MULTICULTURAL FRANCE ON THE SMALL SCREEN: ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATIONS ON THE TELEVISION SHOW “ENGRENAGES”

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

How does media contribute to the ongoing debates about French identity in the increasingly multicultural France of the twenty-first century? This thesis attempts to address this question by examining French policies concerning discrimination against ethnic minorities as well as using the French television show Engrenages as a case study. By providing a thorough history of French television and racial discrimination in France, and by using different methodological approaches such as coding and scene analysis, this thesis argues that France, similar to many other European Union countries, continues to struggle in its approaches to multicultural issues.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

After being racially profiled and accused of having a fake identity while at a bank, a young black man named Koné is brought into an illegal immigrant detention center. Koné is stripped down to his underwear and all of his belongings are taken away. He is given new clothes and some blankets, which he carries to his cell. There he will be forced to stay until he can gain freedom through the court of law in France. As the police escort him to his cell, he sees multiple ethnic minority families who, too, have been accused of living in the state without any documentation. Men, mourning and wishing for freedom, sit on their beds while mothers dressed in colorful, traditional garb are washing the faces of their young children. Once Koné reaches his temporary cell and meets his cellmate, he descends into a state of confusion and asks himself, “What am I doing here? I don’t get it. I don’t understand… I’ve worked here for over ten years. I’m engaged to a French woman. We’re having a baby.”1 Unfortunately, he is now forced to sit and face a French criminal justice system marred by a history of discrimination towards immigrants and ethnic minorities.2

This scene is just one of many in the French television series Engrenages that portrays French society’s treatment of ethnic minorities. According to the show’s producers, these types of scenes are intended to represent many viewpoints about contemporary French social problems and also to represent the French police and the common violent and abusive tactics they use towards civilians.3 In other words, the show is used as a vehicle to talk about ethnic minorities and how they are treated in French society. “Ethnic minorities,” in this case, refers to both

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1 “Saison 4,” Engrenages, Created by Alexandra Clert and Guy-Patrick Sainderichin, Written by Anne Landois and
2 “Saison 4,” Engrenages; See also, Susan Terrio, Judging Mohammed: Juvenile Delinquency, Immigration, and Exclusion at the Paris Palace of Justice, (Standford: Standford University Press, 2009).
immigrants (documented and undocumented) and second-generation minorities of North African, Sub-Saharan African, Southeast Asian, and Caribbean descent. Their treatment on the show concentrates specifically on the racist and xenophobic beliefs harbored by some white, native-born French men and women who look at ethnic minorities as incompetent, child-like, and inferior. However, do the audiences interpret these scenes the way the producers intend them to? Are these scenes condemning racism and xenophobia or are they promoting these ideas by representing ethnic minorities in stereotypical ways (ie. childlike, unintelligent, uncivilized, etc.)? What is the media’s role in fighting against or encouraging discrimination in French society? Furthermore, how does media, specifically television, contribute to the ongoing, dynamic discourses about “Frenchness” and French identity in the increasingly multicultural France of the twenty-first century? This study seeks to answer these questions by examining France’s policies concerning discrimination against ethnic minorities and the concurrent presence of societal and political discrimination against ethnic minorities through the lenses of the popular French television show *Engrenages*.

**History of French Identity and the Nation State**

According to Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, a nation “is an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” However, how do citizens form this “imagined” nation-state become nationalists? Anderson claims that people define their national identity through cultural traditions, capitalism, forms of communication, and language. France, in particular, is a great example of a country with a robust national tradition. Although there is not clear-cut definition for what this French national identity is, this thesis defines it as follows: French identity is the combination of both historical events including but

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5 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3, 6, 12, and 42–43.
not limited to the French Revolution in 1789, and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), Republican values including, universalism, unitarism, secularism, and assimilationism, laïcité (or in other words secularism), and mastery of the French language. All of these components of French identity have been developed and established throughout French history. Since the French Revolution in 1789, the government and the citizens of France have focused on building a national collective consciousness by promoting particular cultural traditions and the French language. This type of nation-building was specifically seen throughout the Third Republic (1870-1940), in which France strengthened its nation through education (by making education obligatory for all citizens) and reached the peak of its colonial empire. The French people expressed their racist and xenophobic views through their colonial empire and its “mission” of civilizing parts of North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. The “colonizing mission” was a way for France to highlight how colonized people were “uncivilized” by focusing on the differences between skin color, culture, and language. By pushing this colonizing mission, French politicians and colonizers were able to teach French citizens what it truly meant to be French compared to the “others” (non-white, child-like, unintelligent, uncivilized, etc.).

This push for identity was weakened, but also in some ways made stronger, after World War II when large swaths of the colonial empire were finally diminished. From the 1940s until the early 1970s, the flow of immigrants into France tripled because of France’s need for laborers

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after the War. This increase in immigrants reinforced negative views of immigrants and reinforced what it meant to be French. Suddenly, France had the new responsibility of supplying these immigrants with jobs and housing, which made many French people extremely resentful because this immigrant presence led many to believe there was a greater competition for jobs. New far right-wing parties used this struggle as a ploy to promote their ideologies. One such party that was guilty of further heightening this racism and xenophobia was the *Front National* (FN). The FN is an extreme right-wing party in France that was founded in 1972 by Jean-Marie Le Pen. During the 1970s and the 1980s, the FN promoted an anti-immigrant stance in France and blamed immigrants for the increase in unemployment. As the party gained more support from French citizens, it soon came to be a significant player in French politics in 1983. The party also was able to convince many French citizens that immigrants were the source of national insecurity, which then led to more people believing that there needed to be an expulsion of all immigrants from the country.

This feeling of racism and xenophobia, pushed by particular political parties and by some French citizens, was very problematic for the French state because of the state’s longstanding policies promoting integration and assimilation of ethnic minorities. For example, since the Revolution in 1789, or some even argue before the revolution, France promoted policies

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reflecting the idea that France is a “color-blind” society, meaning that the French state “does not recognize racial or ethnic groups either as legitimate social or political categories or as targets for policy.”\(^{14}\) This “color-blind” society only applied to France and did not apply to the colonies.\(^ {15}\) Therefore, as xenophobic and racist feelings grew after World War II and contrasted against France’s “color-blind” ideals, the French government tried to implement policies to assimilate ethnic minorities into society. The government hoped that this assimilation would discourage these negative feelings. These measures included laws such as the *Foundational Law of 1972*. This law focused on “banning discrimination and racist acts in private and public life, and punishing perpetrators in criminal courts with stiff fines and jail sentences.”\(^ {16}\) The goal was to deter acts of racism.\(^ {17}\) In 1983, the state furthered its integration policy by introducing the National Council for the Prevention of Crime, the Commission for Neighborhood Social Development, and urban-area contracts. These new policies were introduced to start improving the neighborhoods that were populated with ethnic minorities and pushed white Frenchmen and women to start interacting with ethnic minorities.\(^ {18}\) After all these efforts, racism and xenophobia continued to exist. Therefore, in 1990 the *Gayssot Law* was also put into place. This law was added onto the *Foundational Law* and “strengthened the penalties against racists and added to the list of crimes classified as racist.”\(^ {19}\)

All of these policies were put into place to prevent racial discrimination. However, a lot of opponents to these policies still existed. For example, when dealing with immigrants and


\(^{15}\) Bleich, “Anti-Racism Without Races,” 168.

\(^{16}\) Bleich, “Anti-Racism Without Races, 165-166.

\(^{17}\) Bleich, “Anti-Racism Without Races, 166.

\(^{18}\) Frachon “France,” 138.

\(^{19}\) Bleich, “Anti-Racism Without Races, 166, see also, 165-166.
citizenship in the past, French political leaders also promoted the identity of “Frenchness” with the expectation that a new-comer would completely assimilate him/herself into a mythic singular “French” culture.\textsuperscript{20} For instance, under the Presidency of François Mitterrand, and then later Jacque Chirac, the government tried incorporating the newly arrived immigrants by promoting and reinforcing the already in place “republican model.”\textsuperscript{21} This model “conceives of integration as a process by which individuals subordinate their particularist origins and accept membership in a unitary nation-state defined by reference to shared universalist values.”\textsuperscript{22} Or, in other words, this model encouraged ethnic minorities to identify primarily as French. Although this model was already in existence since the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, it was continuously adapted and reinforced since 1988 by political authorities. Even purportedly anti-racist groups in the 1980s, such as \textit{SOS-Racisme}, an organization that specifically works to promote a multicultural society and which fought against the Front National and their discriminatory political platform, promoted this model because they thought it was necessary for immigrants to integrate into society.\textsuperscript{23} The idea behind all of these policies was, and continues to be, to integrate and assimilate minorities into society but not to alter the predominant conception of French identity. However, these policies do not work well together because fighting against cultural discrimination is not possible when a country expects an ethnic minority to completely dismiss their culture and exchange it for a new one. Since these policies made at the government level trickle down into different parts


of society, such as in corporate or private organizations and amongst the general population, French citizens gain certain mentalities about ethnic minorities.

**French Media**

According to former President of the Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel (CSA), Herve Bourges, “the audiovisual media are today the principle tools of representation that society gives itself.”

Therefore, it is likely that the images and depictions of ethnic minorities in media, and particularly on television, influence the ways that French citizens view and think about ethnic minorities in society. Although these depictions have changed for the better over time on French television, France continues to struggle with the way that it depicts or does not depict ethnic minorities on television.

Since the advent of television in France in 1935 and until the mid-1980s, the state fully controlled television. However, it was not until the 1950s that the state began including minorities on television. Even then, the only ways that the state presented minorities on television was in documentaries to explain their living conditions, cultures, and lifestyles; and those documentaries featured the *bidonvilles* (slums where many immigrants, specifically Algerian immigrants, were placed in metropolitan France). The shows also focused on problems, such as unemployment, that many believed occurred because of immigrants. This type of programming was supposed to be informational, in contrast to mainstream entertainment programs.

Furthermore, the different ethnicities from Sub-Saharan Africa or from North Africa

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that were shown were rarely differentiated or recognized but, instead, were grouped together as
one minority despite their different cultures, customs, etc.\textsuperscript{27} Then, in the mid-1980s, as the state
ceded control to private broadcasting companies, more attempts were made to represent
minorities in a positive light on television. For example, different shows such as *Navarro*, *PJ* and
*Un flic nommé Le coeur* were cast with some minorities to show inclusion. However, these
shows either represented the minorities by typical negative stereotypes associated with the
*banlieues* (poverty-stricken areas surrounding major cities in France) or portrayed them as
people who “integrated” into the French system and were now “French.”\textsuperscript{28} Missing were positive
“multi-cultural” images.

