

## ABSTRACTS

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**Olivier Masolet**, *Des quartiers sans voix: Sur le divorce entre la Gauche et les enfants d'immigrés* [in French]

This article examines why the activism of the children of North African immigrants has not been noticed or recognized by elected officials of the Communist Party. Through historical and ethnographic study of a Communist municipality in the greater Paris region, the article first demonstrates that this militancy, far from being a new thing, is inscribed in the traditional forms of the militancy associated with the “banlieues rouges.” In order to understand the urban activists’ invisibility in politics, the author analyzes the negative representations of the group from which they come and the tensions between North African immigrants and local officials of the Left, tensions linked to urban renewal in the industrial suburbs. The detour through the history of the “red suburbs” thus reveals the structure of the tense relations between the Left and the housing projects, which seem to be disowned not only economically but also politically.

*Keywords:* suburbs, immigrant youth, local politics, Communist Party, urban segregation.

**Nacira Guénif-Souilamas**, *The Other French Exception: Virtuous Racism and the War of the Sexes in Postcolonial France*

Twentieth-century France invented for itself an “exception” that successfully preserved the French culture industry. Postcolonial France is experiencing another “French exception” that renders a “virtuous racism” commonplace and legitimates the discrimination that expresses this racism by identifying the undesirable “new French” as scapegoat figures. Four gender-specific stereotypes strengthen the belief that there is a form of sexism exclusive to the segregated neighborhoods of the suburbs that are inhabited primarily by French people of immigrant and colonial descent. Associated with the central figure of the *garçon arabe* are the  *beurette*, the veiled Muslim French woman, and the secular Muslim. The article argues that the model of abstract, universalist France has become one of a fundamentalist republicanism that plays diverse

expressions of otherness and singular identities off of one another in order to preserve a soft regime of oppression.

*Keywords:* gender, ethnicity, stereotype, racism, republicanism

**Sylvie Tissot**, Y a-t-il un « problème des quartiers sensibles »? Retour sur une catégorie d'action publique [in French]

The November 2005 riots in France brought new attention to debates over the situation of underprivileged areas. Rather than analyzing what happened in these areas, this article examines how this social problem was constructed and publicized and has since become an object of public policy since the end of the 1980s. The political focus on underprivileged areas was not primarily or only an effect of increasing concrete problems, like unemployment, poverty, or juvenile delinquency. Instead, it resulted from and contributed to a fundamental restructuring of the French welfare state, by authorizing a recentering of public action on specific urban spaces—rather than across the nation—and on social ties, rather than economic reality. This constructivist study seeks to understand why politicians, experts, or civil servants have associated the question of “underprivileged areas” with certain problems (like lack of communication and the weakening of social ties) while ignoring others (such as ethnic discrimination).

*Keywords:* underprivileged areas, social problems, welfare state, constructivism, activism

**Frédéric Viguier**, “Maintaining the Class”: Teachers in the New High Schools of the *Banlieues*

Over the past twenty years, a silent revolution brought 70 percent of a generation to the *baccalauréat* level (up from 33 percent in 1986), without ensuring students corresponding job opportunities. Sociologists have analyzed the impact of this educational democratization, which sought to solve the economic crisis by adapting the younger members of the French workforce to the new economy of services: it has paradoxically accentuated the stigmatization of youths from working-class and immigrant families who live in suburban housing projects. Therefore, high school teachers have had to deal with students’ profound disillusionment with education. Moreover, teachers have been central to all of the recent political controversies in France regarding cultural difference. While there are books, pamphlets, and memoirs reflecting their experiences, there is no research exploring the discrepancy between high school teachers’ expectations and those of their predecessors. This article explores this discrepancy and its contribution to the social and political construction of the “*problème des banlieues*.”

*Keywords:* teachers, democratization of education, suburbs, immigrant youth, sociology

**George Ross**, Myths and Realities in the 2006 “Events”

The “events” around Dominique de Villepin’s abortive promotion of the CPE in spring 2006 were seen by many as a great popular victory in the defense of France’s social model and another, albeit modest, version of May 1968. Others, particularly Anglophone neoliberals, saw them as proof that the French were incapable of reform. Both conclusions were wrong. The events and defeat of the CPE may have been enjoyable for many involved, but they resolved none of France’s underlying and debilitating economic problems. On the other hand, the neoliberal view that the French are averse to real social policy reform is incorrect. Instead, the unresolved dilemmas surrounding the CPE episode are in large part the product of a particular strategy of reform, the “social management of unemployment,” that has nourished and intensified dangerous—unavowed—social dualism in France. The present problem, illustrated indirectly by the events, is that political actors and social partners are unable to cooperate sufficiently to confront this dualism.

*Keywords:* reform, social policy, social dualism, political class, unemployment

**Erhard Friedberg**, Le CPE est mort—et maintenant? [in French]

The failure of the CPE does not prove the impossibility of reform in France, but rather illustrates political actors’ incompetence when it comes to developing and leading reform efforts. The article argues the foregoing thesis by reviewing different moments when competence in these matters would have been able to make a difference. It then examines the collateral damage of this aborted reform with regard to the administration’s capacity to act and with regard to the French political landscape from now until the 2007 presidential elections.

*Keywords:* reform, French unions, Socialist Party, labor market, political class

**Herman Lebovics**, The Musée du Quai Branly: Art? Artifact? Spectacle!

Designed by Jean Nouvel, the Musée du Quai Branly, the just-opened museum of African, Amerindian, Pacific, and Asian cultures, covers a city block on the Left Bank of Paris’s museum row. Both in landscaping and internal layout, Nouvel wished to frame the building within his understanding of the cultures on display inside, but also within its setting in the metropolitan capital. Objects collected in the imperial age now are displayed in what French officials see as the postcolonial era. But how were the pieces on display to be shown: as works of art or well-made cultural artifacts? Nouvel took the lead in evoking a vision of the cultures on display that is closer to Joseph Conrad’s dark tales than to enlightened contemporary scholarship and museology on these societies. Neither an art nor an ethnography museum, the Musée du Quai Branly is a spectacle about the societies of the global South.

*Keywords:* anthropology, art, French museum policy, cultural identities, postcoloniality