrants to better understand their backgrounds and experiences (Beauchemin et al, 2018; 2011). This study was supported and approved by the state, which limits the amount of data that can be collected or shared on ethnic, racial, religious, but due to the public outcry on this matter, allowed INED to conduct the study. It was released in 2018 and concluded that an alarming percentage of immigrants of non-European origin lived in poverty in *quartiers prioritaires*, experienced violence, had difficulty getting jobs, and did not subscribe to the French Identity. It also found that there was a correlation between those who felt discriminated against and those who were tangibly impacted in employment, promotions, and access to education, based on their ethnicity.

Nicholas Sarkozy (2008) and André Macron (2018) also attempted to address the issue under the *Politique de la Ville*, although since 2003 the bulk of the funding has gone solely

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towards urban infrastructure renewal. The inclination towards infrastructure upgrades are an attempt to follow the values of the Republic and equalize the social-economic gap in a race-neutral way (Misra, 2017). The focus on infrastructure deficiencies rather than on the value-based identity challenges faced by isolated members of French society is the main criticism of these policies (Kepel, 2012). Furthermore, the ridged interpretation of *laïcité* and the continued insistence of the Republic to implement policies that restrict religious symbols, including Islamic clothing and head scarves, puts tension between Islamic values and French societal values. Moran (2017) stated that, in marginalized communities, high unemployment, delinquency, crime, and poverty are the fabric of daily life, creating a social, economic, and physical culture gap between those who live in these communities and those from French background. In 2017, visible minority immigrants in *les banlieues* did not feel that the government policies have positively impacted their lives over the last 10 years (Misra, 2017). A study done by Jean Beaman (2013) on middle-class, second-generation North African immigrants in Paris, found that while they had achieved educational heights, were employed at good jobs, and had a fidelity to the French Republican values, they have not had their French identity acknowledged by the host society, so despite their middle-class achievements, they continue to feel isolated and marginalized. This suggests that the focus of French policy on the socio-economic divide and adequate housing and infrastructure has not successfully bridged the cultural divide between immigrants in France and greater French society.

Programs Implemented

One of the main programs to come out of the policies of the *Politique de la Ville* was social mediators hired by private organizations like transit systems, housing developments, municipal governments, and to a lesser extent police department (Biotteau, 2007). The positions

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were created in the 1990s and at one point there was over 20,000 social mediator positions registered in France (Robert, 2001). The social mediators were to be a social buffer between authorities and the marginalized immigrant population (Stébé, 2012). These positions were initially well received by the communities and filled a need for employment within the marginalized communities. However, problems with trustworthiness, fraud, ostracization from working against the community, and lack of authority started to cause problems (Stébé, 2012; Biotteau, 2007). There were additional concerns that putting untrained, unprepared mediators in conflict situations was bad for not only the community, but also the social mediators themselves, to say nothing of the profession of mediation (Biotteau, 2007). Most of the social mediator positions in Paris have translated into less of a mediator position and more of a social planning position like organizing soccer games, art events, or social outings. Some municipalities, like Bondy in the *Seine-Saint-Denis* suburb of Paris, have maintained the social mediators due to ongoing optimism.

In addition to the programs directly influenced by the *Politique de la Ville*, non-government organizations have a presence in *les quartiers prioritaires* as well. Many of the programs are aimed at increasing education, finding employment, and creating community. There are a handful of organizations that have achieved a reputation of being impactful with both the residents of these areas and the government. Breen-Smyth (2014) suggested that an entry point into the issue would be to change the perception that *banlieues* are 'suspect communities' by French society because of the poverty, violence, and arguably non-French activities that reside there, and that the *banlieues* need to change not the greater society.

The biggest criticism of the programs that are currently operating in *les quartiers prioritaires* is that there is no mechanism for evaluation that allows the government or the

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citizens to understand their success (Kumeda et al, 2009). The government has little to no oversight over the outcomes of grant funded programs and has no perceivable mechanism in place to cumulatively evaluate them. Moreover, even if programs do have an evaluation mechanism, there is no way to compare this to other programs that do the same thing because there is no standardized system.

Conflict Analysis

One of the core components of conflict management is the ability to understand the causes, manifestations, escalations, and potential de-escalations of a conflict (Fisher, 2014). It is important to be able to define the type of conflict under investigation, identify the systemic factors that contribute to it, and find the patterns of escalation. Is it also important to understand the conflict so interventions can be tailored to have the most impact. This study focuses on the use of ICR as a way to intervene in ethno-political conflict. This section of the literature review defines the conflict between France and its immigrants, identifies the main factors of identity, principles, and simplicity theory that underpin the situation, and demonstrates a pattern of escalation using Fisher's theory of escalation.

Defining the Conflict

With a strong background explained in the previous section, it is understood that there are differences in values and identity between those considered to be of French descent and those who have come from elsewhere, mainly those of Arabic or African ethnicity. The largest group of immigrants in France come from predominately Islamic nations with cultural norms that differ from those of France. France has a long history of a division between government and religion, most notably in its laws and values of *laïcité* (secularism) explained previously. Islam is not a religion that is easily practiced behind closed doors, separate from everyday life, with

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headscarves being a particularly visual representation of this. Fisher (2009) noted that many post-cold war conflicts were not, “primarily over ideology, or even resources, but over issues of identity, recognition, and justice – and the power to achieve these” (p. 328). Ted Gurr (1993) defined this type of tension over identity as ‘ethno-political conflicts’ where minority populations are marginalized politically, economically, and culturally by governing majorities. The situation in France would fit into this definition as the laws of France do not allow immigrants to freely and openly practice their religion or culture (Moran, 2017), immigrants are at a higher risk of poverty and living in impoverished areas (Beauchemin et al., 2011; 2018), and the ethnic background of immigrants impacts their ability to be accepted into French society, including employment opportunities (Beaman, 2015). France has never been particularly accepting of other cultures, most recently Arabic and Islamic, into the fabric of their national identity. It has slipped in anyways with kabab and halal restaurants lining Haussmann streets, mosques in every neighbourhood, and more areas of the cities being visibly ethnically diverse. Ethnic or cultural norms of this sort, that demonstrate or celebrate the identity of an ‘othered’ group can be perceived as a threat and increase fears from people who do not share that identity (Ross, 2000, p. 1019). This concern of what identity is French and what identity is not is a central factor to the conflict between the immigrants and greater French society.

Contributing Systemic Factors

The conflict between immigrants and greater French society impacts French citizens, notably of Maghreb, African, or Middle Eastern decent, who feel that even though they ascribe to the French Identity, they are yet to be accepted as French by the greater society (Beaman, 2015). Beaman (2015) stated that, “part of claiming an identity is having compatriots accept that identity” (p. 44). Additionally, there is public debate in France about what they consider French,

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and who is part of the national identity (Cowell, 2009). Concerns over identity and values or principles are integral factors in ethno-political conflicts.

Mayer (2015) stated that principles or values (used interchangeably) are directly attached to our identity and adherence to these principles is germane in helping us be successful and achieve our goals. This concept of identity links to the psychological needs of Maslow's second tier (Maslow, 1943) and additionally is cited in Mayer's framework for conflict analysis as part of identity-based needs, at the centre of his wheel of conflict (Mayer, 2012). Identity should therefore be considered a critical human need and should be included at the epicentre of conflict analysis. Mayer (2015) argued that, "a conflict that is values or identity based becomes more charged and intractable," (p. 8) due to the strong adherence to principle without the flexibility of compromise. People generally feel that their core principles are part of what makes them who they are, their identity, and any compromise of their principles would be a direct threat to how they live and what they believe. This can be seen in the fierce protection of *laïcité* by French society and the refusal to compromise the principles of the Republic to accommodate the different cultural practices of immigrants in France. There is an argument that the laws of *laïcité*, the separation of government and things like religion, race, or ethnicity, are being enacted in contemporary France as a way to protect the society from Islam and its practices, for example, the 2004 law against religious symbols in public including headscarves (Fourest, 2008). Kelman (1978) supported this assessment suggesting that in identity conflicts,

"fulfillment of the other's national identity is perceived by each side as equivalent to destruction of one's own...thus neither side can be expected to move to accept the other unless and until it develops a sense of assurance that its own existence is secure" (p. 170-71).

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Mayer noted that principle and compromise are often seen as opposites but are actually both needed in conflict management (2015, p. 139). In France, the system's inability to be flexible in accommodating important aspects of immigrant's identity is one of the reasons the French government focuses on physical needs instead of the emotional, psychological needs of its citizens. This allows for building of infrastructure but does not address the main issue that makes immigrants "the other". The strict adherence to France's own principles is one of the causes of unrest because it does not allow the flexibility to openly practice differing cultures, creating marginalization of immigrants and inciting a differentiation between them and what is seen as French. French society has essentially created a paradox where adhering to the principles of the Republic creates inequality, a concept directly in opposition of the strongly held Republic value of equality. Mayer's theory suggests that this is because of a lack of balance between principle and compromise.

Beaman (2015) stated that "under the French Republican model, acknowledging difference is seen as propagating difference" (p. 38). However, while the values of the Republic are directly opposed to ethnic or racial oppression, in reality the French Identity relies on ethnic and racial indicators in its construction (Kastoryano, 2004). If principles are seen as essential to identity, which is the case of both the French Republic and immigrants from different backgrounds, the more intense the conflict and the more likely people will see the conflict as a clear cut issue of right and wrong, creating polarization (Mayer, p. 138). This argument demonstrates the type of social polarities that exist in France, a strong indicator of intractable conflict and an entry into the examination of Simplicity theory, an integral part of intractable conflict analysis (Coleman, 2003).

