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Finally, if, as seems inescapable, we conclude that France is a nation that has consistently problematized its ethnically distinct others, its burgeoning migrant and minority populations increasingly form new classes and categories of Frenchness whose multiple intersections and transformational interactions with the French social whole can potentially usher in a new, Francophone transnational space of hybridity and renewal.

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Understanding the French Riots of 2005: What historical context for the ‘crise des banlieues’?

Introduction

In November 2005, when young people were rioting nightly in nearly 300 French towns and cities, the press in France and abroad was filled with alarmist predictions about the collapse of French society, the failures of French political institutions, and the imminent demise of an identifiably ‘European’ French culture.¹ Seen now, in the aftermath of Nicolas Sarkozy’s election as the sixth president of the Fifth Republic in May 2007, the riots have receded to the margins of public discussion.² During the campaign, the candidates used tactical references to the unrest in 2005 to score points against one another, but there was little substantive discussion or even disagreement expressed between the more conservative Sarkozy and his socialist opponent, Ségolène Royal. Sarkozy, who as Minister of the Interior called himself France’s ‘First Cop’, cast himself as the first line of defence against what he called the ‘scum’ in the streets, and in so doing was able to poach

¹ Anyone familiar with the historical literature on social revolt, in works by historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, E.P. Thompson, Charles Tilly and Georges Rudé, will recognize the stakes in choosing to use the word ‘riot’ to describe the events of 2005 in France. Because press reports often use the word ‘riot’ within accounts that minimize the political content of these moments of urban violence, some critics have sought to avoid the term. I have chosen to retain it as the most convenient translation of the French ‘émeute’, which connotes a spontaneous and unorganized popular uprising. I hope it is clear by the following analysis, however, that by using this word I do not mean to imply that such moments of protest are simply nihilistic expressions of asocial rage, without a political coherence of their own.

votes from the right-wing extremist, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Royal, more surprisingly, took a similarly harsh line, calling for young 'delinquents' to be sent to military-style boot camps where they would learn the self-control necessary to become productive members of society. More than a few commentators have attributed Sarkozy's victory to the fact that this tough stance seemed more plausible when embodied by a young and (self-consciously) virile man of the right instead of a young and (self-consciously) photogenic woman of the left. The fact that the riots of 2005 were so quickly relegated to a minor paragraph in a longer narrative about the election of a new president stands in stark contrast to the atmosphere of anxiety and discomfort expressed in public comments about the riots while they were taking place. In the space of eighteen months, an outbreak of violence—that many thought might bring down the government, spark a race war, or worse—was now rendered as a simple background element in a different story about one politician and his confident new government.\(^3\)

The quickness with which the most alarmist interpretations of the riots of 2005 receded might have something to do with the fact that the riots themselves were never seen as particularly mysterious. Here again, the storyline was simple. Take one western European nation whose social welfare spending since the Second World War has increasingly and disproportionately benefited the prosperous middle class, males, public sector employees and the elderly at the expense of the young, females, the unemployed and the unskilled.\(^4\) Mix in a long history of racial discrimination against those descended from former colonial subjects in Africa and Asia, a discrimination that was above all reflected in employment, wages, and housing.\(^5\) Reinforce the psychological and material effects of this racism by minimizing the extent of or even denying the existence of such discrimination, and rally around a governing ideology that prohibited procedures that might measure its consequences.\(^6\) Justify the maintenance of a rigidly tracked educational system that effectively reproduced class and status hierarchies from one generation to the next with self-serving bromides about meritocracy.\(^7\) Add to this a well-intentioned but ultimately disastrous policy of urban planning, including the 2006 student protests over changes to rules regarding labour contracts is George Ross, 'Myths and Realities in the 2006 “Events”', French Politics, Culture and Society, 24.3 (2006), 82-88. Ross argues that contrary to popular perceptions, the French state has actually been quite active and even successful in many attempts to reform its social welfare system.