As a result of this lack of representation and discriminatory representation, a well-known
French-Cameroonian writer named Calixthe Beyala\textsuperscript{29} began a group called *Collectif Egalité*.
Founded in 1998 by Calixthe Beyala, Dieudonné, and Manu Dibango, the *Collectif Egalité*’s
mission has been to raise awareness about the discriminatory (or lack of) minority representation
in the French media.\textsuperscript{30} According to these leaders, the idea is to promote a fair representation in


\textsuperscript{29} Calixthe Beyala is a French ethnic minority activist and novelist. She was born in Cameroon and then moved to
France when she was seventeen years old. Beyala is the President of the Collectif Egalité and has led the fight for
ethnic minority representation on television. In Nicki Hitchcott, "Calixthe Beyala: Black Face(s) on French

Beyala: Black Face(s) on French TV," 474.
the media of all of France’s ethnic communities. In 1999, as part of this fight, Beyala and director Luc St. Eloy interrupted the César Awards and demanded that the Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel (CSA) and the French government start including “visible minorities” on television. Beyala and St. Eloy even refused to pay their annual television taxes until the CSA and French government recognized their cause. In response to this significant uprising, the CSA conducted a study about visible minorities and their visibility and placement on television programs. In order to achieve this, the CSA measured how many times “visible minorities” appeared on television and what characters they played. It also measured the number of appearances and the types of characters by monitoring five national channels during primetime (5pm to 12am) for one week. The CSA confirmed that minorities were not equally represented, and that out of the study only six percent of visible minorities were cast as professionals. Eleven percent of them appeared as guests on a show, and six percent of them were cast as the general public. After reaching this conclusion, the CSA promised to take greater control of its

32 “Visible minorities” is the latest term used to refer to people who are easily distinguished as minorities because of their skin color. In Rosello, “Good Cops, Black Cops,” 85.; The CSA and several authors have discussed and analyzed how this term has been used in contemporary France. These authors include but certainly are not limited to, Mireille Rosello in “Good cops, black cops: ethnicity and solidarity in PJ Saint-Martin; Marie-France Malonga, and Guy Drouot. *See Faculté de droit et de science politique. La place des minorités à la télévision française: La question de la représentation des minorités visibles. Edited by Guy Drouot. Aix en Provence: DEA de Droit des médias, 2002-2003.; and, Qui a peur de la télé en couleurs? La diversité culturelle dans les medias, eds., Isabelle Rigoni and Julien Ténédos (Montreuil: Aux lieux d’être, 2007).; and, Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel, “Présence et représentation des minorités visibles à la télévision française: une étude du CSA,” La Lettre du CSA, no. 129, June 2000. http://calixthe.beyala.free.fr/etudeCSA.htm (accessed October 21, 2014); and, Marie-France Malonga, "La télévision comme lieu de reconnaissance: Le cas des minorités noires en France," Hermes 51 (2008): 161-166.
34 Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel, “Présence et représentation des minorités visibles à la télévision française: une étude du CSA,” La Lettre du CSA.
relationship with broadcasting companies and to make sure that the broadcasting companies were following through with their new responsibility of representing minorities on television.\textsuperscript{35} Since then, not only has the \textit{Collectif Egalité} and the CSA been working together on this mission, but the \textit{Collectif Egalité} has also been involved in other various protests, particularly in the year 2000.\textsuperscript{36} Beyala, too, has participated in several interviews expressing the \textit{Collectif Egalité}’s continuing fight for visible minority representation in the media.\textsuperscript{37} The Collectif Egalité has made some progress through its working with the CSA. However, according to the \textit{Collectif Egalité}, the problem still continues because the state is not protecting its ethnic minorities nor are all the ethnic minorities being represented in the media. Not only does this contribute to certain racist and xenophobic ideas amongst white French men and women but this also does not help ethnic minorities feel like they fit into French society. Rather, when they are not represented, they do not feel French. This feeling is completely opposite of what the color-blind policy is supposed to represent. Therefore, the \textit{Collectif Egalité} continues to fight and bring attention to this discrimination until the state actually carries out its government motto of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” to all ethnic groups living in France.\textsuperscript{38}


\textsuperscript{36} Beyala and Maguysama!, “Actions du collectif egalité: Les minorités visibles se mobilisent pour une France multiculturelle.”


French Media and the European Union

This study focuses on the problems with ethnic minority representation on the television that exist nationally. However, it is important to understand that these issues also have international implications, such as for France’s relationship with the European Union (EU). France is one of twenty-eight member states of the European Union and as part of its membership in this Union, France receives many benefits such as economic stability and participation in democratic political processes.  

All of the agreements between the EU and its member states are to support different values throughout the EU. One of the EU’s main goals, in particular, is to promote equality and fight against discrimination. One of the areas that it fights for these values is in the media. In order to promote values of equality and equal representation of ethnic minorities in the media, the EU has established several different campaigns and programs that not only provide the EU member states with guidelines on how to accomplish equal representation of ethnic minorities but that also sometimes monitor the different states and their television broadcasters to make sure the states are improving this representation. However, although this monitoring is occurring and there are agreements between the EU member states and the EU, the EU states do not always implement these policies correctly, completely, or at all. According to the most recent policies in the Lisbon Treaty (2009), it is the responsibility of the member states to implement European Laws made by the EU. That is to say, although the EU makes these laws for the member states to follow, it does not have the legal power to enforce the implementation of these laws in the

Europa, “How the EU Works.”
Therefore, if the states do not implement these European laws, change is not actually made.

Examples of these policies that the European Union suggests are two different campaigns/programs that are to help fight discrimination against ethnic minorities. The European Union established the *EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program* (EUMAP), which conducts reports that measure human rights issues such as minority protection, equal opportunities for women and men, etc., on the television. EUMAP also program works with the *Network Media Program* (NMP) to make sure that pluralism exists in the media. Also, a campaign that the Council of Europe (another institute that promotes human rights, democracy, etc in Europe, but is not associated with the EU) supports is called “Speak out against discrimination.” In this campaign, the Council of Europe started working with media professionals in all member states of the EU by making sure the professionals were trained to properly talk about the new multicultural Europe in different media outlets.

Although each of these programs has presence in all of the EU member states, there are examples of how these programs are not implemented fully by the member states. For example, France struggles with the implementation of these types of programs because of the French politics concerning anti-discrimination. Since France follows the color-blind policy that demands there be no distinctions between races, it has been very difficult for the media and different programs to actually measure how many ethnic minorities are present and what their roles are on television. The CSA has been the only institution that has managed to measure this

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representation, but even then when the CSA measures this representation, it clumps several ethnicities into one rather than distinguishing between them. In addition, although the CSA measures this representation, there does not seem to be a significant positive change in how ethnic minorities are represented, as one will see in later chapters of this thesis. This lack of positive representation is the fault of the French government and of the CSA not fully implementing regulations that are made to ensure positive ethnic minority representation. Despite the EU having all of these guidelines and establishing many of these programs, there seems to be a lack of accordance to the EU from member states such as France. This suggests that there needs to be change in the power of regulation and implementation at the EU level and at the national level.

**Engrenages: A Case Study**

As a way to examine the dynamic discourses about “Frenchness” and French identity in the increasingly multicultural France, this study will be using the French television show *Engrenages* as a case study.

*Engrenages* was first broadcast in 2005 by the French television station *Canal+*. Since then, it has aired for five seasons. *Engrenages* is a criminal investigation show. According to the producers, the show is supposed to present many viewpoints about contemporary French social problems, and it also pays special attention to the French police and the common violent and abusive tactics they use towards civilians. In fact, according to Janet McCabe in “Exporting French Crime: the Engrenages/Spiral Dossier,” “interweaving crime with politics, the focus is

often less on the felony than with what the investigation of its reveals about wider social truths and conditions.”

In order to portray this excessive use of force by the police, the plot circulates around three police officers and their daily professional and personal affairs. In addition, each season has a significant theme that the producers focus on; the last aired season, “Season Four,” takes on the theme of documented and undocumented immigration of both North Africans and Sub-Saharan Africans and the racism that informs their treatment by the police. By focusing on specific themes such as racism, the producers have claimed that they are trying to alter the racist and xenophobic views in France and inform people about the corrupted French police force.

_Canal +_, which airs _Engrenages_, is a subscription channel that mostly airs French cinema movies and sports broadcasting. It is often considered a French HBO. According to the _Canal +_ broadcasters, _Engrenages_ is the first of its kind (that being a French “Law and Order”-like show) that became extremely successful not only nationally, but also internationally. In fact, Médiamétrie conducted a study that included all of the Canal Plus subscribers both in France and internationally and found that the viewers rated _Engrenages_ with an 8.5/10 grade. Médiamétrie also found that the third season was watched by 871,000 _Canal +_ subscribers (a forty-seven percent increase from the amount of viewers who watched it during the second

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48 “Saison 4,” _Engrenages_.


50 Médiamétrie is a French company that conducts different studies to measure television audiences. These studies include who the audience is, what type of technology the audience is using to watch television, the channels the audience is watching, etc. See Médiamétrie, “Comment mesure t-on la Télévision?,” _Médiamétrie_, http://www.mediametrie.fr/television/pages/infographie-médiamat.php?p=144&page=196 (accessed 28 March 2015).
Engrenages has become a very significant show amongst other “Law and Order” shows in France for multiple reasons. According to the producers and the Canal + broadcasters, much of this success is due to the fact that Engrenages is quite different from the normal “Law and Order” shows broadcast in France or in English-speaking countries. This difference is seen in the plots in which unlike the U.S. and the UK shows, Engrenages’ storylines never feature problems that are easy to solve, but rather feature problems that involve many players. Since these problems are so muddled, someone is bound to get hurt no matter the solution, which is considered more realistic. The producers and broadcasters also believe that it was widely accepted overseas by popular channels such as BBC four because not only is the production quality extremely good but it is also “French, absolutely French, with Paris and different areas of Paris appearing on the screen.” This statement refers to the fact that the audience likes to learn about French culture and is able to see popular tourist sites while watching the television series.

**Intentions of Study**

Both of the topics- French identity and minority politics, as well as discrimination of ethnic minorities on television- have been studied extensively. In fact, many scholars have used different French television shows to explore the troubling racial politics of France and how these take shape in the mass media. However, this study differs in that it will examine the racial politics of the television show Engrenages. Although scholars have studied Engrenages with the sole intent of finding out how popular it is both nationally and internationally, as well as why it is popular, no one has yet analyzed the depictions of ethnic minorities and the producers’
intentions in making this show. Scholars also have not examined what opinions this show possibly reveals about its take on French identity politics in an ever-changing multicultural society. Therefore, this study demonstrates how France continues to struggle with maintaining its proposed French identity as its society becomes more multicultural over time.

In order to fully analyze this topic, chapter two examines the existing literature that discussed these topics while also giving a brief synopsis of other previously studied shows. This can offer insights into how these topics have been previously studied and whether there has been negative or positive change throughout time concerning ethnic minorities in the media and their place in society. This chapter also discusses the methodology used for this study, which includes analyses of scenes, coding, and audience interpretations of the show through social media (ie. blogs, news reports, ratings, etc.).

The third and fourth chapters strictly focus on the analysis of Engrenages as a case study. Chapter three focuses on the results from a coding of the show. This coding includes: measuring the number of racial slurs used by the characters on the show; numbers of appearances by both ethnic minorities and the white French men and women characters (and how these numbers compare). This section of the study is a more quantitative approach to analyzing discrimination on Engrenages.

The fourth chapter centers on the scene analyses of the show, along with the audience interpretations of the show. The scene analyses include interpretations of the language used, the descriptors given to the ethnic minorities versus those given to the white French men or women, the interactions between ethnic minorities and the police, and the stereotypes foisted on ethnic minorities (which includes the clothing they wear, their intelligence, and their culture). The audience interpretations will include personal blogs, which primarily discuss plot developments
and character relationships. This chapter will also examine media coverage of the show and explore to what extent this coverage pays attention to how ethnic minorities are portrayed.

The fifth chapter is the concluding chapter that focuses not only on the analyses of the show, but also provides policy recommendations for the French government and organizations that lead the discussion on ethnic minority representation in France. This chapter hopes to provide potential solutions to a continuing lack of representation (or preponderance of misrepresentation) of ethnic minorities on French TV.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Several scholars have contributed to the ongoing discussion about politics concerning discrimination against minorities and French identity, as well as minority representation in French television. In general, scholars have acknowledged some positive change in minority representation on television throughout history in which minorities are being represented in more dominant and serious roles. However, most scholars have reached the same conclusion: there is still significant change to be made; and, the attempts at change that have been made, unfortunately have ended up contributing to negative societal stereotypes about minorities. In coming to this consensus, scholars have employed many different methodological approaches and focused on many different aspects of television.

The subject of politics concerning ethnic minority discrimination coinciding with French identity has been a prominent theme in scholarly debates. One of the leading scholars on both ethnic minority policies in France and on ethnic minority representation on French television is Alec Hargreaves. He has done extensive work on problems with current ethnic minority policies in France, on general broadcasting and its representation of ethnic minorities, and on specific television shows that feature ethnic minorities. In his book *Multi-Ethnic France: Immigration, politics, culture and society*, Hargreaves focuses on the idea of nationalism and immigration and how these two concepts must be looked at together when viewing problems such as racism and xenophobia that exist in France. According to Hargreaves, because the French nation and its citizens strive to maintain the “French identity” (which France believes makes the nation stronger with similar people, culture, and values), there is a common fear of “outsiders” because of the potential cultural change that they bring to the country, as well as them being new.

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competition for jobs.\textsuperscript{54} This coincides with Benedict Anderson’s argument in \textit{Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism}. Anderson claims that people define their nationalities through cultural traditions, capitalism, forms of communication, and language.\textsuperscript{55} These ideas about nationalism and identity that both authors address seem to contribute to many of the xenophobic and racist views existing in France because many French people are concerned with maintaining the French identity. One way many government leaders and citizens are maintaining this identity is by excluding those who are different because of their skin color, background, culture, language, etc. By using both of these books as reference, this thesis will contribute to the discussion about how this negative mentality, which often comes about from the idea of “Frenchness,” is affecting not only French politics, but also many parts of French society.