Simplicity Theory

Another theory to consider in the analysis of this conflict is simplicity theory which leads into understanding intractable conflict and polarization. Burgess and Burgess (1996) noted that conflicts do not start out as enduring and unmoveable, “but can emerge from important issues like moral and identity issues, high stakes resources, or struggle for power or self determination”. Coleman (2011) goes farther by stating that as time goes on, for more than 20 years, these conflicts can attract other people and parties, becoming more complicated, and start to threaten basic human security, needs, or values, making them resistant to change (p. 708). As this tension in France has been alive in public discourse for over 40 years, it fits into the model for an intractable conflict because it is enduring, there is a national discussion implying lots of parties involved, and it deals with identity and belonging issues. Furthermore, to support the categorization as intractable conflict, these types of conflict are often rooted in a history of colonialism, ethnocentrism, racism, or human rights disputes, which France very clearly has (Azar, 1990).

A main component of intractable conflicts is the collapse of complexity in between individuals or groups, leading to reinforcing feedback loops that simplify and align issues into an us versus them pattern of behavior (Coleman, 2014). The previously mentioned paradox between adherence to principle as opposed to measured compromise is a contributing factor to the us versus them mentality in France. Coleman (2014) noted that this type of polarization causes people to align separate issues into one larger cause, and events that might have been unattached are now seen as associated with the opposite side. In France, this kind of break down in complexity has been seen in the strict adherence to *laïcité*, the unwillingness to see people as different, and the unmoveable boundaries surrounding the French National Identity. Often, when

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this breakdown in complexity occurs, societies become deeply invested in these polarized identities, making it one of the primary obstacles to overcome to build sustainable dialogue and start a peace process (Coleman, 2011). When a conflict reaches this level, it becomes resistant to outside intervention as it starts to feed itself (Coleman, 2018).

Coleman (2014) described a worldview of conflict that deals with the pathology or the diagnosis of the conflict like a disease. This way of looking at a conflict, “views the conflict as a complicated system made up of various interrelated parts that exist as an objective reality and can be analyzed and understood directly and treated accordingly” (p. 713). Volkan’s (1998) work supports Coleman, suggesting that conflict management should focus on what is wrong in the system and treat it, like a doctor would a disease. Looking at Volkan’s deficit model and applying Coleman’s pathology worldview to the tensions in France, we can see that the issue would be that the segregation of immigrants, particularly those of Islamic origin, and the refusal of French society to include the background of these citizens into their National Identity. The presenting symptoms are economic inequality, difference in quality of life, escalation of violence, and ethnically skewed policies and programs, all of which have contributed to the breakdown of complexity and the polarization of identities in French society.

Coleman (2014) suggested that intractable conflicts grow differently than regular conflict. They are non-linear, which means they start slow, then hit a specific threshold, after which they grow catastrophically and spread exponentially, feeding themselves and becoming resistant to outside intervention (p. 713). Coleman (2018) stated that to manage these types of conflicts, “ a radically different approach is required (p. 13)” and that we have to, “shift focus from resolving conflicts to transforming the contexts that enable and sustain them (p. 21)”. Thinking of the tension between France and its immigrants as an ethno-political, intractable

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conflict that is bubbling at its threshold, we can potentially determine how to prevent it from escalating into a conflict that will most likely turn bloody, destructive, and enduring. If the interventions the government and non-government organizations have implemented in France over the last 40 years are having an impact on the conflict system, we can potentially pinpoint which ones are de-escalating the conflict. This helps understand what interventions are having the greatest impact on the parties involved and confirms what type of approach is best suited to interventions in this context.

Social-Psychological Approach

Understanding the history of cultural tensions in France and the contributing factors that have escalated the conflict will prepare the way to intervene and potentially manage the conflict to de-escalate tensions. The cultural issues in France are not based on resources, or even solely based on power dynamics, therefore interest-based interventions like negotiation, mediation, or diplomacy are not the greatest fit. France has thus far focused on tangible changes but has not addressed the subjective identity conflict when implementing programs to bring equality to the Republic. Saunders (2000) stated that deep rooted social conflicts are outside of the realm of what government can manage alone. He continued by saying, “people do not negotiate about their identities, historic grievances, dignity, hopes and fears,” and it is really citizens, not government that, “change human relationships and reconnect the severed sinews necessary to bridge divides in a functional society” (Saunders, 2000, p. 252). To an extent, France has recognized that bridging cultural issues is not an endeavor that can live solely with the government and has demonstrated some support for grass-roots, non-government organizations in building tools for marginalized peoples and helping provide access to services. This starts to create a multi-level peace process and encourages what Saunders calls a, “public peace-making

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effort” (Saunders, 2000, p. 252). He suggested non-official processes that increase dialogue, face-to-face interaction, and conflict analysis can change relationships in inter-group tension. Such efforts would go farther than what the French government has done to bridge the cultural differences. There is an existing process, a form of track-two diplomacy, developed into theory during the 1990s and early 2000s called Interactive Conflict Resolution that fits the social-psychological needs for managing the conflict between France and its Immigrants. The field of track-two diplomacy is quite diverse where the conflict management is conducted in non-official ways with non-state actors. So instead of government officials having discussions, track-two takes it to the people, a more grass-roots form of conflict management in addition to official channels (Diamond & McDonald, 1991). Interactive Conflict Resolution is a particular form of track-two diplomacy where unofficial dialogue and small group interaction are used to reflect on the subjective experiences, feelings and views of the parties involved in the conflict in the hopes of creating a better understanding of all perspectives (Saunders, 2000). This type of conflict intervention, where the social psychological experiences are taken into consideration, would be the most appropriate form of conflict intervention to deliver in the French context.

Interactive Conflict Resolution

Interactive Conflict Resolution, ICR for short, is a systematic method of bringing parties together to discuss differences, analyze the conflict, and create solutions for management and reconciliation. Ronald Fisher (1993) describes the process as small groups of unofficial representatives engaging in problem solving discussions regarding the issues and tensions they experience in their communities. Fisher (1997) added to this concept, including a larger selection of interventions by stating that ICR is,

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“facilitated face-to-face activities in communication, training, education, or consultation that promote collaborative conflict analysis and problem solving among parties engaged in protracted conflict in a manner that addresses basic human needs and promotes the building of peace, justice, and equality.”

Fisher (2009) noted that the main purpose of ICR is to get parties to increase cooperative interactions and create qualities of respect and trust in their relationships, leading to de-escalation and management of the inter-group conflict. ICR is built on a framework that includes three main activities of dialogue, conflict analysis, and problem solving (Rothman, 1997). Dialogue being, “the respectful exchange of information, the clarification of differences, and the creation of shared meaning,” (Fisher 2009, p. 335), moving into analysis of the conflict that allows for examination and understanding of the underlying causes for all the parties, and finally the problem solving aspect that looks for innovation and collaboration in addressing the conflict through tangible activities (Fisher, 2009). ICR considers a number of critical components of inter-group conflict and creates a process based on those components, specifically addressing both objective and subjective underlying causes, including cultural differences in the analysis of the tensions, and working towards is a goal of social change (Fisher, 2014). ICR has had some great success in dealing with cultural and identity inter-group conflict because it includes these three components in its process, making it a strong theory to use in the analysis and potential resolution of the conflict in France.

Successful ICR interventions in ethno-political conflict

Andrea Bartoli (2005) considered the impacts of ICR on the peace process in Mozambique, a country that was engulfed in a sixteen-year civil war caused by an ethnically diverse population, an independence movement to end Portuguese colonization, and a radical new leader that favored nationalist and socialist policy, “an approach that clashed with traditional

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identities and local structures of power” (p. 80). Bartoli stated that the civil war in Mozambique ended and the violence ceased because of, “a prolonged investment in communication, problem solving and institution building [that] made possible a cooperative peace, which is lasting” (p. 80, 2005). Bartoli credits the Mozambicans themselves, the greater society, as the bringers of peace by addressing the tensions, incompatibilities, and apparent antimonies, creating space to consider alternatives, specifically through a religious group called the Community of Sant’Egidio. It was through this Community that face-to-face communications about interests, experiences, and needs of the Mozambique people were able to be expressed and addressed by unofficial members of the two parties, the government and the military. In 1990, after a long, sustained communication between the parties with the Community of Sant’Egidio as a third party intervener, a peace process was decided, and the re-building of Mozambique as a united county started (Bartoli, 2005, p. 104). This demonstrates the success at using face-to-face interactions to discuss all facets of the conflict, and create relationships that were, “long term, open, transparent, respectful, and allowed for the exploration of political options not otherwise available” (p. 90).

Saunders (2005) showed success for face-to-face dialogue processes in addressing the conflict in Tajikistan after the end of Russian colonization. Outside intervention, from either Russia or the United states was not welcomed, so Saunders used the Dartmouth Conference Regional Conflicts Task Force to create a sustained dialogue between non-leadership members of all parties, where “enemies might talk safely,” (p,133). The idea was that only those people actually involved in the conflict would be the ones to transform the relationships and come up with peaceful ways forward, so an opportunity for those people to interact and collaborate needed to be created. These semi-grass roots meetings took place in different locations for a

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number of years and grew to include a large number of participants, facilitated by the task force. Eventually, this dialogue paved the way and provided a basis for leaders in Tajikistan to start negotiations about how to stop the violence and create a peaceful government. By having non-formal discussion between members of the parties, the dialogue was able to address barriers to formal negotiation that occurred both between parties and within parties (Saunders, 2005, p. 138). This suggests that ICR with non-official participants can create a solid path for governments to start discussions about policy change and allows non-government actors to help facilitate agreements between those in power.