\(^3\) For a prescient account of the ways in which the social and spatial isolations of marginal populations in France are related to exclusionary practices that implicate all levels of French society, see Eric Maurin, Le Ghetto français: enquête sur le séparatisme social (Paris: Seuil, 2004). For a longer history of the relationship between colonial migration from North Africa and racism in France, see Neil MacMaster, Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900-62 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).


\(^7\) For a dramatic portrait of the shortcomings of the French social welfare system and the problems faced by those who seek to reform it, see Timothy B. Smith, France in Crisis: Welfare, Inequality and Globalization since 1980 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). A more sanguine view of the French crisis,
whose solution to one dramatic housing crisis only produced another with equally serious social repercussions. Sprinkle with political leaders of both the left and the right who will not speak openly about any of these failures, and who instead seek to blame outside influences, such as immigrants from abroad, or the evils of globalization and American-style capitalism. Stir. Voilà. Spontaneous combustion.

Since this story seemed so familiar—in fact, the diagnosis of the illness was widespread before the violence of 2005 even happened—commentators moved rather quickly from the subject of the violence itself to the well-trodden debates about social policy that have pitted the Socialists against the Gaullists since the 1980s. The left largely resorted to tired-sounding arguments about strengthening the bonds of community at the local level, which would have sounded more sincere if the Socialist Party had actually done more to give voice to neighbourhood associations at the grass-roots level in the last two decades. The right trotted out equally familiar and more harshly worded arguments about public order and security. Since the violence was largely held to be merely an intensification of a kind of conflict that had been quite common, even routine, on the margins of French cities since the early 1990s, the facts were largely taken for granted, as was their relation to the more general sense of French malaise. In spite of the rehearsed quality of the debates, however, some commentators did succeed in posing real and pressing questions, though not always in a form that made them easy to answer. Did the revolt of these alienated young people reflect, as some appeared to fear, the dismal end of the ‘French model’ of universal citizenship and integration? If so, what model of social and political belonging might replace it? Was the government’s draconian response a powerful example of the return of a colonial dynamic in the relationship of the French state to its most disadvantaged subjects? Or was the crise des banlieues best understood as a continuation of a characteristically French tradition of socio-political contestation, in which marginalized groups resort to violence in order to claim, with more or less success, the attention of political elites?

It is telling that the positions embodied in the questions given above—which might be summarized as the arguments of rupture, return and continuity—assume that the origins of the French crisis lie essentially in a characteristically ‘French’ history of rupture and cultural ‘integration’ and that the solutions to this crisis are to be found in the political realm, that is, in the relationship between state institutions and civil society. If one subscribes to the rupture thesis, believing that the ‘French model’ of social integration and

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9 See, for example, the arguments made by Pierre Rosanvallon, a newspaper sources (Le Monde, Libération, Agence France Presse, Le Figaro, etc.) for this article were accessed through the LexisNexis Academic database, and are thus given without pagination.

10 This was the position taken by the manifest of the Indigénnes de la République, an organization that published this text in February 2005 asserting that the republican tradition in general, and the institutions of the Fifth Republic in particular, were inescapably linked to France’s past as an imperial power. The riots of 2005 brought widespread media attention to these arguments. See, for example, Laurence Chabert, ‘Le choix d’une loi liée à la guerre d’Algérie risque de rouvrir une plaie’, Agence France Presse, 8 November 2005; and Jacques de Saint-Victor, ‘La République désintégrée’, Le Figaro, 3 November 2005.

citizenship is hopelessly broken, then presumably the solution lies in finding another model and applying it with more success. If one believes that the riots are a symptom of a return of a colonial dynamic in the relationship between the French state and those on the margins of French society, then the problem can only be addressed by political confrontation with the postcolonial state, perhaps modelled on the anti-colonial movements of the past. Of course, if one believes that the riots are simply a continuation of a distinctively 'French' tradition of political protest, then one might conceivably do nothing, beyond what is already being done in the name of social solidarity and neighbourhood security, under the assumption that French society will find a way to adapt to the present crisis, as it has done in the past. The first two options probably over-estimate the ability of one or the other side of the political equation—state institutions or elements within civil society—to impose their will on the polity. The third almost certainly minimizes the depth of the fissures that have opened up between those who are protected by France’s current social welfare system, and those who are not.

