

## CALL FOR PAPERS

“The heritage of immigration in France and Europe: cultural and social issues”

A European conference organised by the association Génériques

At the Maison de l'Europe in Paris, the 10-11 December 2012

There is a widely-held belief that the concept of immigration is closely linked to labour and employment alone. Consequently, immigrants have long been confined to a space which kept them invisible and ignored their human, social, cultural and emotional dimensions. Recently, however, the value of immigration history and heritage in France has been recognised. Indeed, the idea that France's national heritage also comprises the cultural identity of groups and individuals from elsewhere seems well-established today, even if questions linked to the preservation, valorisation and collective ownership of this heritage remain open.

While the notion of heritage seems, on the face of it, to offer an immutable collective narrative and refer to the transmission of an invariable identity, from the outset immigration seems marked by notions of movement, fluidity and complexity. Immigration heritage therefore leads us to question not only the concept of heritage but also its definition and the boundaries that apply when discussing immigration.

What is transmitted in immigration? What is transmitted of immigration? How does our awareness of the existence of this heritage emerge? Where does this transmission take place: is it at home? Or at school? Is it from this transmission that immigration heritage is born, or is the process of elaborating this heritage also the work of other agents? If so, how does this occur and by whom, and most of all, why and for whom, since the history of immigration cannot only be written for (and by) the descendants of immigrants? Is it because immigration heritage may be a factor of integration and social cohesion?

Of what past does immigration heritage tell? Inversely, what history does heritage narrate and legitimise? How, for whom and why? The concept of memory has invaded the field of historical studies, as well as public spaces, since the 1980s. What is the relationship between heritage and memory, and between heritage and history?

As with any process of heritage-building, that of immigration is the product of collaborative work between many different partners, both private and public. In France, associations for immigrants were the first to raise the issue of their heritage. Indeed, thanks to their efforts to preserve the culture of immigrants' countries of origin and transmit it to younger generations, as well as change the perception society had of immigrants, public awareness of the heritage of immigration grew. Later, other agents (cultural, academic, individual...) sought through the prism of heritage to change the image of immigrants and highlight their rootedness in French society. In France, public bodies played a particularly important role.

The general interest in this heritage over the last thirty years has many layers of significance. Firstly, its chief focus is on elements of cultural identity from elsewhere, so it forces us to question our relationship with culture, our understanding of what actually constitutes culture itself, and also the manner in which culture represents itself as heritage. Secondly, it allows us to rethink the foundations of the nation in history and memory by incorporating the place and the role of immigrants.

As an important agent of the preservation of immigration history and memory since its creation in 1987, the association Génériques, whose work crosses between the academic, institutional, associative and cultural worlds, is organising a conference on the heritage of immigration in France and in Europe.

The conference will seek to not only develop knowledge of the heritage of immigration but also question and share the practices of those who work on this topic at the local, national, transnational and European level (associations, governmental bodies, cultural agents, cultural heritage institutions, researchers...).

The conference will consist of presentations and roundtable discussions focusing on immigration heritage (research, practices...) and associated policies in France and Europe.

We welcome proposed papers that deal with one or more of the following issues:

- How is immigration heritage created and transmitted, and by whom?
- The heritage of immigration: an issue of social integration and/or culture?
- The heritage of immigration and the memory of sites: what role for cultural routes?
- The role of new technologies in the preservation and diffusion of immigration heritage.

#### Submission guidelines

Proposals for papers in French or in English (300 words max.) in Word or pdf formats should be sent to : [colloquepatrimoine@genericques.org](mailto:colloquepatrimoine@genericques.org), before 11 October 2012.

Authors will be notified by 22 October 2012.

Papers may be presented in either English or French.