For a general understanding of French policy toward ethnic minorities, the book \textit{Race in France} includes several scholars’ work that analyzes state ethnic policy and the different laws enacted to protect citizens from racist acts.\textsuperscript{56} In particular, Erik Bleich in his chapter, “Anti-racism without Races: Politics and Policy in a ‘Color-Blind’ State,” argues that although French people pride themselves on being color-blind, France has not always acted in this way. Rather, colorblindness has played a large part in racial discrimination against new immigrants and even against France’s own ethnic minority citizens.\textsuperscript{57} In fact he defends this argument by saying that “immigration policy is the principle form of racism in France.”\textsuperscript{58} However, Bleich also acknowledges that other attempts to curb racism have been made such as from the 1980s to the

\textsuperscript{55} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}, 3, 6, 12, and 42-43.
\textsuperscript{57} Bleich, “Anti-Racism Without Races,”163-164.
\textsuperscript{58} Bleich, “Anti-Racism Without Races,” 163.
present in which there have been some movements that have promoted multiculturalism in schools. In the schools, teachers were required to use more intercultural rhetoric while teaching to recognize the different ethnic minority immigrants and their different identities as they were moving to and living in France. There have also been more anti-racist groups speaking out and advocating for the “right to difference.”  

Bleich makes an important point that there are some advantages to having a color-blind society such as less internal separation between different ethnicities and resentment of policies that are made to benefit certain ethnicities. However, Bleich states this approach has led France to not implement further policies that are in any way beneficial for minorities. Therefore, Bleich’s study gives this thesis validation with regards to how French society discusses ethnic differences.

Robert C. Lieberman also discusses the color-blind policy and its flaws in his chapter, “A Tale of Two Countries: The Politics of Color-Blindness in France and the United States.” Lieberman discusses the similarities and differences of policies that concern protecting minorities between France and the United States. Lieberman also makes the overall argument that the idea of color-blindness in France, although is supposed to help fight discrimination by not recognizing different ethnic groups with regards to social categorization or policy making, is not particularly effective. He makes this claim because there is not always strict enforcement of policies within certain institutional segments of the French government. In turn, this lack of enforcement causes more discrimination in French society. He even argues that because there are no political advocates to alter and improve anti-discrimination policies in France, it is exceptionally hard for political authorities to oppose and change this policy that has existed in

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59 Bleich, “Anti-Racism Without Races,” 174; see also, 173.
France for so long.⁶² Both of these chapters by Lieberman and Bleich come to the same conclusion: racism and minority discrimination are started at the policy level and then filter down through society.

The book, *De la question sociale à la question raciale? Représenter la société française*, which also consists of several different scholars’ insights, focuses on the question of whether stereotypes of ethnic minorities result from longstanding French colonial ideals. These ideals have evolved into racial stigmas and have reinforced predominant French understandings of “Frenchness.” For instance, according to Pap Ndiaye in his chapter, “Questions de couleur: Histoire, idéologie et pratiques du colorisme,” most of these racist and xenophobic beliefs originate in the colonial ideals that defined what it meant to be French. He argues that one of the simplest distinguishing features was the color of skin; or in other words, “to be French is to be white.”⁶³ Although Ndiaye’s argument is well defended, it could be more valuable if it also included Bleich and Lieberson’s policy arguments. Xenophobic and racist attitudes and beliefs exist for several different reasons and not just because of one time period.

A combination of both of these arguments is seen in Gérard Noiriel’s chapter “‘Color blindness’ et construction des identités dans l’espace public français,” also in *De la question sociale à la question raciale? Représenter la société française*. According to Noiriel, the reasons for discrimination range from the ideals of colonization, to the faults of a color-blind society, and then to the economic troubles existing in society. In fact, he claims that often times a lot of these stereotypes are then passed down from generation to generation, which makes these problems continue in society rather than putting a stop to them. This argument strongly supports this thesis

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⁶³ Pap Ndiaye, “Questions de couleur. Histoire, idéologie et pratiques du colorisme.” 46; see also, 45.
because it looks at a broader picture with several different causes of racism and xenophobia rather than having one sole cause.\textsuperscript{64}

Part of this Master’s thesis focuses on how ethnic minority policies trickle down into societal problems such as in tense relationships between the police force and ethnic minorities. Since Engrenages centers on crime and the law, this thesis will also address how racism and xenophobia is sometimes exhibited by the French police force. Several scholars have studied problems between the police force and ethnic minorities. Didier Fassin in Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing, examines police brutality towards ethnic minorities, particularly those living in the banlieues. Fassin questions how a democracy like France can justify the horrible and discriminatory actions aimed at ethnic minorities, especially in the banlieues. He examines the pervasive mentality amongst many policemen, which is that areas like the banlieues are filled with criminals. Fassin also discusses how the policemen hold this type of mentality against minorities as well as the use of force many policemen use against minorities without repercussions from the state.\textsuperscript{65} This mentality Fassin discusses in turn reflects how French identity plays a part in racism and xenophobia because it shows how French police are relying on stereotypes that are only given to what French society deems as the “other.” Therefore, Fassin’s work will be a useful source in examining the television producers’ depictions of the French police force in Engrenages.

In addition to the extensive scholarly work on policies concerning ethnic minority discrimination, rights, and protection in France, there is also a significant amount of work that focuses on French television and ethnic minority representation. Much of this work discusses the

\textsuperscript{64} Gérard Noiriel, “‘Color blindness’ et construction des identités dans l’espace public français.” In De la question sociale à la question raciale? Représenter la société française, edited by Didier Fassin and Éric Fassin, (Paris: Éditions la découverte, 2006),162, 166, and 170-172.

history of representations. However, some scholars have focused on older, popular television shows and how they have either contributed to the improvement of ethnic minority representation or contributed to racist and xenophobic views.

Édouard Mills-Affif is one of the leading scholars on ethnic minority representation in French media. In his book, *Filmer les immigrés*, Mills-Affif traces the full history of ethnic minority representation in television from the 1960s to the mid-1980s, which is considered the time of the “migratory boom” for many post-colonial states.66 He completes this task by examining the French debates about immigration in this period. This analysis includes discussion of how language has been used to group together several different ethnic minorities instead of distinguishing them; and, there is discussion about the degrading colonial image of immigrants. Mills-Affif also examines the different attempts at documentaries and other programs about ethnic minorities that were marred by an exoticizing approach.67 Because of this detailed history, this foundational book will be used to historicize contemporary problems of media representation of ethnic minorities, such as those in the show *Engrenages*.

The book *European Television: Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities* is another compilation of several scholars’ works that does a thorough job of analyzing the ways ethnic minorities are depicted on TV in different western European countries. One scholar in particular, Jérôme Bourdon, in his chapter “Foreigners on prime time or is television xenophobic?,” examines television shows that are aired during prime time and that are not specifically aimed towards minority audiences. According to Bourdon, prime time television shows generally present minorities as either facing some sort of conflict and being portrayed as a criminal or victim or,

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that shows fall victim to the “Benetton Effect” in which minorities are only portrayed as singers, dancers, or those who play sports. Bourdon also claims that broadcasting companies do condemn this type of representation but nobody is actually taking the initiative to stop it.

Another study that contributes to our understanding of stereotypes and their relationship to television watching is “Media Use and Misperceptions: Does TV Viewing Improve our Knowledge about Immigration?” by Toril Aalberg and Zan Strabac. They argue that often television gives misinformation about immigrants and ethnic minorities. For example, Aalberg and Strabac note several cases of misinformation about the size of the immigrant population which then makes the audience view immigration as a “problem.” Although this Master’s thesis will not measure how people react to such images on Engrenages, Aalberg and Strabac offer evidence of how television can inform public understandings of immigrant and ethnic minority groups.

Alec Hargreaves’ chapter “Gatekeepers and Gateways: Post-colonial minorities and French television” in the book Post-Colonial Cultures in France also examines minority representation on television. He focuses on minority representation after the privatization of formerly state-run channels. Hargreaves gives examples of particular television series, offering a potential model for how this thesis will analyze the television show Engrenages. According to Hargreaves, although television shows began including ethnic minorities in the 1970s (mostly in documentaries), the show “Mosaïque” was introduced in 1976 and its purpose was not to integrate ethnic minorities into society, but rather to encourage ethnic minorities to move back to

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68 The Benetton Effect is when minorities are shown as exotic and as objects of entertainment (ie. dancers, singers, etc). Seen in Jérôme Bourdon, “Foreigners on prime time or is television xenophobic?” in European Television: Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities. Eds., Claire Frachon and Marion Vargaftig, (London: John Libbey, 1995), 32-33.
69 Jérôme Bourdon, “Foreigners on prime time or is television xenophobic?”, 24, 27, and 32-33.
their homelands. In the 1990s, the television shows “La Famille Ramdam” and “Fruits et légumes” featured ethnic minorities. However, the ethnic minority image was toned down in order for the characters to seem more “French” in “La Famille Ramdam;” and the characters in “Fruits et légumes” were specifically made to only give the audience a positive feeling about ethnic minorities and were mainly aimed to attract ethnic minority audiences. By discussing these shows, Hargreaves is able to make a strong case that despite numerous attempts at including ethnic minorities on television, they are still largely given marginal roles or portrayed in a xenophobic and racist light.71 This thesis will examine how Engrenages fits into this broader history of racist representation.

Richard L. Derderian in his book North Africans in Contemporary France Becoming Visible dedicates a whole chapter to multiculturalism on French television. Similar to Hargreaves, Derderian looks at the television show “La Famille Ramdam.” However, Derderian takes a deeper look into the show by analyzing the public discourse about the title of the show in which the word “Ramdam” is rooted from the Arabic language. Derderian finds that the title only became allowable because the family in the show, even though of ethnic minority descent, was “French” enough for the audience to accept the title. He even discusses how racism and discrimination seem to have been completely omitted from the television series, giving the false hope that discrimination problems were improving in France and/or barely existed. Derderian argues that avoiding these issues was another way for the French to ignore the fact that France was becoming a multicultural society.72

Derderian also gives attention to the television show “Seconde B,” a show introduced in 1993 and which focused on teenage youth in the *banlieues*. Although this show was supposed to provide a more realistic portrayal of many ethnic minorities, according to Derderian it was not a promoter of multiculturalism but instead muted the differences between the ethnicities. It essentially insulted the cultural differences that were present in the television show by rarely referring to them and even then only criticizing the cultural differences. The show also contributed to the already negative image of the *banlieues* by only focusing on the more poverty-stricken and crime-heavy areas. By focusing on both “La Famille Ramdam” and “Seconde B,” Derderian proves that although there is a desire to integrate and include ethnic minorities, there continues to be a stigma attached to ethnic minorities and a need to make the ethnic minorities seem more “French” so as not to “disturb” the viewing public.\(^\text{73}\)

Mireille Rosello’s “Good cops, black cops: ethnicity and solidarity in PJ Saint-Martin” is extremely important to this thesis because she analyzes a police show called *PJ Saint-Martin* that is in the same genre of television as *Engrenages*. Rosello examines specific scenes and their characters as well as the different types of interpretations about ethnic minorities and their communities that can be drawn from the scenes. Rosello concludes that the show, which is trying to recognize multiculturalism, ends up actually butchering the efforts and categorizes all ethnic minorities as a homogeneous whole. This categorization then contributes to the idea that there is a difference between white French people and ethnic minorities (both of whom are French citizens and whom are not French citizens) because it still focuses on the cultural differences of ethnic minorities compared to the French culture. In fact, according to Rosello, *PJ Saint-Martin* is simply following the framework of previous television shows.\(^\text{74}\) She says:


\(^{74}\) Mireille Rosello, “Good Cops, Black Cops,” 82-85.
PJ is a typical contemporary fiction in that the script makes a deliberate effort to introduce a multicultural cast: even more significant is the fact that both the police team and their ‘clients’ (victims and delinquents) are ethnically diverse, which allows the episodes to explore not so much the relationship between a supposedly homogeneous (white) society and the token black or Beur hero but rather the complex and fictionally unpredictable relationships between minority characters who cannot easily be lumped together under the ethnic umbrella: several stereotyped binary oppositions are thus potentially questioned even if, as we shall see, it is always possible to fit old paradigms of interpretation into the new mould.75

Therefore, it seems as though the show’s efforts to represent a multicultural society were overshadowed by the stereotypes that are more prevalent in society.