Kaufman and Sosnowski (2005) discussed how it was important in the Peru-Ecuador Peace process to , “generate new ideas outside the box of official negotiations that civil society can follow and sustain because, in the end, it is people, and not political institutions, who find their basic identities affected by conflict” (p. 177). While diplomatic and government negotiations were necessary to end the Peru – Ecuador border wars that had gone on since the independence from Spanish rule, The ‘Grupo Maryland’, an initiative from the University of Maryland, brought people of common identities (location, profession, gender, etc.) together at all levels of the conflict to freely express opinions, brainstorm solutions, and support diplomatic process (Kaufman and Sosnowski, 2005). By building on common identities and using a variety of interactive methods, the Grupo Maryland allowed participants to build trust outside of the conflict and create collaborative relationships that could address diverse political ideas. Through these workshops, it was discovered that the non-official participants did not feel as strongly about the conflict as the military or even the lesser emphatic politicians, noting that if it was up to them the conflict would have been solved by now. Over the course of the four workshops, the participants were able to provide suggestions up to the formal negotiations that represented to the

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social feelings of the society, identified four areas of contention that needed addressing, built relationships that continued on past the signing of an accord, and felt empowerment of being able to influence diplomatic negotiations without being involved in the formal process (Kaufman, and Sosnowski, 2005, p. 197). This example shows that ICR can lead to the inclusion of civil society in discussions of conflict that is instrumental in setting key areas to address concern, empowering grass-roots decision making, and creating bonds between differing parties.

ICR in Non-diplomatic Arenas

The majority of examples of ICR uses and successes are in diplomatic or bi-lateral nation to nation discussions, but the successes of face-to-face interactions between participants of polarizing tensions can be translated even further into grass roots movements. The cognitive shifts in attitudes and empowerment, and the changes in empathy, trust, and cooperation can be seen in non-governmental organizations through mentorship opportunities, community associations, education programs, and interest groups. Fisher (2005) stated that intractability and polarization are common in conflicts that can benefit from ICR, and are almost considered to be triggers for the use of ICR as a form of intervention (p. 221), but does not necessarily require diplomatic participants in order to be effective. In France, it is an identity crisis between groups of citizens and the policies of their government that is causing the rise in tensions. While there have been persistent and cycling burst of violence, and many calls for solutions, it is a conflict that has not yet reached an overly destructive level of escalation that would require international peacekeeping forces.

The goal of applying ICR interventions in the French context would be to de-escalate ethno-political tensions before it reaches an insurmountable level of violent destruction, or its

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intractable conflict threshold. If, as the previous examples suggest, third party organizations can provide a opportunity for people to break down social barriers, collaborate on social issues, and come up with integrated solutions to complex identity problems in bi-lateral diplomatic situations to de-escalate political issues, then it could be argued that implementing the components and aspects of ICR into Non-government organizations France can de-escalate the tensions between French society and its immigrants. By looking at NGOs that include face-to-face interactions in their programs with the goals of, “communication, training, education, or consultation,” as directed by Fisher’s broad definition of ICR, it can be tested to see if the aspects of ICR have an impact of conflicts that are outside of the diplomatic realm. Additionally, it can be determined what aspects have the most impact at the grass roots level, and what links need to be made into the policy to de-escalate conflicts focusing on those aspects that are not easily negotiated. This concept takes ICR a step further than negotiated, agreement style conflict management and pushes it into a vehicle for societal change. Fisher (2005) indicated that one of the issues with ICR and its uses in the field of conflict management is that it’s evaluation has been lacking, and it is by mainly anecdotes from the practitioners and some participants that we understand its value. Fisher noted that further study and evaluation of ICR in different circumstances is needed to better understand its applications (p. 216.) d’Estrée et al. 2000 conducted an extensive review of ICR processes to better understand how to evaluate success, discovering that the defining an overarching criterion and including less-tangible concepts like behavioral change were, “the two primary challenges facing evaluation of these different interventions” (p.104). d’Estrée et al. (2000) also commented that understanding how participants defined success and collecting information on what they considered to be working and what was not, would continue to build a consensus around what criteria defined successful

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ICR interventions. By using the fundamentals of ICR as the basis for the methodology of the study, integrating it into the choosing of NGOs and the formation of the interview questions, it can be seen what aspects of the theory impacts changes in attitudes, shifts in perception, and potentially bridge the cultural gap between France and its immigrants.

Using ICR as the basis for the study, and understanding the history of the ethno-political conflict in France, in addition to conflict theories, allows this research to look at how interventions are deployed and measured in a situation with laws and enforcement. Using Mayer's ideas of principle and compromise, paired with Coleman's theory of intractable conflict, it can be argued that France is heading towards a more violent, more polarizing conflict that will grow larger and more complicated resisting outside intervention as it progresses. This study may demonstrate how interventions from non-government actors could play a significant part in slowing that progression to an intractable threshold. Additionally, if the social-psychological nature of this conflict is taken into account and included in the interventions, there is a chance that the conflict can be managed to a point where it does not reach intractability and long term violence can therefore be avoided.

Methodology

A general qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews with non-government organizations operating in the Greater Paris Area was conducted to assess the impact of their programs on bridging the cultural divide between immigrants and French Society. Qualitative research typically takes place in the natural world, is at its core an interpretative research design, and respects the humanity of its participants by applying numerous methods of study (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). General qualitative research is the appropriate methodology for this study as the proposed research aims at understanding the perspectives of those implementing the programs in marginalized communities in Paris, how French policy affects their impact on the cultural divide, and how the components of Interactive Conflict Resolution (ICR) are successfully implemented in this context. By using a qualitative design, the complexities and unique experiences of people will be gathered into one data set and can generate conclusions with more depth and accuracy (Dane, 2018). Furthermore, because qualitative research is a fluid and open-ended process, it is possible to go beyond superficial responses and logical thought to better understand the participant's emotions and values (Creswell, 2018). This research design offers a transformative theoretical framework which suggests research needs to be focused on changing policy, politics, or the social agenda to confront oppression at all levels (Mertens, 2010). This is a cross-sectional study and is not stratified due to legal requirements in France against collecting racial or ethnically differentiating information (Creswell, 2018, p. 149; Simon 2008; Tribalat 2004).

Research Location and Participants

The research focused on organizations operating in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, the communities northeast of central Paris, one of three departments in the Greater Paris Area. *Seine-Saint-Denis*

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is the poorest region in France and is home to the largest population of immigrants in the Greater Paris Area (Misra, 2017, Beauchemin et al., 2018). The majority of programs that address aspects of the cultural divide between immigrants and French society, both government and non-government, are focused in this area, also called the 93rd department, or *le quatre-vingt-treize* (HCI, 2011). Non-Government Organizations were the target of the study because, “NGOs are involved in all types of development activities that often seek to bypass state authority” (Hanlon & Kenneth, 2016, p. 110). This means that the constraints of the state and the actions of the state can be different than those of NGOs. The French government has focused on infrastructure and economic based solutions, NGOs working in this area of Paris have the ability to focus on people-based solutions which often leads to grass-roots movements and capacity building (Hanlon & Kenneth, 2016).

Interviews were held in-person at the office locations of the participating organizations in Paris to minimize a contrived atmosphere and to ensure the participant would feel comfortable in their own environment (Creswell, 2018, p. 181). The organizations were chosen based on programs implemented in *Seine-Saint-Denis* and their inclusion of one or more of the Interactive Conflict Resolution principles of face-to-face communication, training, education, and consultation with an impact on the divide between the immigrant population and greater French society (Fisher, 2009). As French laws do not allow the organizations to directly address the cultural conflict for fear that differentiation breeds inequality, the organizations selected predominantly included a form of interactive dialogue only. The components of conflict analysis and problem solving were less prevalent as they would require organizations to facilitate interactions that directly addressed the conflict rather than targeting the symptomatic issues in the hopes of impacting the culture gap. It is a non-probability sample, sometimes referred to as

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purposive sample, where participants were chosen based on availability and convenience rather than random sample due to the limited immersion into the society and the timelines of only three weeks in Paris to conduct the research (Creswell, 2018, p. 150). Furthermore, Tansey (2007) stated that if the aim is not to generalize about a greater population, but to, “uncover the causal mechanisms that link independent and dependant variables to one another in a particular context,” (p. 14), as it is in this context with the NGOs and ICR, then non-probability sampling is the best method. Due to the sensitive nature of this research and that organizations in France are legally not allowed to directly address the cultural differences between people, it is necessary to select a specific cross section of participants that deal with immigrant populations, that include a mandate of social change, and that include aspects of ICR. This is a small sample of organizations and with limited resources, time and effort are better spent on a small number of chosen organizations with the right characteristics rather than a larger random sample that may not include any relevant information to the study (Tansey, 2007).

Participants were chosen from a preliminary internet search, including government and non-government sites, to find organizations that fit the parameters of the study. This research identified 20 organizations and programs operating in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, with publicly available mandates that worked with immigrant populations. These organizations were invited to participate in the study through email invitations. The researcher was in Paris for three weeks starting January 6, 2020 to conduct interviews. However, these three weeks coincided with not only the largest transportation and public service strike France has seen in 35 years, but it also coincided with the global outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Two organizations agreed to participate a result of this initial invitation. The research was conducted by a Canadian, an outsider to both French and Maghreb society, and this influenced how participants viewed the

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questions and the research. Being an outsider was both an advantage and a barrier, where respondents explained things in greater detail because the researcher was not part of these communities, while others were hesitant to participate due to the sensitive nature of the topic and speaking to a foreigner. This was also experienced by other over-seas researchers in this field in France (Beaman, 2015). There was a concerted effort to refrain from imposing Canadian biases and norms on the research or the while conducting the interviews. Additionally, as it was regarding a particularly sensitive subject being researched and conducted by someone outside of the communities involved, additional methods of gaining participation, such as snowball sampling (Small, 2009), were used to find a larger selection of participants. Being present in Paris for the study was germane to the research, as it allowed for a better understanding of the feeling, sentiment, daily life, and structure of the communities. Additionally, because of the outsider status of the researcher, snowball sampling, where participants can indicate and suggest organizations that may be willing to participate after meeting in person, was key to getting access to organizations that may not have otherwise talked with an outside researcher. An additional five participants were found due to community connections and snowball sampling. With the time and accessibility limitations in mind, it became necessary to consider a clustering procedure of identifying organizations that do communicative or interactive interventions through community influencers, academics, and other contacts in the Greater Paris Area. As a result, four interviews were conducted in person, and three were done electronically.