My goal in this article is not to answer any of these questions definitively, but rather to examine why all of them were posed so urgently in November 2005, and to suggest what kinds of historical context might be most helpful in understanding why the riots appeared to be both so obvious in their origins and so insoluble as symptoms of a larger social and political crisis. The French are undoubtedly correct in thinking that the solutions to their problems might be found in an expanded form of political dialogue that includes both those on the inside and those on the margins of French society, but for reasons that are interesting to investigate further, it has been extraordinarily difficult to find the ground on which such a dialogue could take place. It may be that the impasse is as much conceptual as it is economic or political, and that part of the problem arises from a tendency to treat all aspects of the many problems facing French society at the dawn of the twentieth century as if they were part of the same problem, and thus treatable within one coherent framework that could be applied, top-down, by the state. Such a reading of the French situation encourages reductive readings of the French past, as well as over-confident assumptions about the ability of any particular set of ideological principles to guide successful policies. It also discourages more pragmatic responses that might do much to lower the temperature of public debate.

The Riots of 2005

The trouble began on the night of 27 October 2005 in Clichy-sous-Bois, a suburb to the northeast of Paris. Three adolescents, believing themselves to be chased by the police, climbed the barriers surrounding a high-voltage electric installation to find a hiding place. Bouna Traoré, aged fifteen, and Zyed Benna, seventeen, were electrocuted and died immediately. The third, Muhittin Altun, also seventeen, was badly burned and hospitalized in serious condition. In the hours that followed, angry young people ran through the streets of Clichy and neighbouring Montfermail, setting fire to cars and attacking several buildings. Nearly 200 police battled the rioters until 3am. The next night, in spite of the presence of heavily equipped anti-riot squads, more street battles broke out. Fourteen people were arrested, twenty-three of the 400 police officers active that evening were injured, and twenty-nine more cars were burned, along with dumpsters and public phone booths. In Montfermail, the rioters attacked a police station, attempting to set it on fire. The prefect reported that a bullet had been fired at a police car, and the police themselves reported using over fifty tear gas grenades and firing 150
‘flashballs’—non-lethal rubber bullets—in the course of the evening.12

The violence took on a new urgency on 30 October, when somebody fired a tear-gas grenade at a mosque in Clichy. The police claimed that the grenade was not theirs, but those inside the mosque were convinced that the grenade came from the police lines.13 On succeeding nights, the violence spread to other neighbourhoods throughout the Paris region, and by the end of the week, the list of affected areas began to look like the index to the Michelin guide; eventually nearly 300 communes were affected.14 The rioters attacked schools, daycare centres, recreation halls and grocery stores. They set fires to attract firefighters, whom they then attacked in turn. They attacked municipal buses and their passengers. Schoolteachers in the banlieues spent their nights on the phone, calling every parent in their address books, pleading with them to keep their children at home and out of harm’s way after dark. Others occupied their classrooms, spending the night inside the empty buildings with the lights on, armed only with fire extinguishers. The press published daily counts of the number of

cars burned: by the time the violence subsided after nearly three weeks, the total had surpassed 10,000. Over 5,000 people were arrested, leading to over 800 prison sentences. One man died after being beaten while attempting to protect his car.

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, boxed in by his government’s previous positions on urban violence and his own presidential ambitions, opted for a combination of the carrot and the stick. Villepin announced a restoration of support for neighbourhood associations in the banlieues—support that had been cut by his own party’s government—and the creation of an apprenticeship programme which would allow students to leave school at the age of fourteen to prepare for a trade.15 Discussion of these ‘carrots’, such as they were, was overshadowed by the ‘stick’, Villepin’s announcement on 7 November of a ‘state of emergency’ based on the long-forgotten law of 3 April 1955. This law, originally written to help the government deal with the outbreak of armed rebellion in Algeria in November 1954, declared that in exceptional circumstances the ordinary liberties granted to citizens could be obstacles to the state’s ability to protect itself. The law thus granted prefects the right to declare curfews, imprison people without charge, place them under house arrest without trial, prohibit people from travelling or gathering in public, and enter people’s houses at any time of day or night. Normal judicial procedures could be suspended and replaced with military justice. The same local officials could also institute