The methodological approach of this study requires looking at the different ways in which producers present stereotypes on the television shows. This type of analysis is present in the study previously mentioned, “Good cops, black cops: ethnicity and solidarity in PJ Saint-Martin,” in which Mireille Rosello examines how language and visual cues are used to describe ethnic minorities in television programs. Rosello argues that the use of language in the media still creates ideas of racism because the language used is very general and does not differentiate between different ethnicities and between the citizenship status that different minorities hold. Furthermore, different language varieties are often used for different characters in the series to show levels of authority; the white French people speak “superior” language (ie. proper, without slang, and with a regional French accent) to show they are truly “French,” whereas minorities use “inferior” language (ie. speaking with slang or mixed with other languages, and used with a Foreign accent).76

Rosello makes a similar argument in “Representing illegal immigrants in France: from clandestins to l’affaire des sans-papiers de Saint-Bernard,” showing that there is often specific language and types of images that are used in the television program to describe immigrants, all

75 Rosello, “Good Cops, Black Cops,” 82.  
76 Rosello, “Good Cops, Black Cops,” 79-85, and 87.
of which mostly derives from stereotypes. In fact, Rosello makes a point to argue that there is never a clear-cut definition of an undocumented immigrant (or any immigrant for that matter) but that French television often gives them all a common set of features and describes them in the same negative ways.\textsuperscript{77} Both of these studies are significant because they examine the language component of representation which is important because of the French state’s concern with the purity and protection of the French language.\textsuperscript{78}

Lastly, no study has analyzed how \textit{Engrenages} represents ethnic minorities, but one study, “Exporting French Crime: The \textit{Engrenages/Spiral} Dossier” by Janet McCabe, does analyze how and why the show has become popular internationally. According to McCabe, although the show is “interweaving crime with politics, the focus is often less on the felony than with what the investigation of it reveals about wider social truths and conditions.”\textsuperscript{79} Therefore, the fact that the show has reached over seventy different countries renders this thesis’s importance.\textsuperscript{80}

This thesis contributes to this ongoing dialogue about ethnic minority representation on French television. The producers of \textit{Engrenages} claim its objective is to curb racism and xenophobia, as well as the poor treatment of immigrants and ethnic minorities.\textsuperscript{81} This study will build on the already existing literature to fully understand how a television show such as \textit{Engrenages} might contribute to the creation and perpetuation of racism in French society. This study differs in that the main goal is not to prove that \textit{Engrenages} exemplifies racism in the

\textsuperscript{79} McCabe, “Exporting French Crime,” 102.
\textsuperscript{81} Chrisafis, “Meet Spiral’s feminist anti-hero.”
media. Rather, this study discusses how this show contributes and/or is a product of the existing dialogue about French identity and policies concerning the protection of ethnic minorities.

**Methodology**

The methodological approach of this study includes: individual scene analyses, audience reception, and quantitative and qualitative coding.

In devising a methodology for this study, a guiding question has been: how much of the television show is actually presenting the reality of life of ethnic minorities in France as opposed to presenting the stereotypes assigned to ethnic minorities in France? Scholar Mireille Rosello addresses this problem in her work “Good cops, black cops: ethnicity and solidarity in *PJ Saint-Martin.*” By arguing that, although there is a diverse cast in the television series, there are “complex and fictionally unpredictable relationships between minority characters who cannot easily be lumped together under the ethnic umbrella.” Thus, this sort of characterization and the fictional relationships between all the different ethnic minorities and white French characters actually represent stereotypes because these relationships are not easily found in French society.

Rosello also remarks that television producers often rely on images and form relationships between characters that are more a cliché in order to please the audience’s presumed beliefs about successful multicultural cohabitation. Also, when the producers do form these apparent “positive” images, they actually create more generalizations about ethnic minorities by grouping all ethnicities into one category and produce a “mosaic of cultures and origin.”

In the individual scene analysis approach, specific scenes (although every scene could potentially be analyzed) are studied with an eye towards such factors as: the discourse used and

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83 Rosello, “Good Cops, Black Cops,” 82.
84 Rosello, "Good Cops, Black Cops," 82-83.
85 Rosello, "Good Cops, Black Cops," 83.
the intentions of certain conversations, the portrayal of both ethnic minorities and white actors and actresses, the way characters dress, and which characters are presented in a positive or negative light. These scenes are chosen based on how significant they are to the storyline. Each scene is evaluated individually and then put in comparison with the others. The findings from the coding analyses are then also taken into account. While these factors are looked at, this study also keeps in mind the ways that the producers of *Engrenages* depict the realities of ethnic minorities and their relationships with the police force versus the ways that these so-called realities are actually just often stereotypes perceived by society. This type of analysis helps determine how often and to what extent *Engrenages* plays a part in the discourse that defends a mythic unitary “French” identity in a multicultural society. It also provides strong evidence as to how the producers expect audiences to react to this type of television series.

The reception of the television series among French audiences is also evaluated. This approach includes the show’s ratings in both France and internationally; and, it also includes peoples’ opinions about the show on blogs and in news reports. The show’s ratings come from Janet McCabe’s study “Exporting French Crime: The *Engrenages/Spiral* Dossier.” Analyzing these ratings provides evidence as to how popular the television show is and as to why people are interested in the show. Peoples’ opinions in blogs and news reports are analyzed according to how often the television show is talked about (i.e. how much are people talking about this show and in what countries) and what parts of the television series are talked about (i.e. are people discussing the problems of ethnic minority representation and the problems between ethnic minorities and the police force in society or are they more concerned with discussing the plot of the show). Analyzing these forms of audience reception gives a better understanding as to how audiences watch this show. That is to say, do they watch it simply for entertainment or do they

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86 Casey et, al. *Television Studies*, 45, 64 and 229-230.
watch it and question the stereotypes and images that are depicted on the show? The answer to
this question helps determine if the show follows the producers’ intentions to spark discussion of
these societal problems or if the producers fall into the same discriminatory cycle that other
television shows seem to have fallen into in the past.

The coding process for this thesis will follow Jim Macnamara’s media analysis guidelines
in “Media content analysis: Its uses; benefits and best practice methodology.” It is first and
foremost important to understand that the coding is used in this thesis in order “to provide a
description or explanation of a phenomenon in a way that avoids or minimizes the biases of the
investigator.” Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative coding are used in this study. The
quantitative coding includes enumerating the usage of certain phrases and words along with their
synonyms that are significant to the problem. The qualitative coding includes the narratology
(storylines and plots of the show) and semiotics (symbols and signs present in the show, often to
give certain messages). By focusing on both the narratology and semiotics, this study will be
able to calculate the characterizations in the storylines and the presence of certain symbols,
cultural stereotypes, etc. Quantitative and qualitative coding will provide evidence as to how
the representations and messages in Engrenages contribute to the existing dialogue about French
identity and policies concerning the protection of French minorities.

The variables coded for are those that contribute to the problems in French discrimination
policies. These variables include but are not limited to: stereotypes, cultural differences, visible
minorities and their presence on the television show, both positive and negative situations that
come from multiple cultures living together, etc. Each of the coding elements was chosen so that
“all positive messages identified for analysis should be equally matched with their corresponding

87 Jim Macnamara, “Media content analysis: Its uses; benefits and best practice methodology,” Asia Pacific Public
negative form, and vice versa, to ensure balance." In other words, this study codes each message equally to prevent any biases that could possibly occur in the other forms of methodology.

**Coding Process:**

The researcher will search for the following points in all twelve episodes of Season Four of *Engrenages*. These points will then be coded by paper and inserted into an Excel document to figure the percentages and form comparisons:

--The number of racial slurs spoken by ethnic minorities versus the number of racial slurs spoken by white French characters. These slurs include derogatory terms used against another ethnicity.

--The number of chapters that focus on crime committed by a white character versus the number of chapters that focus on crime committed by an ethnic minority character. These chapters may coincide throughout the season.

--The amount of times an ethnic minority officer appears on the show. There is only one minority officer present in the show, but he does not appear until late in the season. His character is not portrayed as frequently in the show as the white police officers’ characters.

--The number of chapters in which ethnic minorities are dressed in typical “Western” and/or “French” attire versus the number of chapters that ethnic minorities are dressed in “ethnic” attire (This attire includes African headdresses and different veils that represent Islam.)

--The number of chapters in which ethnic minorities are seen using languages other than French.

--The number of white French characters who have significant storylines versus the number of ethnic minority characters that have significant storylines. This variable will be measured by how many episodes focus on each prominent character and will include both perceived “good” and “bad” characters who are prominent in the television show.

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--The number of times a racial/ethnic term is used for a “visible minority” versus the number of times a “visible minority” is referred to as “Français(e).”

--The number of times “Français(e)” is used as a synonym for the “white Frenchmen/women.”

--The number of times the term “blanc” is used as a way to refer to white Frenchmen/women versus the number of times the term “noir” is used as a way to refer to any ethnic minority.

**Conclusion:**

The multi-methods approach used in this study (scene analysis, audience reception analysis, and both quantitative and qualitative coding) will provide strong evidence from which to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between ethnic minority representation on television and a changing conception about Frenchness in an increasingly multicultural, twenty-first century France.
CHAPTER THREE: CODING ENGRENAS

As part of the fight for equal representation of ethnic minorities on television, the Conseil Supérieur de L’audiovisuel publishes reports on visible minority representation on French television. One of the most recent reports was published in 2009. This report sampled 560 hours worth of broadcasted programs from the primetime hours (5:00pm-12:00am) on sixteen different channels. This report measured several different variables, one of which was the number of non-white people who appeared on French fiction television versus the number of white people that appeared on French fiction television. According to the report, only eleven percent of the people seen on the television show amongst these sixteen different channels were non-white. White people made up eighty-nine percent, showing an alarming disproportionate representation of white characters seen versus ethnic minority characters seen on television. This type of finding proves that French broadcasters still struggle in positively and equally representing ethnic minorities on television.

Similar to the CSA report, this thesis will also use the same methodology of coding, but it will measure different variables in order to measure the representation of ethnic minorities in season four of Engrenages. By conducting this study, one will be able to see how Engrenages’ producers’ representation of ethnic minorities compares to other television shows. One will also see whether the fourth season of Engrenages that was aired in 2012, approximately three years after the CSA’s 2009 report, has improved the way ethnic minorities are represented on television. Although there will be different variables accounted for between the CSA’s study and this thesis, it is hoped that these findings will illustrate the way French society (and in particular, 90

French broadcasting companies) handles situations involving discrimination against ethnic minorities.

Coding Process

The methodology of coding is used for this study in order to show a quantitative account of ethnic minority representation on the television show Engrenages. Different variables have been chosen based on the appearances of ethnic minorities and their characterizations, along with how these appearances and characterizations compare with those of the “white” French characters (as seen in Chapter 2). These variables were looked for and counted by the number of times they appeared throughout each episode or by the number of times they appeared throughout each chapter of each episode. There are six chapters in each episode and twelve episodes in the season. These elements were tallied on an organized chart and then inserted into an Excel spreadsheet for the results to be calculated.

Findings and Results

After coding the entire season, the results show that there are several trends that occur throughout Season Four of Engrenages. This section will decode these trends starting from a general standpoint and working towards more specific details.

The first significant variable that was accounted for during the coding process was the number of prominent ethnic minority storylines versus the number of prominent white storylines in the show. In order to code this variable, all people either of color and French origin, people of color and not of French origin, or people simply not of French origin (such as one Greek man) were considered ethnic minorities; and all white people of French origin were placed in the category of white storylines. A character was considered prominent if the character was seen more than once throughout the season and if the character had an active voice in the episode.

91 “Saison 4,” Engrenages.
rather than just as a bystander in the series. Overall, there were around seventeen main white characters and around fifteen main ethnic minority characters in the show. At first glance, this number seems to suggest that the show gives equal attention to both whites and ethnic minorities. However, after numbering the appearances of prominent white characters versus the appearances of prominent minority characters throughout each chapter of the show, the prominent white characters seem to appear much more often throughout the entire season. In fact, when looking at Figure 1, one can see that prominent white characters appear over three times more than prominent minority characters.

In addition to the lack of prominent appearances of ethnic minority characters compared to prominent white characters, there is also a large difference as to how white and ethnic minority characters are portrayed. For example, there are both bad and good prominent white characters and bad and good prominent ethnic minority characters. Although it is impossible to know how the producers expected the audience to feel about each individual character, each character is given a certain personality that leans more towards what one would perceive as good or bad. In order to measure this variable in this study, a character is considered good if he/she is an authority figure whose job is to help people and protect society, if he/she is a person who is wrongfully accused or an innocent bystander in a crime, or if he/she is a person who works to help people because of his/her civil duty. A character is considered bad if he/she is doing harm to others, or if he/she is constantly breaking the law. It is important to note that not all of the characters were easily placed as good or bad because several characters had both qualities. The deciding factor was determined on what types of qualities were predominantly seen throughout the season. By looking at Figure 2, one can see that although the number of prominent white characters and the number of prominent ethnic characters is more or less equal, there is a greater
amount of prominent ethnic characters who are considered “bad.” In fact, only two of the fifteen prominent ethnic characters are considered innocent and “good” people, whereas eleven out of seventeen prominent white characters are seen as “good” and innocent people.