An interview guide with timelines, consent process, introductory questions, primary and secondary research questions, as well as promoting questions was used to inform the interviews and communications with participants (Appendix B). It was sent during the initial request for participation making the themes and the goals of the interview transparent from the beginning.

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The questions for the interview guide are based on the principles of Interactive Conflict Resolution approach (Fisher, 1997) focusing on how organizations integrate dialogue, conflict analysis, and problem solving into their programs. Moreover, participants were asked how they integrate the social psychological approach into their programs by indicating how they use phenomenological lens, interactions, and systemic views (Fisher and Kelman, 2011). Finally, there were questions on how policy has influenced the programs and their impacts, and what kinds of evaluation mechanisms are being applied. By using the components of the social psychological approach and ICR as the backbone of the interview guide, the data demonstrated patterns on what components of the programs are seen as successful, how policy interacts with the components, and how they are considered in the evaluation process. This pointed to what is working at building the cultural bridge between the immigrant population and the greater French society in marginalized communities in Paris, as well as recommendations and areas for improvement. While an interview guide was used, the role of the researcher was to gather the information through probing questions and to interpret the conversation as it was being held. Understanding that this qualitative process has emergent design properties and observations as well as responses are integrated into the analysis of the data (Creswell, 2018, p. 181).

Limitations

During the research process, the social and political unrest in Paris due to the Pension strikes, transit lockdowns, and the emergence of Covid-19 required a minor pivot in approach to engaging with potential organizations. The response rate was lower than anticipated because people were not getting to work due to transit issues, participating in strikes, or too overwhelmed to participate in anything other than day to day operations. It became necessary to utilize publicly available information and interviews that had the same basic themes as the interview guide and

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were conducted with organizations originally identified. Additionally, electronic questioning and messaging also provided access to participants, with the same themes and questions being asked remotely instead of in person. Because of the sampling method and being social constrained, this research is limited in its ability to generalize the impacts of programs in *Seine-Saint-Denis*.

Moreover, the openness to discuss culturally divisive issues in Paris was limited. Three organizations on the initial list blocked electronic communication after the first invitation, and the majority did not respond at all to multiple attempts at engagement. The high taboo of the subject made snowball sampling and personal connection even more important in gaining participants for the research. There is a general consensus and willingness in Paris to acknowledge that there is a cultural divide between immigrants and French society, but that is as far as the willingness extends. Even organizations that speak publicly on these matters were only willing to entertain questions about it to a superficial extent. Gathering a larger sample of organizations to participate in a study such as this would require more time, effort, resources, and above all more integration into the communities and NGO circles where these organizations exist.

Paris is a closed city where large wooden doors and five story walls create a maze of locked buildings and courtyards that can only be navigated with help and connections. There is no opportunity to go ‘door knocking’ as all the entrances to offices of NGOs are housed within these courtyards and require permission to access. To connect with participants, contact had to be made outside of the organization office, either electronically or through introduction, and an invitation had to be extended to go in and talk to anyone in person. This type of closed environment, coupled with the sensitivity of the subject matter, made electronic interaction paramount. With the transit strikes and global pandemic added to the closed off nature of Paris,

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opening the methodology to include any participants that were willing, electronically or in-person, became germane to the study.

Ethics

The results of this research are intended to indirectly benefit participants by providing the larger society with empirical data on the impacts of conflict programs in marginalized communities in Paris (Mfutso-Bengo et al., 2008). Participation in this research was voluntary with no inducements. This study was conducted with compassion and respect for the individuals and communities involved. There was no harm intended or expected to any participants volunteering for this study, and the benefit of examining conflict interventions in marginalized communities in Paris out-weighs the risk of conducting the research. An ethics review and approval were conducted and obtained by Royal Roads University before any research was undertaken and participants were given the option to contact the university to verify the authenticity of the study before agreeing to participate.

This study engaged only with organizations that have publicly available mandates to mitigate the risk of exposing privately held views and beliefs in a public manner. While there was no direct interaction with vulnerable persons, the research did engage organizations that work with marginalized and vulnerable communities and are located within those communities. To respect the autonomy of participants, informed consent was obtained by all participants before conducting any interviews. Any information that could be traced back to the person or organization was redacted and destroyed.

To minimize risks this research could have on communities or the relationship and status organizations hold within these communities, confidentiality and anonymity was maintained throughout the process. This research does not aim to obstruct or hinder the effectiveness of any

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participating organizations. The data was maintained to ensure maximum confidentiality and the researcher assigned codes to the participants that only they will have access to, ensuring that the data cannot be publicly traced back to any specific organization. All data is protected by password and only available to the researcher, the transcriber, and the thesis supervisor. The researcher has undertaken the translation of the transcripts themselves to have the least amount of people interact with the data as possible. Audio files and their partner transcripts will be destroyed after the thesis defence is completed.

Results

Data Collection Methods

A total of twelve organizations were researched, with seven organizations providing elite, or complete, interviews and an additional five organizations, from the original participant list, reviewed for relevant information. The remaining eight organizations on the list were either unwilling or unable to participate in the studies, as indicated in the methodology section. The data received from the seven participants with personal communications was coded by theme and is supplemented by publicly available sources with organizations on the original list that fit the themes and questions of the interview guide.

The interviews were semi-structured to allow for the most flexibility in the responses while still controlling the overall direction of the interview, specifically the integration of ICR principles into how organizations are addressing the cultural divide (Dane, 2018, p. 208). It is important to note that dialogue was the most predominate component of ICR performed by the organizations interviewed, with conflict analysis and problem solving being noticeably absent because of the inability to address the main crux of the conflict due to the laws of the Republic surrounding equality. Data collection was completed in French and used digitally recorded

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interviews, note taking for observations during the interview, and reflective writing after the interview has completed. Electronic communications were done in a mixture of French and English based on the primary language of the participant. Sources were personally translated from French into English and coded to be included in the data set. To ensure correct French spelling, intonation, and grammar, the in-person interviews were transcribed by a native French speaker contracted by the researcher. The researcher then translated the transcriptions into English and performed an inductive thematic analysis appropriate for semi-structured interview data collection (Dane, 2018, p. 209). All names and identifying data have been removed per the Royal Roads Ethics review conducted in October 2019. Data analysis was coded by hand to ensure a closeness with the information and following Tesch's Eight Steps in the Coding Process (Creswell, 2018, p. 196).

All seven respondents were administrators of programs focused on *Seine-Saint-Denis* in Department 93, a suburban area of Paris with the highest population of immigrants in France. None of the programs addressed the cultural divide or immigrants directly as one of their main goals, but rather targeted specific symptoms of the conflict such as poverty, education deficiencies, or employment inequality. Two organizations were focused on training and employment, and five organizations that were geared toward education. Additional public information was used to support the collected data with the five additional organizations being studied. Similarly, the five additional organizations, included in the study, deliver programs in Department 93 but also do not address the cultural divide directly. They include two programs with a focus on social engagement, two focused on training and employment, and one surrounding youth incarceration. This breakdown in disciplines, determined through the data of the research, follows the five priorities of the Department of Social Cohesion, which are the

French Language, Jobs and Employment, Education, Access to the law, and Access to Health (2018, Rapport du DDCS).

The Importance of Nomenclature in French Society

Throughout the course of interviews, the respondents showed a repeated pattern of being extremely diligent about labels and naming, distinguishing between what they considered to be a legal term and what was more of a cultural term. Beaman (2015) found the same pattern when she conducted interviews in Paris around similar subject matter, noting that, “the differentiation between the cultural and legal dimensions evidences the tenuous social locations of many children of Maghrébin immigrants” (p. 43). Words that were regularly described and qualified as legal were those that carry a status with them, like refugee, citizen, *quartier prioritaires*, economic integration or BAC (baccalaureate, which means essentially undergraduate degree). These words denote a type of status that is held with the government, something that requires an application, paperwork, or qualifications to obtain. The respondents’ answers demonstrated an importance in distinguishing these legal terms from other cultural terms because of what is considered appropriate differentiation under the eyes of the Republic and what differentiation breeds inequality. Words that were defined as more cultural, non-governmental, based were exile, immigrant, *quartiers populaires*, and integration. An example from Respondent A:

“In France, we have what are called *quartiers prioritaires*. These are not *quartier populaires*. The *quartier populaire* is a concept that is not technical, it is a rather historic concept. It's the people who live there, they are people not very well educated, not very well integrated ... The *quartiers prioritaires* of the city is a measure. If in a space we realize that the median salary is 2 times lower than the national median salary, then it becomes a *quartier prioritaires*.”

Interestingly, there was a certain amount of respect or positivity associated with any legal labels, where the cultural labels have more of a negative connotation. This was a subtle difference, but is best demonstrated by this excerpt from Respondent B, discussing the label of refugee:

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“it is complex, because when someone seeks asylum and its granted, they obtain the title of “statutory refugee” - a title for 10 years - they enter the society right away. They are considered a Frenchman, only they cannot vote. They have access to employment, etc., to all services, like any French citizen. Only that they have the specific needs of a refugee that are not, perhaps, the same needs of a Frenchman who was born here, or even if he was third generation, second generation, but he was born here. What I can say is that as an organization, we have not been too involved in the activities of what is called *quartiers populaires* because, when we hear this term, it is rather French people who live in priority neighborhoods. I am not very sure if public policies think of asylum seekers when they talk about support programs for the city's *quartiers populaires*. For me, it is rather angry young French people who live in political districts of the city, who cause the problems.”