14 The list included: Ile-de-France (Yvelines, Essone, Seine-Saint-Denis, Paris, Val d’Oise); Haute-Normandie (Eureux); Nord-Pas-de-Calais (Lille, Tourcoing, Valenciennes, Dunkerque, Soissons, Beauvais, Nogent-sur-Oise, Creil); Aquitaine (Pau, Bordeaux and its suburbs, Brive, Limoges); Centre (Orléans, Montargis, Blois); Auvergne (Clermont-Ferrand); Pays de la Loire (Nantes, Saint-Etienne); Bretagne (Rennes, Quimper, Brest, Saint-Malo); Lorraine (Guebwiller, Thionville, Metz, Nancy); Alsace (Strasbourg, Colmar, Mulhouse, Illzach); Franche-Comté (Belfort-Montbéliard); Rhône-Alpes (Lyon, Vénissieux, Bron, Meyzieux); Midi-Pyrénées (Toulouse and its suburbs); Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (Avignon, Nice, Aix-en-Provence). Conspicuous by its absence from this list is the most Mediterranean of French cities, Marseilles, not usually known for its lack of urban problems.

15 Renewed support for neighbourhood associations came as a complete reversal of the government’s previous priorities, although in effect it simply amounted to a restoration of the status quo ante. The education proposal was potentially even more significant, as it marked a total abandonment of the governing philosophy behind primary education in France since the 1970s, based on a notion of the collège unique, i.e. the same for all, until the age of sixteen. Renaud Dely, Emmanuel Davidenkoff and Thomas Lebègue, ‘Trois mesures phares: entre ébaton et carotte, les trois points forts de l’intervention du Premier ministre hier soir’, Libération, 8 November 2005.
controls on the press—print media as well as radio and television—and they could close cafés, restaurants, theatres, cinemas and other public buildings. Predictably, Villepin’s announcement of the state of emergency set off a firestorm of protest and worried editorialists in the national press, and the law remained in effect until 3 January 2006.

Meanwhile, from the procession of young people before their local tribunals, a portrait of the individuals caught up in the violence began to emerge. Most were between 14 and 20 years old. In spite of much loose talk about ‘immigrés’, the vast majority were born in France and possessed French citizenship. Frequently they came from families who had come to France some time in the past from North and West Africa but this was not always the case. In some areas the majority of those arrested was not ‘issu de l’immigration’ as the common—and misleading—phrase would have it. The majority had no criminal record. The one thing that they had in common was residence in the banlieues.

The Arguments

In the widespread public discussion that took place in the wake of the violence, commentators lined up initially along two poles, in a classic opposition that social scientists will instantly recognize. On the one hand were those who sought an explanation on the basis of social causes. These observers looked to larger impersonal forces of urban development, economic conjuncture, population movements and long simmering antipathies between different groups in society. On the other hand, were those whose discourse operated in a mode of moral condemnation and who singled out the individuals they deemed responsible for the violence, whether it be the rioters themselves, the alleged leaders behind the scenes, or even the political figures who seemed to profit from the instability and emotions raised by the confrontation between rioters and the police. These surface differences, however, hid some rather fundamental agreements about the terrain of the debates, and this unacknowledged consensus is a useful indicator of how limited the initial discussion of the riots actually was.

A good place to begin looking at this opposition might be the arguments put forth by Justin Vaisse and Alain Pinskielkraut. Vaisse, a former speechwriter for socialist Defense Minister Alain Richard who had also spent time at the Brookings Institution in Washington, gave a concise summary of the social argument in an article that circulated widely via the internet among French historians in the United States. He argued that over the past 150 years, the French had succeeded in integrating newcomers to France in three fundamental ways: public schools, universal (male) military conscription and employment. Schools, argued Vaisse, are

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16 My discussion of the law of 3 April 1955 is based on an unpublished paper by Sylvie Thénault, in the author’s possession. Only five prefects chose to implement the extra security measures, in spite of the fact that twenty-five departments were eligible by the terms of the law itself. Ironically, the départements that did implement the curfew provisions—Alpes-Maritimes, Seine-Maritime, Somme, L’Eure and Loire—were not the ones where the most violence had occurred. It appears that the authorities in the most troubled areas were afraid of adding to the tension by appearing to rush to the most repressive options. See Nicole Penicaut, ‘Les couvre-feux, pétards mouillés de Matignon’, Libération, 10 November 2005.