Overall, the numbers appearing on Figure 2 show that although there was perhaps an effort to include the same number of ethnic minorities as whites in the show, there is still a significant problem as to how each character is portrayed. Whites and ethnic minorities might be equally represented by number, but ethnic minorities are disproportionately portrayed as criminals. White characters, on the other hand, are more associated with authority figures and are seen as innocent, crime-stopping heroes.

Coding was also done for the number of chapters that showed crime committed by ethnic minority characters compared to the number of chapters that showed crime committed by white characters. This variable is accounted for in chapters where people conspire together to create and to commit the crime, when a character defends him or herself because of the crime, and when the crime actually takes place. Both Figure 3 and Figure 4 are divided so that Figure 3 displays how many chapters entail crime committed by white characters throughout the episodes, and Figure 4 displays how many chapters entail crime committed by ethnic minority characters throughout the episodes. As one can see, there is approximately ten percent more white crime than ethnic crime shown during the entire season. This statistic would make it seem as though ethnic minorities are not always the stereotypical “bad guys” in the show and in life. However, when considering how much the show is dedicated to white characters versus how much the show is dedicated to ethnic minority characters (as seen above), the ten percent difference is not extremely significant. Rather, it further proves that when ethnic minorities appear throughout the season, they are usually associated with crime.
Additionally, it is also important to recognize that the crime committed by whites that is seen as so prevalent throughout the entire season, as the chart shows, is often related to a select group of characters. There is a group of four white activists who use violence to fight against the French political establishment. Throughout the season these characters claim they are fighting for immigrant rights and that they feel the only way to succeed in making change for immigrants is by using violence. However, as the violence occurs, it is clear that they use immigrant rights as a façade just so that they can gain support from the more peaceful immigrant rights activists. In reality, their actual motive is to fight against and break down the French police force and eventually the law itself. Furthermore, if these four activists were not as present, the number of chapters with crime committed by white characters would not be as high because most of the other white characters are seen as good and as those who prevent crime.

In addition to evaluating the ascribed character traits of each of the actors in the show, this study also examines the type of clothing that the ethnic minority characters wear. Clothing is coded for by the number of chapters in which an ethnic minority is seen wearing “ethnic” attire versus when he/she is seen wearing “western” attire. The “ethnic” attire includes various kinds of West and North African garb as well as religious attire (i.e. different forms of the veil). The “western” attire includes jeans, pants, blouses, and dress clothes that are currently popular in the western world. According to Figure 5, an ethnic minority is seen wearing ethnic attire in at least one chapter in nine of the twelve episodes. At the same time, in every episode, there are at least three chapters in which an ethnic minority is seen wearing “western” attire. From these results, although they are not guaranteed, it is possible that the producers are trying to show how most of the ethnic minorities currently residing in France are westernized and therefore wear western clothing. However, the number of times ethnic attire is present on the show also brings attention

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92 “Saison 4,” Engrenages.
to the cultural differences that exist in France. People who wear “ethnic” attire in French society stand out more and perhaps are not perceived as “truly French” by French society.

Furthermore, the number of chapters in which an ethnic minority officer appears is included in Figure 5. Throughout the entire fourth season, there is only one ethnic minority who plays a significant leading role as a police officer. Another ethnic minority police officer does appear in episode six, but he is without a voice and is seen in a crowd. The ethnic minority officer who plays a main character, even though seen in previous seasons of Engrenages, does not appear until episode eight of Season Four. The appearances of this ethnic minority officer lead to two important conclusions about the show. First, the fact that he does not appear until the eighth episode and then is killed off in the twelfth episode, shows that there is not an equal representation of authority figures who are of ethnic descent compared to authority figures who are white. 93 Secondly, if one looks at Figure 5 carefully and compares the number of appearances of the ethnic minority officer to those chapters that show ethnic minorities in western attire, one can see a trend. Since the ethnic minority officer appears in almost every chapter starting in the eighth episode, there is always a guarantee that an ethnic minority will be dressed in western attire because this officer dresses to work with the French police force. That is not to say that other ethnic minorities are not dressed in western attire throughout these last five episodes, but rather that there was always one minority who could essentially cover the role of the “ethnic Frenchman”- an ethnic minority who was dressed in western clothing. It is unknown whether or not the producers had certain motives by showing ethnic minority characters in western attire or in “ethnic” attire. However, the appearance of both attires, and the amount of times and situations in which these two different types of clothing appear, suggests that French society looks at immigrants or second-generation immigrants as not truly French because of the

93 “Saison 4,” Engrenages.
way they look. The amount of times and types of situations ethnic minorities are in suggests that white French society does not associate ethnic minorities with positive roles in society such as by those who by definition are supposed to protect society and the law such as policemen, but rather more as criminals or people who do not positively contribute to society or the common good.

Moreover, the amount of chapters in which languages other than French are used by ethnic minorities is accounted for throughout each episode. From episode six to episode eleven, other languages, including Turkish and English, are used in at least two to four chapters per episode. Again, although it is difficult to determine the producers’ intentions for including other languages besides French, it is possible that these other languages are included to show the reality of immigrants who come to live in France and who often have a different native language than French. However, at the same time, these other languages are stigmatized because there are scenes in which white Frenchmen and Frenchwomen yell at the immigrants to speak French rather than the foreign language. These type of scenes illustrate that there are problems with how French people assume that the French language should be dominant even in a multicultural society. What is interesting, though, is that when English is spoken in these chapters, the negative stigma of foreign languages disappears. In these scenes, the Frenchmen and women immediately understand the English language and have absolutely no objection to the foreigner using the English language.94 This type of reaction potentially shows how French society is working towards accepting the English language because of its relationships with the English-speaking world as well as the fact that English is becoming a dominant language in the world.95

94 “Saison 4,” Engrenages.
The reaction also perhaps proves that French society views all other languages as inferior to the French language.

Lastly, the usage of different terms throughout the television program is also coded for. These terms include those that specifically refer to ethnicities or racial identities, and the term “Français(e).” According to Figure 6, throughout each of the twelve episodes, characters used racial and ethnic terms to describe ethnic minorities several times, the lowest being one time in an episode, and the highest being fifteen times in an episode. At the same time, not once was an ethnic minority, citizen or immigrant, described as “Français(e).” Figure 6 also shows that the term Français(e), however, was used to describe a white character one to three times throughout four of the twelve episodes. This finding is extremely significant because it brings light to how French society identifies those who are not white and French even if the person was born and raised in France. Perhaps the usage, or lack thereof, for identifying ethnic minorities as French is supposed to represent the realities of French society. However, the fact that the producers, who have tried to make statements about inequality seen in French society, have avoided referring to any ethnic minority as Français(e), demonstrates that the supposed ideals of what it means to be French is deeply entrenched in French society.⁹⁶ In this case, it has shaped the norms of French television.

Other terms are also accounted for in the study. For example, the usage of racial slurs used by ethnic minorities towards others versus the usage of racial slurs used by whites towards others is accounted for throughout each episode. These racial slurs include any term that is considered derogatory or that puts down another ethnicity because of his or her skin color. Overall, there were zero racial slurs used by ethnic minorities against others and three racial slurs

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used by whites against others. Both of these numbers are surprisingly low for how much fighting and disagreement occurs between the characters (both of ethnic background and those who are white). Thus, it is valid to say that the producers of the show were perhaps aware of the usage of these types of terms and tried to avoid them as much as possible. Whether or not the number of times these slurs are used is representative of how often these slurs are used in French society is unknown.

The last type of terminology coded for in this show was the usage of “blanc” to refer to whites versus the usage of “noir” to refer to ethnic minorities. The results turned out quite low. “Blanc” was used only once to refer to a white person and “noir” was only used once to refer to an ethnic minority. The fact that these terms were hardly used is actually not surprising considering France strives to be a color-blind society that does not make a distinction between the color of skin. It is also significant that these terms of color to describe ethnic minorities are hardly used compared to the amount of times that racial and ethnic terms are used to describe an ethnic minority. The fact that ethnic terms are used to describe ethnic minorities rather than the color of their skin suggests evasiveness about explicitly racial language in France. That is to say that French society possibly uses ethnic descriptions as proxies for terms such as “blanc” and “noir” in order to claim that it follows and succeeds in color-blind thinking.97

Conclusions

The results from Engrenages show that there is an equal number of ethnic minorities and whites present on the television show, and that Engrenages diverges from the findings of the CSA’s report conducted in 2009. However, that does not mean that the producers of Engrenages have really accomplished the CSA’s goals and regulations to include more minorities because, as

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mentioned before, the appearances of these dominant ethnic minority characters are not as frequently seen as the dominant white characters. Furthermore, most of the dominant ethnic minority characters that do exist are criminals or ones associated with illegal actions.

The results from this study raise the question of whether French television is actually improving how ethnic minorities are represented, at least from 2009 when the CSA report was published until 2012 when this season premiered on French television. The findings on *Engrenages* show that there is a lack of representation of ethnic minorities on television compared to whites. And, the findings also show that when ethnic minorities are represented, they are represented in a biased and stereotypical manner. Even though there are some cases in *Engrenages* in which ethnic minorities are see as the “heros,” for the most part, they are seen as immigrants who are breaking the law by living in France illegally, or as criminals who are involved in gangs and with drugs.

The findings also show that there are still problems concerning who is and who is not considered French because how whites are dressed and act in the show compared to how ethnic minorities dress and act in the show. The fact that many of the ethnic minorities are wearing traditional African garb and sometimes speak other languages enhances how different ethnic minorities are seen from the “typical white French person.” None of the white characters ever wore these types of clothes and were never heard speaking any language other than French. In addition, when the immigrants (both documented and undocumented) are wearing western attire in the show and speaking perfect French, it is possible that the audience could think that ethnic minorities can easily assimilate to French culture.

How the public receives these representations and portrayals is unknown and difficult to measure. However, the fact that these issues are still occurring, even when the producers are

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98 Conseil Supérieur de L’audiovisuel, *Promouvoir La Diversite Dans Les Medias*, 1; and, “Saison 4,” *Engrenages*. 

43
supposedly working to counter these problems, demonstrates that there are certain ideals of what it means to be French unconsciously embedded in French society and its people.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Pudlowski, “‘Engrenages’: une quatrième saison très politique.” 20 Minutes.
3.1 FIGURES

Figure 1.

The percentage shown in this chart represents the amount of times a white prominent character or an ethnic prominent character appeared throughout each chapter of each episode.
Figure 2.
This chart shows the number of prominent white characters and number of prominent ethnic characters as well as how many characters appear to be good and how many appear to be bad.
Figure 3.
This graph shows the number of chapters in which crime that is committed by white characters appears versus the number of chapters in which crime committed by white characters does not appear throughout Season Four.
Figure 4.

This graph shows the number of chapters that crime committed by ethnic minorities appears versus the number of chapters that crime committed by ethnic minorities does not appear throughout Season Four.
Figure 5.

This chart shows the number of chapters in which ethnic minorities are dressed in western attire versus how many chapters in which ethnic minorities are dressed in ethnic attire. The chart also pays attention to the number of times the only ethnic minority cop appears in the show and the relationship between his appearances and ethnic minorities wearing westernized attire.
Figure 6.

This chart represents the number of times a racial or ethnic term is used to describe a visible minority, the number of times the term “Français(e)” is used to describe a visible minority, and the number of times the term “Français(e)” is used to describe a white Frenchman or Frenchwoman.
CHAPTER FOUR: SCENE ANALYSIS AND AUDIENCE PERCEPTION

Introduction

For any television show such as *Engrenages*, the main goal of the producers and of the directors is to invent storylines and characters that make the audience feel emotions ranging from excitement and anticipation to love and hatred. However, although this may be the intention of directors and producers, it is very difficult to determine how an audience actually interprets and perceives a show and its messages. Therefore, rather than try to determine what each scene in *Engrenages* means or how the audience feels about the show, this study tries to examine how the specific characterizations and storylines that the authors have chosen contribute to the systematic stereotypical beliefs and opinions that many white French people have about ethnic minorities. This study also measures what types of conversation national and international audiences are having about this show and why these conversations are occurring.