This becomes important in understanding the landscape in France when it comes to the perceived differences between those who have a certain legal label and those who fall into a more cultural label. This focus on nomenclature contributes to the notion that France is a country of the French and ‘the other’, demonstrating a society where one group of people is included, and one is excluded. It was noted through observation and personal experiences that refugees are considered quite different than immigrants, and the support and inclusion of refugees is thought of as a positive development and understanding their background is important. Contrastingly, the support and inclusions of immigrant or 2nd or 3rd generation immigrants is thought of as negative, and distinguishing their background is against the values of the Republic. From observations and statistical review, refugees and immigrants suffer the similar fates of mixed identities, marginalization, and segregation in the Republic, yet they are thought of as hugely different in society.

Moreover, *quartiers populaires*, is the cultural term for impoverished neighbourhoods and most areas defined *quartiers prioritaires* by government are those same areas as those deemed to be *quartiers populaires*. This is one demonstration of how organizations and arguably French society tiptoe around the fact that people are from different backgrounds and ethnicities. If an NGO works only with people who have a legal title, distinguished by a status, then it is ok

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that to say they are different and have different needs, directly stating that providing for those differences is an outcome of the program. If an organization works with a cultural title, like immigrant, exile, or *quartiers populaires* with no administrative status to go with it, that is suggesting that these people have different needs than any other French citizen and would be against the ideals of the Republic, choosing not to include any cultural outcomes in their program. This is such an important qualification in France that more than one participant felt the need to make this distinction before conducting the interview. For example:

“It is important that I stress that [our program] is not designed for immigrants or a solution to the problems of immigration. We work with economic poverty and provide [services to those] with modest social backgrounds that can accelerate their economic integration. Of course, poverty and immigration are not totally independent of each other, but I think it is important that [our program] distinguish between these two concepts.”

The use of the words, “immigrant” and “cultural gap” received distinctly negative reactions when explaining the research. There was a consideration from the author of rewording the proposal and questions to attract more participants once the negative connotation was established, but in an effort to remain faithful to the methodology and ethics review, the wording in the questions and invitations remained the same. Two participants agreed to be interviewed in an initial introduction, but when the interview guide was sent indicated that they were uncomfortable giving written or documented feedback on the subject. The use of cultural, non-legal labels was perceived as deterring people from participating in the study based on the number of potential participants that looked at the questions and then decided not to participate.

Impacts and Successes

The primary research question asked was, *are organizations that deliver conflict management programs in Seine-Saint-Denis having an impact on the conflict between French society and its immigrant communities?* The data demonstrates three outcomes that were

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perceived as the most impactful between all the participants: the interaction between people of varying backgrounds, providing tools for people to help themselves, and using the French language to bridge the divide.

First, the inclusion of face-to-face interactions was the most impactful intervention over all the disciplines and respondents by a sizeable margin. It mainly took the form of mentorships, meaning there was a direct mentor/mentee relationship that was created and supported by the organization. There was a focus on bringing people together, breaking down biases, and changing processes that arguably reinforced societal prejudices. For example, when asked if there was a change in the perception of the participants, Respondent A stated:

“[The program] changes the perception of the [mentee], the perception of the company. We did a study of the mentors' perception of their mentoring activity. And then we realized that for the most part, they say that it has an impact on the way they [work]. So, let's say, well there's a whole set of prejudices, a whole set of biases, maybe they had, and they don't have anymore thanks to this experience. Because they met an audience that they would never have met elsewhere. So, suddenly, it also breaks down these social barriers that currently exist. These social barriers between communities that do not speak to each other.”

Respondent B stated that, “We have an important focus on interculturality and succeed in really creating spaces for exchange between participants, people, newcomers and us, those who already live here.” Furthermore, Respondent D noted that even though the goal of the program was not about bridging the cultural gap, it was one of the results of the face-to-face interaction.

“The principal aim changed quickly, and at the beginning of my work I realized that my principal aim was to get them to know each other. I think that these [people] often aren't well integrated in [society], they are marginalized, so the first success that I saw was the integration of those [people].”

Respondent C also talked about using mentorship as a way to integrate participants into France but keep identities that are valuable to them. They stated, “We mentor them in a way that there is

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an easier bridge with [their profession], but at the same time, they don't get lost either and they can bring something [to France] by remaining themselves.”

These results support one of the main components of ICR, which is the face-to-face interaction through education, consultation, communication. The data demonstrates that practitioners view this type of intervention as having the biggest impact on bridging the cultural divide. It was interesting to note that while the respondents had no formal conflict training, the programs purposefully used face-to-face interaction in their design and consider it germane to their impact. Additionally, other organizations working in *Seine-Saint-Denis* have spoken publicly about how face-to-face interventions make an impact on with participant's perspectives. Anne Charpy, the founder of *Voisin Malin* (Clever Neighbour), describes the door-to-door, face-to-face engagement of her organization:

“It is to overcome fears, it is to push its boundaries, it is to create possibilities, which we had not thought of. With this kind of intervention, we see reality without rose colored glasses, and we understand better what people's lives are made of, the social fabric, the difficulties, the successes, the misery, the generosity” (Interview, France Fraternelle, 2018).

While all the organizations had some form of interaction between groups of people that would not normally interact face-to-face, for example mentors in a central Parisian company with mentees from *les Banlieues*, people working together to directly address the conflict with analysis or problem solving was absent. All respondents were careful to distinguish that their programs addressed a symptom of the cultural conflict, like employment opportunities, economic poverty, or lack of education, as opposed to having interactions directly addressing the cultural differences in France. This is a product of the sensitivity of the subject as well as the limitation from the laws of France and the values of the Republic.

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A second significant finding concerns a cultural divide in creating and delivering tools, predominately administrative access, and shortcuts to services, that make up for a shortcoming in the France's systems. There was a recognition that services or programs provided by French society or government were not equally easy to use or access for all demographics. The goals of these programs are to facilitate the access to opportunities, education, language, networks, and employment with tools that empower participants to succeed on their own. This took the form of digital training in graphic design, resume writing and interview skills, tools to help guide participants through the heavy paperwork of French administrative processes, and competencies in the French language.

Respondent C stated that their main success is that they,

“We fill a lack of preparation, diploma, certification, qualification, by supplying participants with a trade, but we cannot offer them a job at the end. The person must take responsibility and look in the market for a job.”

Respondent A made similar statements where the program is to give participants the tools to help themselves by saying, “We make up for the shortcomings that there have been and once they have these keys and these tools, then they manage on their own.” Respondent B noted that they have an impact on getting jobs, but indirectly from the tools they supply for access to education stating:

“I think that we have an impact on professional integration, but indirectly, we can say through education. So, I think we are going to have a society with happier members, if they manage to work in their trade, or what they did before. We are really fighting against professional downgrading of people who settle in France.”

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Additionally, these themes are apparent in other programs that operate in Seine-Saint-Denis who have similar views and mandates. Les Determines is an entrepreneurial training program that supports people of different backgrounds in starting their own business through development of business plans, funding requests, at the same time fostering, “entrepreneurial culture and develop the notion of belonging” (website, Les Determines, 2020). This concept of filling in gaps in the French system also found in one of the original organizations identified in the study that did not directly participate in the study, Fondation Mozaik. Said Hammouche, founder and president the foundation stated publicly:

“There are so many unemployed people in the *quartiers populaires*...that don’t get information, that don’t get interviews because of their modest social origin, because they originate from different cultures. We recreate a bridge, a connection between the two worlds...those who have opportunities and those who need them” (Interview, Ampli, 2019).

Third and finally, competency in the French language is another component of programs that is seen as having a significant impact on bridging the cultural divide between France and its Immigrants. It is present in almost every program that was included in this study, both ones that responded and those requested to participate, an indicator of its importance in the perception of the French identity. Respondent B noted that the government and universities require a certain level of French to be accepted into programs or employment. Given this, they stated, “we decided to structure the activities around [participant’s] needs, and similarly, French lessons are something that we are always asked for, so we set them up.” Furthermore, Respondent D indicated that the basis of their program was to bring people together through learning the French language stating, “There were a lot of different origins, lots of different cultures in the places [where we work]. I was there to teach them some French language skills, so they fit better.”

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Other organizations used their tools and training to also improve French, helping people both find meaningful avenues of employment while at the same time improving French skills to make it easier as well. Respondent C stated, “we're trying to see how digital can be an added value and how we can adapt the question of language by using music to learn French”. Inclusion of some aspect of French language training in the programs is not surprising considering it is one of the five pillars of social cohesion as indicated by the government (2018, Rapport du DDCS).

Funding and Policy

A secondary research question asked was around the impacts that policy and government had on their programs. All seven respondents who interacted directly with the study identified how the programs were funded, with four having a combination of private and public funding, and two being privately funded. Only one of the seven programs was fully publicly funded and that is because it is directly tied to the National Education system. Two main themes presented themselves in the data when it came to support from government policies and funding, the need to include economic benefit in social programs and the lack of data available regarding ethnic and racial backgrounds of potential participants.

First, while the majority of the respondents felt supported by the government financially in some capacity, there is shift towards social entrepreneurship where a service that serves an economic purpose is provided, as well as a social one. Respondent A suggested that there needs to be a reason for profit driven companies to engage in these social programs and the programs need to provide a beneficial service in return for the time and effort these companies give to help out a social cause. They stated:

“With our studies, we realized, first of all, that 10% of the [participants] we helped are hired into the business of the mentor. It costs around 10,000 Euros for the company to recruit a person through their HR department, so you can see the gain for companies by using [a mentorship program.] The person is already in front of them. That's a lot. So, the

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company is not even going to ask the question if there is a greater understanding or not. It is a considerable financial gain. And this culture change is happening in the NGO world. And that, more and more, there will be operators who will sell a service which will be fundamental, and this service will also be human, almost.”

This viewpoint is supported by organizations like *Voisin Malin*, who work with local companies and distributors to develop helpful information that is delivered door-to-door by members of the community. The goal of the program is to mobilize the talent and passion of the *quartiers populaires*, and yet Anne Charpy (2015) states:

“The motivations to create my business rested on the creation of economic value. Indeed, the companies who distribute services in these neighbourhoods would find an economic benefit in working with us. The creation of economic value will give sustainability to the project.”