17 France has been a nation of immigrants for the last two hundred years, and, as Gérard Noiriel and others have pointed out, an estimated one out of four French people have a grandparent who was born in another country. To refer only to those descended from France’s former colonized subjects from North and West Africa, the Indian Ocean or Indochina as ‘issus de l’immigration’—without acknowledging the foreign origins of previous waves of southern and eastern European immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both stigmatizes the most recent arrivals and obscures the history of immigration in France. See Gérard Noiriel, Le Creuset français. Histoire de l’immigration.
still largely doing their part in this task, but with conscription abolished in the 1990s, and structural changes in the labour market since the 1970s diminishing rates of employment, the other two pillars of the system are currently in default. The result, he implied, has been a breakdown in what was at one time a well-oiled machine for social integration, and the riots of 2005 were only one symptom of this more general dysfunction.

Vasse’s reference to the long history of ‘integration’ in France was meant to invoke the classic republican values of universalism and equality, embodied most importantly in the hallowed myth of the Third Republic (1870-1940), which famously took a population of disparate peasants with rather low fertility rates and moulded them into a modern nation, with the help of waves of foreign immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. This argument is rather typical of the neo-republican orthodoxy that took root in France among political elites in the 1980s. In response to the twin challenges of right-wing extremism in the form of Jean-Marie Le Pen’s National Front and widespread anxiety about the increasing visibility of Muslims in France during these years, politicians from both sides of the political spectrum emphasized the French Republic’s traditional success at overcoming regional diversity, economic exclusion and the arrival of newcomers. This republican consensus reflected concern about Le Pen’s apparent success at retooling an older vocabulary of biological racism that had been discredited by the anti-Semitism of the Vichy regime, and presenting it to the electorate in a new form, emphasizing the cultural incompatibility of France’s most recent minority populations. During the 1980s, a few on the left attempted to respond to Le Pen’s highly effective and xenophobic demonization of ‘immigrants’—many of whom possessed French nationality—by openly advocating a multicultural model of society that recognized a ‘right to be different’. Very quickly, however, these voices were marginalized by the political mainstream for being incompatible with the universal principles of French republicanism and portrayed as dangerous concessions to ‘communitarianism’—a model of a segmented society that was seen as both un-French and a recipe for social conflict. The coincidence of the much-celebrated bicentennial of the French Revolution in 1989 with the first wave of the Islamic headscarf controversy in France only cemented this association between an anxiety about difference and the defence of republican universalism, as if the only possible solutions to the problem of cultural difference could be found in a doctrinally pure form of the French republican tradition that refused to recognize the ‘right to be different’ and proclaimed instead ‘assimilation’ as the only possible goal in integrating newcomers. The costs of such ideological purity were high.

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19 The essential text in establishing this orthodoxy was Noiriel, Le Creuset français. Its theoretical foundation was most coherently stated in Pierre-André Taguieff, La Force du préjugé: essai sur le racisme et ses doubles (Paris: La Découverte, 1987), in which Taguieff argued that all anti-racisms are bound up in an ineluctable embrace with the racisms they confront, unable to escape either the vocabulary or the concepts of difference that they seek to combat.


21 The most noted manifestation of this form of French multiculturalism was SOS-Racisme, an anti-racist organization that organized demonstrations and public concerts throughout France in the 1980s. It should be noted, too, that this embrace of ‘difference’ in no way implied a rejection of ‘French’ identity. See, for example, Trica Keaton, ‘Arrogant Assimilationism: National Identity, Politics and African-Origin Muslim Girls in the Other France’, Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 36.4 (2005), 405-23.

however, because republican anti-racists were forced to repudiate all claims made about the heterogeneity of the social body, whether they were made by racists in the National Front who sought to exclude certain populations from the political nation, or by members of religious minorities such as Muslims who sought to define a different way of being ‘French.’