In order to achieve these goals, this section will examine specific scenes from the fourth season of *Engrenages* and discuss the trends that emerge around language use, clothing, and characterization.

Scene Analysis

Throughout season four of *Engrenages*, there are several scenes in which the white man/woman is seen as the most relatable character, one for which the audience is expected to feel more sympathy or empathy compared to the ethnic minority characters. For example, in many scenes, the main characters, who consist of both white police officers and lawyers, are in an interrogation room with the “criminals.” The “criminals” are more often of ethnic minority descent but are not always actually guilty. Sometimes they are witnesses or have been falsely accused. The police are trying to get answers and the scenes often end up with the police
threatening or yelling at the “criminals,” or becoming physically rough with them in the interrogation room. In turn, as a result of this hostility and/or fear, the “criminals” take on a defiant stance towards the police. This type of interaction is likely intended to make the audience feel sympathy for the police officer who is just trying to do his/her job. The strong disrespect coming from the ethnic minority quite possibly results in the audience losing its ability to understand the point of view of the suspected “criminal.”

One such scene where these types of interrogation takes place is when two Kurdish men are accused of participating in employing and abusing undocumented immigrants as well as being involved with bringing illegal weapons onto French soil. The scene shows one of the Kurdish men sitting in a jail cell and threatening his work partner in Turkish not to say anything to the police as his work partner is being led into the interrogation room. Once the man enters the room, he immediately will not cooperate with the police and will not tell them any information (even though the audience knows he is guilty of these crimes from earlier scenes). Because he is not talking, the police begin to yell louder and even threaten to deport his wife and child back to Turkey if he does not cooperate. The scene ends with the white head policewoman sitting in a secluded room feeling defeated from not managing to get answers from this man. In the background, the audience can hear the wife pleading for the man to tell the truth and their baby crying from all of the yelling. Even though in later episodes the man eventually gives the police information for the sake of his wife and child, this scene perhaps could make the audience feel more sympathy for the policemen/women rather than the ethnic minority who is refusing to say anything and consequently causing more commotion amongst everyone around him. This scene

also perhaps could make the audience feel sympathy for the wife and child who are begging and pleading with the man to tell the truth, but even then, they are not seen as completely innocent because they are illegally residing in France. The Kurdish man turns out to be rather innocent and was simply working for other criminals in order to provide for his family. However, his stubbornness with the police and his unwillingness to be open about the situation gives the idea that he is a criminal rather than an innocent man who was put into a bad position. This characterization aligns with the stereotype that many ethnic minorities (particularly in the banlieues) are guilty of crime and even if they are not necessarily the ones committing the crime, they are involved by association and often lie and cover for other criminals.

Although this sympathy is usually felt for the police, it is important to mention that there are occasional scenes when the audience could begin to feel sympathy for an ethnic minority. However, these scenes are few and far between and usually the attention is focused on the white police officers and lawyers. As the coding of Engrenages suggests, much of this attention to whites rather than ethnic minorities is because a majority (approximately 76%) of the storylines feature white main characters. An example in which the show does focus on an ethnic minority is the occasional scene about an undocumented African immigrant named Koné. This character walked into a bank and was immediately racially profiled by the bank teller, who was looking at his ID (which happened to be fake). The bank teller then calls the police, who come and arrest him and take him to an illegal immigrant detention center until he can obtain a lawyer who can defend him. The audience could potentially feel sorry for this character because although his ID is fake, he is very harmless, has been making honest money at a job in France for ten years, and

103 Fassin, Enforcing Order, 42-43.
has a white French girlfriend who is pregnant with his child. Even though the audience could feel sympathy for this man, Koné actually only appears as a significant character with an ongoing storyline in five of the twelve episodes. He does appear in three other episodes later in the season, but usually only for brief moments at a time and without a significant storyline. The lack of appearance and focalization on this character could perhaps make the audience believe that Koné is not actually a dominant or an important character on the show. One can especially see this when comparing Koné’s character to many of the white characters who appear in every episode, multiple times an episode, and who have a significant storyline throughout each episode.  

There are a few other ethnic minorities (both immigrant and second-generation), who are coded as innocent or good based on the criteria specified in Chapter Three, seen throughout the season. However, like the coding findings for this thesis suggest, approximately 69.44% of the ethnic minorities that are seen are involved in some sort of crime or guilty by association in the show; and, only two out of the fifteen significant ethnic minority characters are considered “good.” Those that do appear and are good usually consist of small children or large groups of adults. However, their different ethnicities get downplayed because of the large groups into which they melt. That is to say that often in the scenes different ethnic minorities are not identified by ethnicity and are just seen as one of the many people who are not white in France. Therefore, not only can the audience not make a distinction between the ethnicities, but the characters that are considered good are somewhat made anonymous because the audience is not able to make any connections with these characters’ feelings or lives. Rather, they are just seen as groups of the “other” with no real importance to the storyline or a specific identity.  

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When the ethnic minorities are visible in the television series, they are also often given marginalized roles. For example, throughout season four, *Engrenages* focuses on illegal immigration and often associates all ethnic minorities (who are undocumented or documented immigrants or who are second-generation) with poverty and crime. There are several scenes in which undocumented immigrants are homeless and secretly living in abandoned houses/squats. In fact, there is a scene where the immigrants hear word that this house has been discovered and they quickly pack their one bag each and move to another abandoned location.¹⁰⁶ Not only do these types of scenes present these immigrants as types of criminals for illegally living in France, they also present them as the “other” to the audience because of the nomadic, without permanent settlement lifestyle they are living in this democratic state.

There are also several scenes in which ethnic minorities (often young boys/men) are hanging out and loitering on the streets during the daytime. Many of these scenes include actual drug or weapon deals that these young men are making with other people. This type of depiction again portrays these ethnic minorities as troublemakers who live their lives on the streets instead of being in school or working.¹⁰⁷

In addition to the housing and the lifestyles of some ethnic minorities, the producers of the show predominantly focus on the clothing worn and languages used by ethnic minorities. Although ethnic minorities often appear in “western” attire, there are several ethnic minority immigrants who are seen in traditional garb (these outfits are usually very colorful and include extravagant and detailed designs that are displayed on the body from head to toe). In fact as the coding findings previously suggested in at least nine of the twelve episodes, ethnic minorities were seen wearing traditional garb. This type of ethnic attire is specifically seen when the show

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is focusing on the immigrants who are living illegally in the squats. Also, sometimes, there are scenes where ethnic minorities are speaking languages other than French. In fact, although many of the ethnic minorities are shown as bilingual in French and their native language, there are a few scenes where ethnic minorities are only able to speak broken French or not able to speak French at all. These particular scenes are examples of the coding findings in which other languages besides French are heard. Although these portrayals perhaps make the situations more realistic, particularly for the immigrants who are illegally living in squats, these portrayals contribute to the ongoing belief that ethnic minorities are different from the “typical” white French male and female in either their attire or language.\textsuperscript{108}

Although there are several examples that show these types of ethnic minority stereotypes and criminal characteristics, one group in particular stands out in the series: the Kurdish population. In fact, the Kurdish people in this series makes up for a good portion of the 69.44% of crime committed by ethnic minorities that was suggested in the coding chapter. In several episodes, the storyline involves the police following a Kurdish group that is selling illegal weapons. In this case, the producers and writers are really playing on specific stereotypes. For instance, they have the group consistently loitering and doing illegal business at a coffee shop (such as illegal weapon trading and transporting undocumented immigrants) where only those of their ethnicity are expected to be and are accepted. There are also several instances in which the writers show the younger Kurdish population doing drugs either at the coffee shop or on the street where young ethnic minorities hang out throughout the show. The Kurdish characters also are very violent towards each other. If one of them does not perform a specific task or knows too much information, he or she is killed immediately, occasionally even by one of his or her own

\textsuperscript{108}“Saison 4,” Engrenages, Canal+, 2012.
family members. In addition to the violence, the producers again address the issue of language. One of the star police officers says to a Kurd who refuses to talk, “stop speaking Turkish. You think I’m stupid? I saw you reading a French newspaper.” Even though the writers and producers tried to make this show as close to reality as they can, they are inadvertently giving the audience a negative image of ethnic minority groups and/or undocumented immigrants and how they interact with each other.

Although most of the ethnic minorities in the television show are portrayed as criminals or the “Other,” the show does portray one ethnic minority man as a police officer and as a “good” guy. This man is of North African descent and actually plays a significant role in the previous seasons. In season four, however, his character does not show up again until about three-fourths of the way into the season, only appearing in five of the twelve episodes as the coding findings suggest. In this season, he is often portrayed as the police officer that goes undercover because of his ethnicity. This characterization gives the idea that no matter what ethnicity he could be, all “brown” people look alike and therefore he can easily fit in with all of the other ethnic minorities. In addition, he is also given the role of the protagonist in the show because he is having an affair with a white policewoman. Even though this affair does give the idea that he is equal to the white man because he can date a white woman, he is also seen as a man who has no morals or values because of the affair. Furthermore, his character on the show is short-lived because the show ends with a bomb exploding near him, leaving the audience to surmise that he has died. It is unknown as to why the producers of Engrenages only include one

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ethnic minority in the show as a dominant “good” character.\textsuperscript{112} However, according to authors Renée Azuberman and René Lévy in their article, “Police, Minorities, and the French Republican Ideal,” there is a very limited number of minority police officers in the French police force.\textsuperscript{113} Therefore, it is quite possible that by only presenting one ethnic minority as the “good guy” and in a leading role such as that of a police officer, the writers and producers of Engrenages are trying to portray the reality of French social issues. Nonetheless, considering that all of the other minorities in the show are criminals or undocumented immigrants, and considering that this actor is simply a visiting character and not one of the main characters, it is possible to say that this is another way of marginalizing and not equally representing ethnic minorities in a television series.\textsuperscript{114} In fact, Jeremy Harding says in his article, “Color Bind,” having only one minority character in a major role in a show does not make the show non-racist, nor does it make up for the marginalized roles that are given to the majority of the ethnic minority characters.\textsuperscript{115}

Although these negative stereotypes are given to ethnic minorities throughout all of season four, one must recognize that the show does focus on a group of white criminals who use violence as a means to take down the French police. Many of the scenes throughout each episode involve this group planning out attacks, working with other criminals, and committing crimes. In fact, as previously mentioned in the coding section, around 80.56\% of the chapters in all twelve episodes include crime committed by whites, most of which is by this particular group. There are many conclusions that can be drawn from the inclusion of this white French criminal group. First, it is possible that the producers included this group as a way to show that white people commit crimes in France, too. This is especially true considering this group has very similar

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{112} “Saison 4,” Engrenages, Canal+, 2012.
\textsuperscript{114} “Saison 4,” Engrenages, Canal+, 2012.
\textsuperscript{115} Harding, ”Color Bind,” 46.
\end{flushleft}
motives and actions as the real life Tarnac Nine group. This group is an anarchist terrorist group that is not only present in France but is also now present in the US, Spain, Greece, and Moscow.\footnote{Chrisafis, “Meet Spiral’s feminist anti-hero.”; Angelique Chrisafis, “Rural idyll or terrorist hub? The village that police say is a threat to the state,” \textit{The Guardian}, January 2, 2009, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/03/france-terrorism-tarnac-anarchists (accessed February 19, 2014); and, “Saison 4,” \textit{Engrenages}, Canal+, 2012.}

However, the part that contradicts this conclusion is that this group is seen working with an ethnic minority who had committed crimes in his own country and who is helping them now commit crimes in France. In addition, with every crime that they try to commit, the group makes illegal dealings involving drugs, bombs, or weapons with ethnic minority characters. Some of these ethnic minorities are prominent characters in the show and others are not. When this activist group is not committing the crime, they are seen as homeless and living in squats with undocumented immigrants. Therefore, although they represent the reality that crime is also committed by whites, all of their crime involves ethnic minority participation to some extent.\footnote{“Saison 4,” \textit{Engrenages}, Canal+, 2012.} This participation perhaps shows that most crime, even if led by a white man or woman involves ethnic minorities in some way and that it is because of the presence of ethnic minorities that this crime is able to be committed.