Another example of a social entrepreneur is Said Hammouche from *Fondation Mozaik*, an organization that helps facilitate employment opportunities for people in *quartiers populaires*. He stated, “the idea is that diversity is not a social issue, but it is actually a service to the economy. This is because these skills are available to the entrepreneurs to see development and growth in France.”

The second theme identified regarding policy is the sentiment that the government does support the programs, but there was a lack of information from the government that would help to make the programs better tailored to participants and more effective. This was overwhelmingly expressed as a need for more objective and subjective information on the background, ethnicity, and other experiences of marginalized populations that might access these programs. Almost every respondent and public source that was consulted suggested that a need for background data and analysis was needed to be more effective, tailored, and impactful in their programs. This is counter to the laws of France about collecting information about ethnic, religious, or differing background for the purpose of informing a study or program. One

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respondent stated the following when discussing if they used any background information to help inform their program:

“We are not allowed, but when you see [the participants], you just have to see the background of the group and you realize very quickly that they are people of immigrant origin, for the most part. Why? Because there is a very strong link (and that is true in all countries) between poverty and immigration. Even if in France, we don't have the right to say it, we don't have the right to do it, that's why I want it to remain anonymous.”

Another respondent did not want to be directly quoted, but gave permission to state that their program would benefit greatly from knowing ethnic and background data on their participants, data that is currently collected but not disseminated by the government, in order to be better prepared and provide more tailored solutions for participants. With that same desire of having more information to work with, a different respondent stated, “since we cannot do an ethnic analysis, to find out who these people are, well we end up being blind, we just know that in this territory, it is a pocket of poverty”.

Letitia Nonone (2015), founder of ZonZon 93, noted in a public interview that there is some work that the government must do, specifically National Education, with explaining the history and memory of the post-colonial immigrants. She stated:

“Normally when I am asked about our national identity, I say we first must talk about our personal identities, where we come from, and our history, like slavery. Because *L'Education Nationale* has not yet done the duty of going through memory and history, we can not ask the youth [of the 93] to claim the French Identity, the Blue White and Red, Clovis, and De Gaulle as their own. They know that there is something missing, they feel that they are only getting told half the history of France.”

This is a good demonstration of the need to acknowledge the differences between the histories, experiences, and background of immigrants and greater French society. The lack of detailed statistics and analysis from the government, under the guise of the values of the Republic, makes any sort of intervention that is trying to impact the cultural divide significantly more difficult.

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More recently, with the increase of protests and marches in solidarity for equity of ethnicities, there have been calls for the government to lift the restriction on gathering differentiating data to fully understand the scope of the cultural differences in French society (Ndiaye, 2020).

It is worth noting that all the programs receiving public funding fit into one or more of the pillars of social cohesion that the government, both national and local, have indicated as important.

These are education, employment, French Language, access to healthcare, and access to legal system (2018, Rapport du DDCS). This would suggest that the direction of the policy, through funding, directly impacts the mandates and outcomes of the NGO organizations.

Measurement and Evaluation

A final sub-question asked surrounded the measurement and evaluation of their programs and the impact they are having on the cultural divide. The results showed two main themes: (1) the programs are producing output measures; and (2) public reporting is based on the desires of the organization rather than requirement by the government or an oversight body for all NGOs.

First, all of the seven personal interviewees stated that they had some sort of measurement of their programs. The majority were centered around how many participants had completed the program. These are called output measures and are designed to demonstrate how much work has been done by a program rather than the impact of the outcome of the program. The thought is that the more people go through an education, training, or employment program, the more people get jobs, but the measurement is not regarding the jobs, its about who takes the training. Other than one of the respondents, none of the measurements went farther than number of participants indicating that these programs are at a basic level of measurement as opposed to in depth program evaluation. All the respondents felt that their programs were impactful, and clearly stated that if they did not think they were having an impact, they would not keep doing it.

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All of the respondents made mention of some kind of report that was being created as a form of evaluation and indicated that these reports were being shared with both private funders and the government. When asked if there had been any changes in programs or even in the policy because of these results, more than one respondent gave an example around the intervention of mentorship. Respondent A stated:

“So it's really very small, obviously, but there will be an impact. Just regarding the fact that today, the state has included in its financing plan law, budget lines for mentoring. There are now credits on mentoring. The state understands that mentoring works. But it works for questions like this and, among other things, mentoring for young people in priority areas of the city is fundamental.”

Furthermore, Respondent B noted that they started a mentorship program because it was funded as part of “action research” by the government. The data would suggest that the reports and evaluations that make their way up to the government are, at least in part, influencing the way the programs are run through the funding models.

Second, the respondents discussed that the reports were being sent for review within the organizations, to the government for review if funding was provided, and to private stakeholders to show the benefits of the program. Respondent D noted, “[My superiors] have to report to the chair of the program. And the program reports to the State as well and there is real time reporting that I had to do.” Respondent A stated:

“We will analyze the data, we will go to the funders and we will, in a way, look at their concerns. And so, in the same way, public institutions, they all have their uses. So, the reports that we have to make must be specialized on such...we do an analysis by audience.”

What is common among all the respondents is that their reporting is not a requirement of the government or even a community of NGOs looking at the cumulative impacts of the programs.

There is no central repository or set of requirements when it comes to reporting on the outcomes

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or impacts of the organizations. The reporting has more to do with gaining or maintaining funding from private investors or government grants than it does with tracking the benefits of the program. There is no doubt that the programs and the people that administer them are having an impact on the marginalized communities they operate in, but the reporting is tailored to the financial side of the organization rather than the social benefit. One respondent noted that in the NGO community there is a benefit to being seen as having low funds, it means funders are more willing to provide money to 'save' the program. The implication of this is that reporting, and evaluation becomes a story telling platform to secure funding in the not-for-profit world rather than an empirical source of data for societal change.

Emergent Patterns on Subjectivity and Equality

In addition to the results that correlated directly to the questions asked, a couple of patterns appeared in the data and throughout the interviews. There were two concepts that surfaced due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews that are of importance to the study but were not elicited directly by the interview questions. The first was whether the subjective or more psychological aspects of the cultural divide were being addressed in the programs and the second was the perception of the inequalities in relation to the values of the Republic.

Two out of the seven elite interviews conducted, only two directly discussed how the program integrated subjective or psychological perspectives into their delivery. Respondent A discussed the psychology of the participants as it related to the ability to reduce poverty and find gainful employment but was incredibly careful to distinguish this from the subjective realities of immigration or ethnic background. Respondent B, the only program to utilize the subjective as well as objective views of the participants to develop and administer their program, stated:

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“For example, we have a women [participating in our program], she is veiled and her boss says to her “[at work] you cannot wear the veil”. So, as she loves her job, she takes off her veil, but internally, what does that mean for her? She feels naked and therefore, there is a whole kind of emotional, psychological, interior difficulty, which makes that perhaps, she does not feel ... she does not have self-confidence in her work, because now she thinks she is different, etc. This is a typical example. Even after work, they have friends, they might be judged by their community because it is betraying their culture. Even those who decide “well, I’m in France, that’s it, I’m lifting my veil, that’s it, I’m going to live as I want”, may find themselves without support of their community. So, it’s a bit “ok, I’m not French, but I’m not too accepted in my community either.”

None of the other organizations, interviewed or studied from publicly available information took the psychological, subjective side of the participant’s experiences into consideration the same way. While the sample size of this study is limited and cannot be generalized for all the NGOs operating in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, it is telling that only one of 12 organizations directly considered the subjective effects of the participant’s backgrounds when it delivers its programs.

Second was the subject of equality in the Republic and how the respondents viewed it. There was a general sentiment that they saw that cultural inequality existed in France and in fact administered their programs hoping that it would impact the gaps in French society, but there was also an expression of feeling limited by the values of the Republic. One responded stated:

“The problem we have to attack is the problem on inequalities. On inequalities, when you are a democratic subject, like you and me, and for the French it is enormous, because of the values of the Republic, inequality hits hard, it hurts. And so, there is an inequality between the poorest and the richest ... I call it the intensity of inequality, this chasm, it hits us in our values... In any case, we, we are not directly working to reduce the intensity of cultural inequality, but this distribution, we would like ... re-shuffle the economic cards. So here, in that sense, we have an impact on the cultural divide.”

Another respondent noted the limitations the values of the Republic affecting the cultural divide by stating:

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“In other countries, the value of freedom is very strong and here the value of equality is very strong. And that the value of equality, at times, could make it difficult for people to integrate.”

Another respondent discussed the idea of equality and the strong values of the Republic as something the burgeoning bourgeoisie use as virtue-signalling, meaning their adherence to equality is less about practical application of the value in society and more, “on showing a virtuous face to the wider world.”

This study and the inclusion of these quotes as part of the results in no way suggests that respondents are in opposition to the values of the Republic or that equality is perceived as not prized and supported by the government of France. The inclusion of this data demonstrates a paradox in the French Identity where the values of equality are highly important and shared, but at the same time the strong adherence to non-differentiation to ensure equality creates inequality for those who are “the other” in the society, a concept noted in the conflict analysis section of this study and explored further in the discussion section following.

Discussion

The results of this study examined the interventions being implemented in an area of Paris perceived as the epicenter of the conflict that France faces between immigrants and French society. The implementation of Fisher's Interactive Conflict Resolution from non-governmental organizations are perceived as having an impact in bridging the cultural identity gap felt in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, particularly the use of face-to-face interaction. While this type of interaction was included in the design of programs, specifically because it is understood that it breaks down social barriers, by itself it is not enough to have a deep and lasting impact on the cultural divide that exists in France today. The good work being done by the organizations that participated in this study is limited by their small reach and by the laws that prevent cultural differences from being the true target of the programs. After further examination of the data, the author has identified four emergent themes, over and above the use of face-to-face intervention, that would help to further bridge the gap in this ethno-political conflict. First, the psychological component of identity and belonging is scarcely addressed at any level in France. Second, the government programs and the organizations in this study address symptoms of the conflict but avoid directly addressing the heart of the issue. Third, there is a lack of data both through measurement and through the unwillingness to discuss ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds which hinders the efficacy and adaptability of any intervention. Finally, the values of the Republic, namely France's social definition and construct of equality, does not include an understanding that highlighting differences and different needs based on lived experience and background creates equity, not inequality. This section examines these topics in further detail and how they relate to the worldview and theory of the study.

