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Memory of Postcolonial Immigration in Contemporary France: A Site of Resistance

This presentation explores how and in which conditions the transitions of memory of postcolonial immigration from invisible to visible take place in contemporary France. It was the beginning of the 1980s that "memory" became an important issue among the children of postcolonial migrants and within their associative movements in France. These children, whose parents came from French ex-colonies such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia after WWII, have begun to claim that neither French textbooks of history nor French museums tell them of their parents' and/or grand parents' past stories, in other words, the stories from which they could find themselves "inherited".

The reason memory is gaining importance today among these actors is relevant to the reality of racism and racial discrimination they face as French citizens "à l'issue de l'immigration" (of immigration origin). Constantly differentiated, stigmatized and discriminated against based on their names, physical appearance, or place of residence, they have been searching for explanations in the past, which was, and still is, invisible in French society. Therefore, it is essential to consider the transition of memory of postcolonial immigration from invisible to visible in relation to the reality of racism and racial discrimination they face. From this context, and by considering the memory's constructive dimensions, this presentation examines how these actors articulate the past with the present both on individual and collective levels through their cultural and artistic practices. Based on the life-history analysis of the activists and on the discourse analysis of these actors' collective actions in Paris, Lyon and Toulouse, the interactions of memory work between the individual and collective levels are also to be analysed. My hypothesis is that memory has become a site of resistance and a new resource for these

actors to overcome subjectively and politically the discriminations imposed on them by society.