**Audience Perception**

There is an abundance of blogs and news articles both in France and internationally that focus on \textit{Engrenages}. There are even \textit{Facebook} and \textit{Twitter} sites dedicated to the television show that allow viewers to comment on the recent episode or cast. Although all of these media sources exist, the audience tends only to focus its comments around two aspects of the show: how realistic the show is, and whether or not they enjoy watching the show. There seem to be only a few sources that address the racism and xenophobia in the show, and even those that
address these problems, only make a few brief comments as they are really focusing on other elements in their commentary. This section will analyze a cross-section of comments made about the show and offer some suggestions as to why certain elements are more commonly mentioned than others.

First, the majority of the news articles, blogs, and social media commentary focuses on the extent to which the show reflects reality. For example, a French blog written by Pierre Sérisier says that season four gives a greater insight into the internationalism that exists in France and really does a great job explaining the flaws of immigration and the crime of trafficking in France. Another French blogger from Slate.fr claims that “Engrenages fits well into contemporary French society.” Even in the UK, bloggers have said that this show offers insights into how French police and lawyers treat the poor versus the rich and the immigrant population in the banlieues. These types of comments are what the producers want to see. In fact, according to Eric de Barahir, a consultant that helps make the show realistic, says that he works with writer Anne Landois to make sure that everything in the show presents a realistic depiction of French police, lawyers, and their interactions with the public.

Although realism is what the writers and producers are aiming for, they are still depicting reality through their own personal lenses and imaginations, which necessarily are informed by biased feelings, stereotyping, and racism. And, even though the audience is clearly aware of this realism, it is possible that they too are not taking into account that this is a television show

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122 Faculté de droit et de science politique. La place des minorités à la television française, 37-41.
that is written by people and, therefore, different elements are automatically distorted even though the writers and producers tried to produce a realistic series. That being said, one can conclude that perhaps certain ideas are engrained in French citizens as well as international viewers about ethnic minorities and what is considered the “norm” for ethnic minorities in Western countries such as France. The viewers are quick to comment on how realistic the show is but do not even question, at least not publicly, if maybe some of this realism is distorted or if the show itself is contributing to the negative stereotypical and racial discourses in France.

The second topic that is consistently written about the series, both nationally and internationally, is whether or not the series is good or worth watching. For example, French blogger Pierre Sérisier, writes another post that claims that even if you do not favor a character it is hard to not feel some connection with him/her in the show. In a New York Times review, Alessandra Stanley raves about it saying it is one of the best television shows to watch at this moment and that people would be missing out if they did not watch it. In addition, in a questionnaire that is available at the end of an article from The Guardian, the bloggers were commenting simply on how great the show was to watch. There are also several online news articles that discuss the shows, but these articles seem to only address how the main (white) characters are evolving and how popular and interesting the show has become.

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These positive reactions are obviously good news for the producers of the show because it means that they are producing a successful and entertaining show. However, it is problematic, yet not surprising, that the huge audience only views this television as a means of entertainment. It is very normal for audience viewers to become excited over a crime drama series, for this happens all of the time and is usually the point of any fictional series. Unfortunately, though, it means that both French people and audiences in other countries are not questioning the depictions of ethnic minorities and are either ignoring or not seeing the lack of representation or the racist and xenophobic representation of ethnic minorities on the television show. It is especially concerning considering season four revolves around immigration issues and problems between white French authority figures and ethnic minorities.

Although these positive comments tend to be the majority of the public comments about Engrenages, there are a few cases in which bloggers and journalists have mentioned the problems concerning racism and xenophobia in the show and the problems concerning racism and xenophobia in French society. However, even these remarks are sidelined and not often noted. For example, there is one blog that addresses the producers’ intent of talking about social justice problems in France. This blog is called Dr. Matthew Ashton’s Politics Blog. In this blog, the author discusses if the director and the producers actually address these issues with accuracy. His verdict is that they do a good job in addressing these issues. While this is one of the few blogs that does discuss these issues, even in this blog there are little to no comments addressing what others think about the show’s depictions of these issues.\(^{127}\) Therefore, it is safe to say that perhaps audiences both nationally and internationally do not either question what they see in the

show and that they only watch it for entertainment, or that they simply do not care or do not feel it is their place to talk about such issues.

Another blogger, James Donaghy from the UK, criticizes the French government as he comments on the show. For example, in reaction to one of the dominant ethnic minority characters, Koné, Donaghy says that Koné does not have a chance because France has a fascist immigration system. Although this type of comment does show that there are people who are questioning France’s way of dealing with immigration, the viewer is not seeing anything wrong with how the show is depicting ethnic minorities. Rather, it is another case where the audience member sees the show as realistic. There are some commenters on the Engrenages Facebook page in which a viewer claims that this show is not politically correct, but a good series nonetheless. There are even some opposite opinions that have been made on Facebook in which a viewer thinks that there actually needs to be more crime committed by ethnic minorities because seeing all of this white crime is not realistic for French society. However, the fan makes sure to add that the show is very good. Both of these kinds of comments show that perhaps there is some attention being paid to how ethnic minorities are represented, even if the viewer him or herself is commenting with a rather discriminatory statement. However, these comments are rarely seen and when they are seen, they are usually just a side note to how great the show is in the fan’s opinion. The fact that these comments are coming from several different media sources and that there are very few comments about these issues is very telling of the audience, particularly the French audience, and what kinds of negative ethnic minority representations are just seen as “natural” and “normal” in society.

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Conclusion

There are several striking conclusions one can make from the scenes throughout season four and the types of reactions and comments that the show is receiving on social media websites from its viewers. First, it is extremely important to recognize that although this show is perhaps depicting realistic situations that are occurring in France, it is still a television show that is being produced through the lenses of the producers’ and writers’ imaginations. Unfortunately, through these imaginations, in order to keep the show interesting and exciting for their audience viewers, there are several racial and xenophobic stereotypes that are being shown. Whether or not these producers and writers are purposely trying to portray these stereotypes is unknown. However, since there are several instances where both the writers and producers claim that this show is to help fight discrimination rather than promote it, it is clear that perhaps unconsciously the negative ideas about ethnic minorities in France is embedded in many of French citizens’ minds. Consequently, as the show is produced and the writing is developed, the writers and producers are helping contribute to the trending negative discourse about ethnic minorities in France.

Secondly, it is important to remember that Engrenages is being aired in over seventy different territories around the world and that all of the social media, blogs, and news articles talking about this show are coming from all of these different territories. Not to mention, that this show is so popular that it has received an Emmy nomination at the International Emmy Awards. This show is without doubt an extremely popular show, leading to no question as to why so many people are talking about it on the media sites. What is interesting though is how they are talking about it. The fact that so many French people are only focusing on the quality

130 Pudlowski, “‘Engrenages’: une quatrième saison très politique.”
and the realism of the show perhaps gives insight as to how French society addresses issues concerning ethnic minority issues, as well as an insight into the deeper mentality about ethnic minorities that is embedded in society. That fact that even international audiences do not question the show is even more telling because it could possibly mean that people are using this television show as a learning tool to find out more about France and its justice system. This fact could even mean that similar racial and xenophobic issues are also occurring in these other countries but just in different ways or to different levels.

Therefore, it is possible to say that overall, because of the structure of French society and the idea that French society is colorblind, French citizens are taught to believe certain ideas about ethnic minorities and immigration and they are not taught how to properly discuss issues concerning racial and xenophobic problems in their society. Part of the way to fix these problems will need to come from the elite levels of society such as the government and the television broadcasters who are in charge of shows such as Engrenages. Until that happens, shows such as Engrenages will inadvertently be made as a product of these racist and xenophobic ideals and will inadvertently help contribute to these ideals in French society.

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CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this research was to explore how the French television show *Engrenages* is a product of and/or contributes to the ongoing debates about “Frenchness” and French identity in an increasingly multicultural France. What is the connection between the way ethnic minorities are represented in *Engrenages* and the problems with French identity in a multicultural state? What do the representations of ethnic minorities shown throughout season four of *Engrenages* say about France’s approach to multicultural issues? And, what do these representations reveal about predominant French ideals of national identity? After reading through the previous chapters, one can come to several conclusions about France, its color-blind policy, and the growth of xenophobic views. Conclusions can also be made about the unwritten rules of ethnic minority representation in French mass media such as television. This study offers insights into the challenges European Union nations such as France face in adapting to the realities of a demographically diverse landscape.

Firstly, from this study, one can conclude that in some ways the color-blind policy is flawed. Since the color-blind policy is implemented in all parts of society, the flaws of this policy create even more problems with regards to multiculturalism and French identity. These problems occur because the color-blind policy is not to distinguish between ethnicities. However, there is an active movement to promote French identity and citizenship and essentially disregard the fact that France is becoming a multicultural society.133 This movement then causes many ethnic minorities to suffer and be discriminated against in different parts of society such as in the media. When ethnic minorities are discriminated against by not being represented properly on television, etc, it is likely that they then do not feel a part of the nation, or simply put, feel

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“French.” Minorities not feeling part of the nation does not coincide with the intentions of the color-blind policy.\textsuperscript{134}

According to Article One in the \textit{French Constitution} written in October 1958 and then later modified in July 2008, France “shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion.”\textsuperscript{135} This statement in the constitution as well as the color-blind policy that claims that France shall not recognize race or ethnicity are both supposed to protect ethnic minorities in France from racist and xenophobic acts by not attracting attention to a person’s ethnic background.\textsuperscript{136} However, because there is no data on ethnic minority groups and their needs in France, ethnic minorities are not protected in society because their problems as underprivileged citizens are being ignored and not taken care of so that they can live better lives.\textsuperscript{137} Rather, by not acknowledging these different ethnicities and their needs, not only does this policy not prepare French society to substantively address the realities of having a multicultural population but this policy has also drawn more attention to how ethnic minorities are “different” from the “typical” French republican citizen (ie. white, native-born).\textsuperscript{138} This “difference” is produced by French society continually trying to integrate and assimilate newcomers into France by making them into what the Republic deems as the “ideal” French

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[135] \textit{French Constitution of 4 October 1958}, art. 1.
\item[137] Bleich, “Antiracism Without Races,” 165 and 180.
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\end{footnotesize}
As a result, cultural differences are further highlighted and end up exacerbating xenophobic and racist views against ethnic minorities.

Secondly, one can conclude that because there are policy problems at the governmental level (and these policies naturally influence and filter down into all levels of society), there are flaws in different media outlets such as in television. These problems extend from the rules and regulations that television-broadcasting companies are to follow regarding ethnic minority representation, to how ethnic minorities are actually represented on aired television. As of now, the main agency responsible for what is seen on television is the Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel (CSA). The CSA not only monitors each broadcasting network daily to make sure that the networks abide by certain rules, but the networks also have to report to the CSA and explain how they have or have not complied with the CSA’s regulations. These regulations have been especially important since Calixthe Beyala and the Collectif Égalité pointed out that ethnic minority representation on television was non-existent or discriminatory. In fact, if a television broadcasting station violates one of the regulations, the CSA can take action against the station, with the most severe repercussion being the revocation of its license.

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Although the CSA is charged with regulating the television stations, there are still holes in the implementation of these regulations. For instance, although the CSA regulates and tries to calculate the representation of ethnic minorities on television, this cannot be done fully because conducting surveys that distinguish between ethnicities does not comply with the color-blind law. There cannot be quotas taken because the jobs or the positions given to different actors, producers, etc., cannot be given on account of one’s ethnic background. Additionally, certain terminology has become negatively associated with ethnic minorities. That is to say, terms such as banlieues have often been associated with ethnic crime and poverty. Therefore, when the term is used in entertainment programs, the audience members already have a preconceived notion of the banlieues and the story line, which then contributes further to the negative connotation of the term.

This type of association makes it even harder for the CSA to control how ethnic minorities are portrayed because the agency is working against negative stereotypes and misconceptions about ethnic minorities that audiences often hold. Considering the results from coding in previous chapters, it is possible that the channels are not actually being held to these standards. Therefore, one could say that although the CSA has made regulations to prevent discrimination against ethnic minorities, there is fault in how the CSA implements these regulations because of the Republican values it has to abide by.

Government policies on ethnic discrimination and their shaping of media outlets such as television help explain the systematic xenophobic and racist images that pervade the show Engrenages. The producers and directors of Engrenages have repeatedly claimed that the

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144 European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, *Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media*, 205.
television show is supposed to fight against discrimination in French society. And, in order to fight against this discrimination, the producers and directors try to make the plots as realistic as possible. Their intentions in trying to depict the everyday realities of discrimination in French society are certainly to be applauded. However, these representations of ethnic minorities are still the product of their own (inevitably biased) imaginations and worldviews. Therefore, not only is the show not able to be completely realistic (for it is a fictional show that is made to entertain), but the representations of ethnic minorities are informed by the racial and xenophobic stereotypes that exist in French society. That being said, there are clear ideals about ethnic minorities and French identity that seem to be embedded in French society even though there are several French people such as the producers of Engrenages who are supposedly trying to fight against these negative views.