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The data shows that personal interactions are working to break down social barriers and stereotypes. This supports Fisher's primary component of Interactive Conflict Resolution of face-to-face interaction. Even though these programs deal with the politically acceptable issues rather than targeting the deep seeded cultural divide and therefore cannot allow for direct dialogue, conflict analysis, or problem solving, they have all indicated that the face-to-face interaction builds relationships between people that would not otherwise interact. If all programs working with immigrant populations, whether directly targeted or not, included some form of face-to-face interactions with someone of the 'French National Identity' there might be a larger shift towards inclusion of immigrant backgrounds and experiences in what is determined to be French. Intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998) has long suggested that in-person interaction breaks down barriers and that prolonged face-to-face engagement significantly reduces prejudices. This theory is also included in more mainstream academic literature. Brene Brown (2017) has a chapter entitled, "People are hard to hate close up. Move in." in her NYTimes best selling book *Braving the Wilderness*, where she explains that getting more personal with a person you feel is 'the other' creates humanity and breaks down polarization. Interaction has been seen as a successful intervention in the academic and written world for some time, so it is heartening to add to the data that proves face-to-face interaction works just as much in practice as it does in theory.

Fisher (2009; 2015) also stated that interaction for the sole purpose of interacting is not enough to de-escalate a growing social psychological conflict. While face-to-face interaction had some success in bridging the cultural gap between immigrant and French society, programs that do not go farther than providing administrative tools to cover over the cracks in the French system and include only superficial interaction, are not comprehensive enough interventions to

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deal with the escalating social problem. A second, but pivotal theoretical component of ICR is that there be an opportunity to deal with the more subjective, emotional concerns arising in the conflict and this is where France's programs, both government and non-government alike, fall decidedly short. The following emergent themes from the study that can be used as the basis to develop recommendations on how better to bridge the culture gap between French immigrants and the greater society.

Emergent Themes between France and its Immigrants

First, there is little to no inclusion of the subjective side of the conflict in the interventions of the government or NGOs. An instrumental component of ICR is that there be an opportunity to deal with the more subjective, emotional concerns arising in the conflict. Fisher (2009) stated that conflict is made up of both objective and subjective elements, "with the latter increasing in importance and effect as the conflict escalates" (p. 331). Directly addressing the feelings, emotions, or perceptions of the participants is noticeably absent in most of the programs and is arguably needed to have greatest impact on the conflict. This could be achieved by NGOs delivering programs that go farther than superficial interaction and bringing working groups of law makers, community influencers, and citizens together to directly engage in the cultural issues in France through conflict analysis and problem solving, as suggested by ICR. If the cultural and identity differences between France and its immigrants are part of what is escalating the violence and the conflict, pushing towards its intractable threshold, then the inclusion of subjective elements should be considered paramount to de-escalation and management. What is interesting is that the psychological state of the participants was mentioned as a consideration in some programs, but only one directly addressed it in the intervention. This suggest that there is an awareness about the psychological or subjective side of the conflict and its importance, but it is

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considered outside of the mandate of the organization or they are unaware of how to approach it. It is no surprise, mainly due to availability of funding, that the organizations follow the five pillars of social cohesion put forward by the government, namely, access to education, French language, access to healthcare, access to the legal system, and employment. The psychology of belonging or forging identity is missing from that list, and correspondingly missing from the organizations. It is true that identity and belonging are more ambiguous than employment statistics or number of students graduated, but tolerance for ambiguity and increased complexity allows for a more holistic understanding of the conflict and should be considered as one of the first steps (Coleman, Redding, and Ng, 2016). Furthermore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that physical safety and security are the base needs, but when those are decently met, there is a requirement to start looking to the psychological needs, including identity, and belonging. France has been focused on infrastructure, housing, and policing for the last 40 years, putting in place the basic physical safety and security needs. Now is the time to start looking to those psychological needs, and while they have been working to develop sense of purpose through education and employment initiatives, they have yet to make headway on the belonging and community elements. Instead of de-escalating the conflict, as hoped, France is seeing an escalation of violence and threats to physical security because the psychological elements, such as identity, are not being adequately addressed. When the government reviews its plans for social cohesion, it would be heartening to see the subjective, psychological side addressed in more tangible ways and included as a direct component of more programs and funding models.

Second, building on the need for a subjective psychological approach, the interventions done by the government and by non-government organizations address the symptoms not the cause of the issue. This goes back to Coleman's (2014) worldview of pathology and looking at

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interventions as the vaccine to a disease. The current interventions for this conflict are centered around economic equality, access to services, and language skills. It's true that all of these are important factors in the conflict, but they are results of a larger issue, not the issue itself.

Beaman (2015) conducted a study of middle class immigrant citizens, where all the previously mentioned symptoms were seemingly addressed, and “because these individuals lack the option of having their French identity affirmed and acknowledged by others, they remain in a marginal social location despite their middle-class status and accomplishments” (p. 49). This demonstrates that even if all the symptoms are treated, vaccinated, and subsequently cured, there will still be conflict because the root cause or disease has not been addressed. This reactionary intervention, treating the symptoms rather than the disease, is most likely caused by the values of the Republic and the fear around differentiation causing inequality. The government and French society allege that all French citizens are equal regardless of race, ethnicity, or background, and because they have equal access to services and rights of the Republic, there is no difference between a *Français de Souche*¹ and a *Maghrebin*. That is the end of the dialogue and digging into it further is considered taboo at best and illegal at worst (Simon, 2008; Tribalat 2004). It's hard to treat a root cause when deeply entrenched values of the society prevent it from being discussed whether those values are actually part of the main problem. Even with the strict laws of the Republic surrounding differentiation and equality, organizations could facilitate non-official interactions, as suggested by ICR theory, that allow participants to dig deeper into the psychology of the social issues through collaborative analysis of their experiences and sharing histories with people whom they would not normally interact. Playing farther into Coleman's pathology worldview, how can a treatment plan be created if one is forbidden from fully examining the patient? Does a

¹ *Français de Souche* is the term used for describing a native French person, generally thought of as white skinned and from Galois background.

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doctor not ask for family history and health background during an exam? It would be like trying to diagnose something as simple as a pregnancy with no differentiating information about the patient. All that is known is the symptoms, they have nausea, fatigue, and aches and pains.

Without knowing the patient is a woman, it would be hard to understand that she is pregnant, and the treatment of the symptoms, without all the background information, could have severe negative impacts on the patient like miscarriage or birth defects. Without sufficient data, it is next to impossible to understand the best intervention or how they are best evaluated.

Third, there are two main themes that came out of the data analysis surrounding the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information that comes from these programs. As demonstrated in the results, most respondents talked about the benefits of understanding their targeted demographic better. Additionally, many of the respondents stated that having more information on the backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences of their participants would make their programs more efficient and impactful. Again, this goes back to an unwillingness to distinguish the difference in needs of those from differing backgrounds. Even as recent as June 13, 2020 the spokeswoman for the President Macron, Sibeth Ndiaye, stated in an open letter that it was time to revisit the ban on racial and ethnic statistics so the government can accurately start to understand the true reality of the conflict between France and its immigrants. This is mirrored in the results from the respondents of the study, the publicly available information from other organizations in *Seine-Saint-Denis*, and from all people that were informed about the study. In the next French National Census, the government should include questions based on race, ethnicity, and immigration to finally get an idea of what the issues actually are based on background and how they might try and address them. These programs and the people that run them are incredibly hard working, believe in their goals, believe in making life better for their

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participants and need this data to support them in their work. Gabriella Blum (2007) would consider these people part of ‘islands of agreement’, indicating that no matter how terrible the conflict, there are always people who have the courage and spirit to reach out and bridge the divide. It would be good to see the government better support the organizations that are already making an impact and give them the information they need to be the most successful possible.

The second topic from data derives from the evaluation process. As stated in the results, all the organizations have reporting mechanisms, and the majority indicated that their reports went up to government. However, finding these reports from publicly available sources seems next to impossible, and only one respondent offered to share the report as part of the study. Even the information consulted from publicly available sources on other organizations operating in *Seine-Saint-Denis* turned up with no available reports on evaluation on the programs. Government websites, national, local, and community also turned up no discernible evaluations of programs operating in the area. From the results of the respondents, it is understood that evaluations are being done, and reports are being created, but no discernible central repository exists. All the programs consulted, both study respondents and publicly available information, state that their goals are under the discipline of education, training and employment, or language. The main goals of these programs are not listed as integration, bridging cultures, or building identity. By virtue of the fact that they are targeting the marginalized populations that experience this gap, they have an impact on that outcome. While that might be the underlying hope for change, the measurements are about education, training, language skills, and employment not a sense of national identity or belonging. As of the writing of this thesis, measurement of identity and belonging in France based on background does not exist.