The well-known philosopher and author Alain Finkielkraut himself participated in the defence of this hallowed republican tradition, but in the autumn of 2005, in repeated interviews to the press, Finkielkraut could hardly hide his disdain for ‘social’ explanations such as those offered by Vaisse.23 Such views, he argued, were typical of a ‘political correctness’ on the left that could not find it within itself to condemn a young man of North African descent who resorted to violence in contemporary France. When a ‘petit blanc’—colonial slang for a poor white man—beats up a black man, said Finkielkraut, everybody is quick to denounce this racist act and see it as an example of immanent fascism in France. But when the kids from the banlieues resort to violence, the sociologists crawl out of the woodwork and excuse these acts with their social explanations. The fault, said Finkielkraut, was first of all that of the young people themselves, whose irresponsible violence was directed both at the rule of law and at other groups in society. If Finkielkraut saw any larger context in which to condemn these actions, it lay not in the realm of social explanations, but in a culture of permissiveness fostered by post-1968 educational institutions, which catered to the demands of different ethnic groups within the population, and fatally undermined the state’s own responsibility to uphold the universal principles of the republic.

I will not dwell on what is specious in Finkielkraut’s argument—the fact that there were plenty of sociologists who decired the violence, beginning with Vaisse himself, or that race only entered Finkielkraut’s discourse in order to defend an apocryphal white aggressor from an alleged case of reverse discrimination by equally apocryphal social scientists. But I do want to point out what is missing from a debate that is structured as an alternative between positions like those put forth by these two authors. First, and most obviously, the agency of the young people in the banlieues is absent from both sides of this opposition, absent from Vaisse’s arguments because by definition, the riots are the result of larger impersonal forces and institutions that are beyond their control, and absent from Finkielkraut’s analysis except in so far as their actions are condemnable as morally reprehensible. By both demanding that these young people be held accountable for their actions (as if nobody else felt this way) and at the same time blaming the ‘super-cool’ (‘supersympa’) institutions of the post-1968 French state for making these kids into what they were, Finkielkraut was able to have his cake and eat it too—he could blame the young people of the banlieues for behaving irresponsibly, while also arguing that the state produced irresponsible individuals.

The positions staked out by Vaisse and Finkielkraut also remain confined within a vision of France conceived as a European nation-state, with all the attendant assumptions about French

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2006), Françoise Gaspard and Farhad Khosrokhavar, Le Foulard et la République (Paris: La Découverte, 1995), and Joan Scott, The Politics of the Veil (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). In addition to the 2004 decision to ban the Islamic headscarf from secondary schools, this renewed emphasis on a republican universalism predicated on the exclusion of difference as a legitimate political category has had other consequences. Often cited in this regard are the lois Pasqua, harsh restrictions on the rights of foreigners in the late 1980s and early 1990s, named after Charles Pasqua, then minister of Interior in Jacques Chirac’s Gaullist government.