The fact that there are flaws and problems at each of these levels in society proves that there is a systematic xenophobic and racist trend in how French society discusses multiculturalism and how ethnic minorities are portrayed and treated in French society. Whether or not the different actors who contribute to or are a product of this trend are doing it consciously or unconsciously is unknown and difficult to prove. However, it is clear that this trend coincides with flawed government policies concerning discrimination that influence governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the general population. Once these ideals are embedded they are hard to change, but rather contribute to the ongoing discussion on what it means to be “French.”

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145 Pudlowski, “Engrenages’: une quatrième saison très politique.”
France in the context of the European Union

Not only should one look at how these problems are occurring nationally in France, but it is important to see how these problems are being addressed when viewing France in the larger context of the European Union. For all twenty-eight EU member states (France being one of them), the EU suggests different policies for the nation-states to adapt and follow. However, as mentioned before, the Lisbon Treaty, that establishes the relationship between the EU and its power (or lack thereof) over the nation-states, states that it is up to the nation-states to properly implement European law. That being said, the EU only has the legal power to suggest and make agreements with nation-states on implementing policies. The EU cannot legally force the policies to be implemented correctly, completely, or at all.\textsuperscript{147} Therefore, throughout each of the twenty-eight nation states, there are certain policies that are supposed to be implemented by reportedly democratic states, but this is not always the case.

One huge example of a nation-state implementing European laws correctly versus a state that does not always enforce correct implementation with regards to the representation of ethnic minorities on television, is the United Kingdom and France. The EU has made the protection of minority rights and equality one of its main objectives in all of the EU nations.\textsuperscript{148} One of the areas that the EU promotes these ideals of equality is in the media. In order to achieve these goals, the EU has created several government agencies to mandate regulations amongst the different EU countries such as the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program. This program monitors the relations between governmental and nongovernmental organizations and their discourses on ethnic minority treatment and representation. It also provides EU countries with suggestions on how they can continue to improve their current situations regarding these

\textsuperscript{147} Europa, “European Union Legal Acts.”

issues. The Council of Europe, too, has created The European Convention on Human Rights, which states that no person should be discriminated against or shown intolerance in European media outlets.

According to the study “Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media” conducted by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, promotion of programs against discrimination in the media have helped in some countries and have not in others. In the United Kingdom, for instance, from 1995 to 2000 the representation of ethnic minorities and how they were talked about improved dramatically. There were even initiatives taken by different programs in the UK such as Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Mass Media (RAM) that sent journalists in the UK to actually spend time at refugee camps in order to understand what many immigrants were going through and to learn how to talk about issues regarding immigration. Programs such as RAM show that the UK was taking a clear initiative to follow the EU’s suggestions on how to better represent ethnic minorities in the media.

Unlike the UK, according to the report, France, has not been as successful in representing ethnic minorities positively in the media. From 1995 to 2000, when French media outlets spoke about ethnic minorities, particularly those that were immigrants, it associated words such as banlieues or immigration with negative connotations. However, as previously mentioned, the CSA did start taking surveys on ethnic minority representation to hopefully improve the way ethnic minorities were represented. This type of initiative is a step forward, but like this thesis shows in Engrenages, French media still struggles in the way it represents ethnic minorities.

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150 Council of Europe Campaign, Media & Diversity, 9-10.
151 European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media, 397 and 416.
152 European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media, 205-206 and 208.
Why is England having more success with the way it represents ethnic minorities in the media compared to France? There is no one right answer. However, it is clear that part of this problem stems from the implementation (or lack thereof) of policies and regulations by the nation-state. It is possible that this is because the UK acknowledges that it is becoming a multicultural state and works to accept cultural diversity.\textsuperscript{153} Therefore, UK citizens are taught how to properly talk about ethnic diversity. Also, implementing European laws concerning ethnic minority representation is seen as standard in the UK.\textsuperscript{154} However, France as a color-blind state refuses to distinguish between different ethnicities. Therefore, it is harder to measure how the media represents ethnic minorities; and, since ethnicity and multiculturalism are not addressed, French society does not know how to talk about issues concerning multiculturalism and identity.\textsuperscript{155}

These findings from the \textit{Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media} report show that many of the EU countries are struggling with addressing the fact that their countries are increasingly becoming more multicultural. Some of the countries seem to be handling these issues better than others, as is evident from the case of the UK and France. However, these findings show that not only is there a problem of implementation between the EU and the nation-state and the nation-state and its society, but they are also very telling of why France struggles so much with issues concerning multiculturalism. Because France strives to be a color-blind society and therefore, does not properly talk about multiculturalism and ethnic diversity, it struggles in


\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{154} European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, \textit{Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media}, 416.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{155} European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, \textit{Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media}, 207-208.}
implementing polices that are supposed to improve the way society talks about these topics.\textsuperscript{156} This lack of implementation then trickles down and affects different parts of society such as in the mass media. This effect is then evidenced by television shows such as *Engrenages* which peddles in xenophobic and racist stereotypes.

**Policy Recommendations**

Since the current government policies on discrimination and audiovisual representation are not achieving the desired outcomes, this study offers policy recommendations that may help improve ethnic minority representation in French mass media.

1. **Government Policies on Discrimination**

   The French government should consider reforming the color-blind policy, which forbids any French government institution or organization from recognizing and distinguishing between ethnicities.\textsuperscript{157}

   Although providing attention to different ethnic minorities defeats the purpose of not recognizing citizens by ethnicity, collecting data regarding housing, income, jobs, etc, while including ethnic identifiers could inform the government about the areas that these minority groups are facing systemic discrimination. This is evidenced by how the UK addresses multiculturalism and ethnic diversity. Because the UK acknowledges that it is becoming multicultural and promotes ethnic diversity, it has succeeded in talking about issues such as immigration in areas such as the media.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{156} European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, *Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media*, 207-208.
The concept of acknowledging race has also worked in the United States. The *United States Census Bureau* takes a census of the U.S. population every ten years and identifying one’s race is part of the questionnaire. The *Census Bureau* claims that the reasoning behind acknowledging race and collecting race data is “to promote equal employment opportunities and to assess racial disparities in health and environmental risks.”\(^{159}\) Starting in 2000, the *Census Bureau* also allowed people to identify with more than one race if applicable. By allowing the collection of this type of data, as well as letting a person freely choose his or her race, the U.S. has been better able to promote civil rights for people of all races as well as transform the concept of the race in the United States because now people are able to identify as multiracial.\(^{160}\) And, although this type of data collection is not perfect, similar policies that allow France to acknowledge ethnic differences could potentially lead to better conversations about multiculturalism and promote stronger enforcement of policies that protect ethnic minorities.\(^{161}\)

2. *Government Policies on Integration and Identity*

France should consider changing the mythic “French identity.” That is to say that France should not try to integrate and assimilate ethnic minorities into an identity that often focuses on appearances, color of skin, and language. Instead, French society should change this identity and look at it as a multicultural identity that has the same values concerning rule of law and human rights. Therefore, as immigrants come to France, France does not immediately try to assimilate them into an ethnocentric identity. Rather, this new identity allows greater room for multiculturalism because it only focuses on the rule of law and similar values rather than on culture and language.


An example of growing success when a nation-state reevaluated its national-identity is the United Kingdom. In the UK, identity is no longer ethnocentric. Instead, the UK has worked to make British identity one that only focuses on the rule of law and shared values. It is important to note that there are still some problems concerning immigration and British identity. However, this newly focused identity at least allows more room for the presence of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity because it does not focus on trying to assimilate other cultures into a singular, mythic British identity.\footnote{Saggar Shamit and Will Somerville, “Building a British Model of Integration in an Era of Immigration: Policy Lessons for Government,” Transatlantic Council on Migration, University of Sussex and the Migration Policy Institute, 2012, file:///Users/CarrieClasby/Downloads/UK-countrystudy.pdf (accessed 30 March 2015).}

3. Media Regulation and Implementation on Ethnic Minority Representation

Instead of just surveying the improvement (or lack thereof) of ethnic minority representation on television as well as make suggestions, the CSA should take an active role in helping change how television discusses and represents ethnic minorities.\footnote{Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel, “Présence et représentation des minorités visibles à la télévision française: une étude du CSA,” La Lettre du CSA; and, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media, 208.} In order to do this, the CSA should begin to provide programs that provide awareness about the problems with ethnic minority representation. In these programs, the CSA should begin to teach the television broadcasters, directors, reporters, etc., to properly talk about issues concerning immigration. The CSA should also send many of its reporters and/or television broadcasting owners/elites to actual refugee camps. By spending time in these places and learning about them, the broadcasters, directors, reporters, etc., can learn a great deal about the true realities of the struggles many migrants go through in order to correctly talk about such issues.\footnote{European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media, 416.}

Similar actions have been taken in the UK to talk about minority issues. For example, the UK has introduced a Refugee, Asylum-seekers and the Mass Media program that teaches...
reporters how to correctly talk about immigration issues. This program also sends many reporters to refugee camps to learn about the realities of these issues. Although this program has not stopped all discrimination on television and it is unfortunately up to the reporters to take part in this program (therefore people have the right to refuse to learn about these issues), it is a step forward in thinking about these issues. This step forward could potentially grow and improve ethnic minority representation.

4. Suggestions for Engrenages

If the producers and directors have not already done so, the producers should consult real life victims that have experienced ethnic discrimination to help their show become more “realistic.” By documenting the experiences of these victims, the producers can perhaps get a more accurate view of the everyday realities (and consequences) of heavy-handed policing faced by many ethnic minorities.

This type of consulting has worked for Engrenages before when the producers wanted to depict the daily life of the French police and how they are trained to deal with suspects in the most realistic way possible. In order to do this, the producers have brought in actual French police to work as consultants and make sure scenes with police interrogation, etc. are representative of reality. If the producers are able to bring in actual French police and accomplish depicting the reality of French police enforcement, it is likely that the producers could also get more realistic depictions of ethnic minorities that have been victims in these engagements with the police by consulting them.

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165 European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media, 416.

These recommendations are intended to help France confront its reality of having a truly multicultural citizenry. Recent debates about French national identity demonstrate the extent to which the nation still must learn how to more effectively and justly embrace its historically marginalized populations. These debates are especially important because of the current movement to improve ethnic minority representation on the television led by Calixthe Beyala and the Collectif Egalité, which has affected the regulation of ethnic minority representation by the CSA. In addition, even though the CSA is trying to improve these representations on shows such as *Engrenages*; and, even though the producers of *Engrenages*, themselves, have claimed this show is supposed to help fight racism and xenophobia, racist and xenophobic stereotypes are still seen on the show. This presence of racism and xenophobia show that *Engrenages* is not only a product of the flaws existing in French policies on discrimination, but that it also contributes to the wider discussion about French identity in a multicultural state. That is to say, Engrenages is a prime example of French society working to prevent racism and xenophobia and promote the mythic French identity, but at the same time, not accepting and properly discussing different ethnic cultures in a growing multicultural society. In order to fix these problems, the French government must take a more active role in addressing these issues, and the mass media is one such arena in which change can be implemented.

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Further Studies

Due to time and resources, this study only focuses on what is portrayed on the show *Engrenages* and heavily relies on newspaper articles and social media outlets for opinions about the show. For further study, it would be interesting to see what one could conclude after conducting interviews about these issues with the producers and directors of *Engrenages*, as well as with authorities from governmental organizations such as the CSA. It would be truly illuminating to get a clear understanding how such key persons approach the issue of minority representation in French mass media.

It would also be useful for scholars to look at gender in the context of ethnic minority representation. Throughout several scenes of *Engrenages*, there is definitely a large difference in the number of ethnic minority women portrayed to ethnic minority men. It would be interesting to see if this inequality of gender representation was a trend in other shows. Also, it would be interesting to find out if ethnic minority characters were given different types of roles based on their gender.

Lastly, this study could be expanded by doing a comparative analysis with a television show in another European Union nation. This comparison would be useful because each EU nation promotes different government policies concerning ethnic discrimination. There could even be a comparative analysis between television shows in France and another type of media outlet in France. It is hoped that whatever the particulars may be of any such future study, researchers will continue to work to devise solutions to help eliminate these urgent issues of inequality and injustice in contemporary France.

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