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Finally, there is no doubt that equality in French society is important. It is literally carved into the stone pillars that hold up the National Assembly, the seat of the French government. It would be presumptuous and frankly bordering on impossible to suggest that the French dismiss their strong values of secularism, *laïcité*, or somehow loosen their adherence on the value of

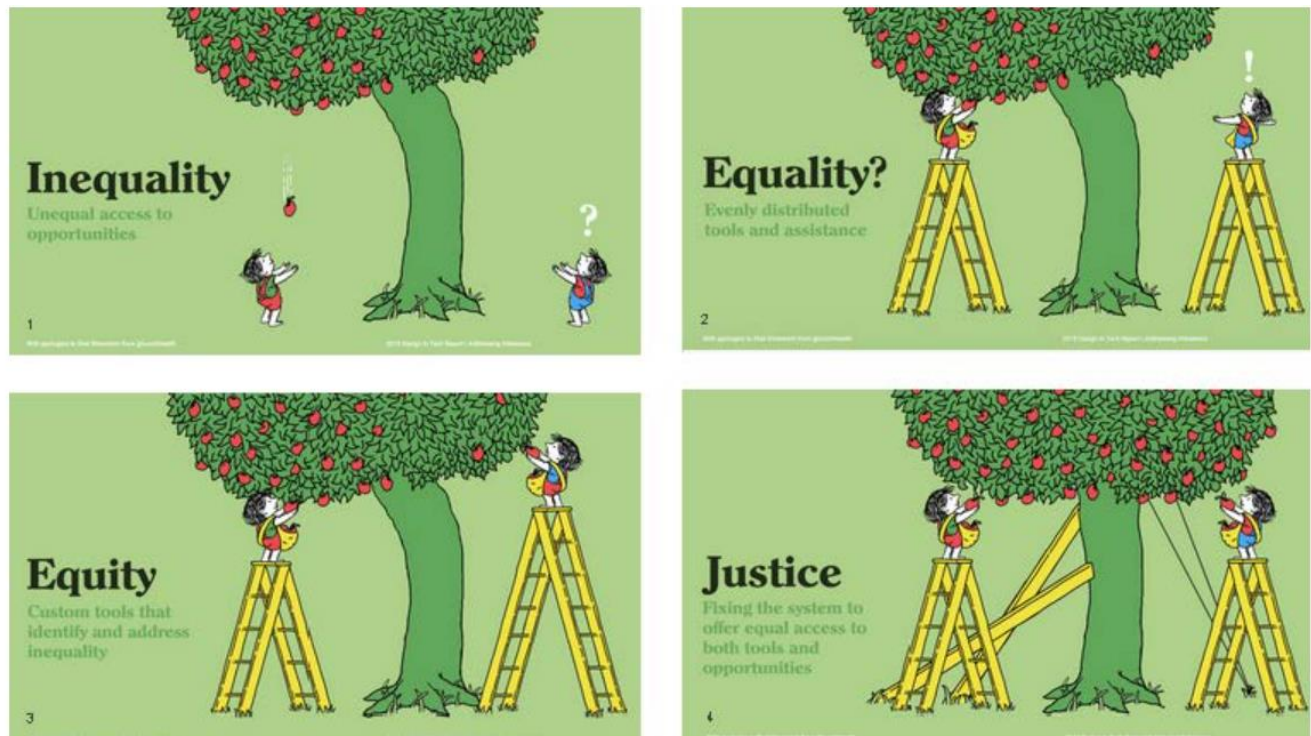


Image credit: Tony Ruth for Design in Tech Report

equality in the Republic. There may however be a way to include the idea of equity within their concept of equality, lean into that strong adherence by suggesting equity would further demonstrate the devotion to equality. As suggested previously, gathering and disseminating data on ethnic background could be used to better inform programs and help people who feel like ‘the other’ in French society. The concept of equity in relation to equality is clearly and whimsically explained in this version of Shel Silverstien’s *The Giving Tree*:

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This illustration demonstrates the main differences between equality and equity through the height of the ladders provided, showing that equal service or even access to equal services does not always mean achieving the same result. In the French system, the view of equality is that no one is different than anyone else and therefore should be treated exactly the same with no consideration of differing experiences. It is this view of same size ladders, by treating everyone the same regardless of background or experience, it actually breeds inequality. Asking French society to fix the system or right the tree, moving straight into this illustration's version of Justice, might be too big of a step, but suggesting that people of differing background require different tools, might be achievable within the values of the Republic. It would be a stronger emphasis on equality through equity, meaning an understanding that the ladders French citizens are provided do not necessarily mean equal opportunity for all and perhaps some differentiation, particularly for those of differing backgrounds, might actually create a stronger adherence to the values of the Republic. This was a common thread among the organizations involved in this study. They recognized the need to provide different sized ladders, like tools to people of differing origins to fill in the gaps left by French society. If this sentiment was shared more broadly across French society and the fears of losing the French way of life were assuaged by messaging about equity within the values of equality, the identities of Immigrants, and anyone else who felt 'othered' by French society might be addressed and included.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to better understand the impact that non-governmental organization programs are having on bridging the cultural conflict between France and its immigrant population, specifically in *Seine Saint Denis* in Paris. The research demonstrates that while the programs were perceived as improving the quality of life of their participants, only a

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small impact was being made on the cultural divide, most notably due to the inclusion of face-to-face interactions that break down stereotypes and social barriers. Even though the programs were seen as impactful by the interviewees, they also noted that the limited scope, number of participants, siloed approach, and targeting only the symptoms of the conflict limited the amount of impact the programs could have on the cultural divide in France. The results of the study suggest that this level of impact is not enough to prevent escalation of the conflict into something truly intractable. This study has limited applications due to the small sample size, but four recommendations materialized because of the data analysis.

The results of the study pointed to several issues with the interventions being implemented in *Seine-Saint-Denis* and recommends three actions that can have a greater impact on the cultural divide. First, there is a lack of data from the government, both evaluative of the programs and social demographics, to create effective programs targeted at managing the conflict. The organizations included in this study demonstrated reporting that focused on number of participants rather than actual outcomes of the program. Gathering data from all programs that may impact the cultural divide is important to understanding the true impact these organizations are having on the conflict. Being able to look at all the data as a whole would show patterns of success and levels of impact that can be assessed as cumulative rather than siloed.

Second, the laws around gathering data from ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds should be amended to allow for regular and unbiased government statistics, leading to better informed programs. Currently, there are public calls for the laws that prohibit the gathering of background or ethnic data due to fears that differentiation breeds inequality, be amended so that the government and organizations have an understanding of the real extent of the cultural issues in France. Additionally, a central repository and reporting system should be created to

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consolidate and analyze the collective outcomes NGO and government programs are having on both the goals they are aiming to achieve, and as an indicator of the divide between France and it's immigrants.

Third, while the programs perceived as having an impact included some kind of face-to-face interaction, only one had a psychological component that addresses the identity issues and belonging, the most impactful factors in this conflict. This is a direct result of definition of equality in the values of the Republic and an unwillingness to distinguish the difference in needs of those from differing backgrounds. There should be a soft shift from the currently rigid societal principle of equality to a more inclusive and more opportune inclusion of equity within that definition. This ability to include equity within the bounds of equality under the values of the Republic would be a good step at balancing strong principles with compromise (Mayer, 2015).

This study highlights the incredible effort and strength of those who work everyday to provide tools, opportunities, help, and prosperity to France's marginalized populations. While the politically acceptable work does benefit those in marginalized communities, the government and non-governmental organizations need to concentrate on the real issues of identity and belonging by bringing people together to directly discuss, analyse, and problem solve the escalating cultural problem in France. By bringing people together for dialogue, analysis, and problem solving, the basis for ICR, the French Government and NGOs can have a real and lasting impact on the cultural conflict that continues to persist in France today. If the government, and indeed the greater French society, continue to ignore the identities and inclusion of their immigrant population, there will continue to be an increase in violence and more widespread human security issues will develop.

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Appendix A – Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE
Total participant time required: 45-60 minutes
<p>Primary research question: What impacts can conflict management programs have on empowering marginalized and culturally divided communities in Paris?</p> <p>Secondary research questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What role does French policy have in influencing these programs? 2. What evaluation mechanisms are in place to measure impact?
<p>Consent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before interview begins conduct the informed consent process.
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the interview guide to participants • Confirm interview location, private or semiprivate • Welcome participant(s) and introduce the interviewer • Explain main purpose of interview and guidelines for choosing participants; • Demonstrate the recording device and explain how audio recordings will be • Inform participants that they can stop the interview at any time, refuse to respond to questions if they choose, and • If participant is new to building, review where the restrooms and exits are located; • Explain how the study will address privacy and confidentiality and that names will not be used in analysis of the data.
<p>Interview Guidelines</p> <p>This interview is semi-structured. During the interview I may ask you additional questions to further clarify or elaborate your answer. You may choose not to answer, just let me know.</p> <p>Interview Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To begin, I will ask you some starting questions. These questions will be used to learn about the programs you run, how you developed and implemented them, and how you feel they have impacted the cultural issues between immigrants in Seine-Saint-Denis and French Society. Can you please tell me a little about yourself and your background? • How did you develop the goals and mandate of your programs? • Whom does your program aim to benefit most? • What community experiences were taken into consideration when developing the programs?

- Who are the main participants in your program and how do they interact?
- Do you work with other programs that have the same mandates?
- What do you think is the most important aspect of this program?
- How do you include dialogue and/or problem solving into your program?
- Does government policy affect the implementation of your program?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Primary Research Question. From your point of view, does the program you run have an impact on the cultural divide between immigrants in marginalized communities in Paris and greater French society?

Secondary Research Questions. These are supporting questions. Based on your experiences:

- Does the current policy of the government support your mandate?
- How do you evaluate the impact you are having in these marginalized communities?

Prompt Questions (to stimulate additional conversation, as required)

- To what extent does your program address the difference in identity between immigrants and French society?
- What would success look like for this program?
- Do you feel the French society support your goals?
- What would you change about the way the program is run?
- Do you use the same framework to measure success as other programs?
- Do you think a systemic evaluation system would be beneficial?
- How do you feel the greater French society has responded to your program?
- How do you think the communities of the 93 have responded to your program?
- What do you see as the biggest gap between immigrants in the 93 and other French people?

Closing:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I would like to remind you that all names and discussions are confidential, and the data will be analysed in a manner than protects the identities and organizations of the participants. I will ensure that you have access to the analysis and the final thesis.