23 See Alain Finkielkraut, ‘L’Illégitimité de la haine’, Le Figaro, 15 November 2005. In 1989, Finkielkraut was one of the signatories of a public letter decrieing the appearance of the Islamic headscarf in a French high school and criticizing then minister of Education Lionel Jospin’s attempts to find a compromise that would defend the republican principle of secular education while allowing the girls to attend school.
history that this entails. In Vaisse’s account, this assumption arises in his point of departure—the question of ‘integration’. ‘Integration’, he implies, is something that nation-states are either good at or not, but their essential personalities as nation-states—and above all the nature of the literal and figurative borders that separate the inside from the outside—remain essentially unchanged by the process. As it happens, Vaisse’s diagnosis is an optimistic one. Elsewhere he has predicted a happy outcome to France’s current difficulties, based on the country’s past successes at integrating newcomers to the polity, a position consistent with many who defend the republican tradition as the answer to France’s problems. But even this generous interpretation of the past cannot obscure the fact that his reading rests on an assumption of a close and natural congruence between nation, population and territory, and on a one-to-one correspondence between citizens and the nation-state that they inhabit. Absent from such a conception is an awareness of how boundaries of exclusion and inclusion are created historically, mapped onto territories or peoples both within and outside the nation, and constructed, adapted or rejected by both states and individual subjects according to the needs of the moment. In Finkielkraut’s account, the boundaries that separate the inside and outside of the nation are equally taken for granted, and given the status of natural fact. In his public comments, Finkielkraut has always been quick to interpret markers of difference—whether religious, ethnic, or racial—as evidence of essential cultural incompatibilities, or worse, as part of the ‘clash of civilizations’ that threatens to drive France into sectarian war. Also absent from these accounts is a dynamic conception of the nature of the contemporary French polity in which ‘Frenchness’ is a quality that can be possessed by peoples of varying backgrounds, without the need to invoke a stigma of origins, or the exclusionary hierarchies implied by degrees of assimilation and integration.

Finally, this strict opposition between individualist and social explanations cannot account for the complex dynamic of racial ideologies that lies behind the confrontations in the banlieues. In Finkielkraut’s account, as we have seen, race comes up only in his attack on the alleged ‘political correctness’ of the left—and race is in no way considered as part of the dynamic which produces entire populations who are excluded from the relative prosperity of contemporary France. In Justin Vaisse’s account, which emphasizes changes in the structure of the labour market as the main factor in the breakdown of France’s mechanisms for integration, race is simply absent from his analysis, as if the slowness of job growth in France since the 1970s and the emergence of entire neighbourhoods marked by exclusion and marginal status, were not also shaped by political decisions about the state’s priorities in social spending, or choices made by people at all levels of society about where they would live, where they would send their children to school, and with whom they would consent to work. As a spate of recent historical work has shown, such decisions take place in France within a context shaped by a long history of racial thinking. Finally, of course, the repeated invocations of the republican tradition make no reference at all to the extent to which French republicanism itself was implicated in the colonial project of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a period in which successive French governments committed themselves to the conquest and subjugation of populations in Africa and Asia, explicitly justified through the republican ideology of the ‘civilizing mission’.25

24 See, for example, Justin Vaisse and Jonathan Laurence, Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), a work, published first in English, that aims to counter much of the ‘official pessimism’ (p.264) that the authors detect in the United States on the subject of Muslims in France.

Historical research on the complex relations between the history of French republicanism and empire, ideas about racial difference, and the institutions of the French welfare state has been developing quickly in recent years, and this work, in spite of ongoing disagreements and a lack of consensus, can provide the necessary context for understanding both the crise des banlieues and the public controversies that followed it in France. Much of this more recent literature developed out of a tradition within French historiography that developed through an engagement with historical research on the complex relations between the history of French republicanism and empire, ideas about racial difference, and the institutions of the French welfare state has been developing quickly in recent years, and this work, in spite of ongoing disagreements and a lack of consensus, can provide the necessary context for understanding both the crise des banlieues and the public controversies that followed it in France. Much of this more recent literature developed out of a tradition within French historiography that developed through an engagement with


the debates about colonialism and decolonization in the post-war period. Common references are the work of sociologist Georges Balandier and anti-colonial or anti-racist militants such as Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon in the 1950s, and the work of historians René Gallissot, Claude Liauzu and Claude Meillassoux in the 1970s and 1980s. Although certain publishing houses in France have long been active in pursuing works that seek to connect the history of racial thinking in France and the history of the French empire to the contemporary situation—L’Harmattan and François Maspero, most notably, and more recently La Découverte—the main centres of French historical research within French universities have been less active in pursuing these links, and the most recent wave of scholarship on these questions has been fed by numerous contributions coming from researchers working outside of France, including scholars from Britain, North America, Africa and the Caribbean.


A French book that has been particularly influential on U.S. and British scholars in the 1990s was Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, Race, nation, classe: les identités ambiguës (Paris: La Découverte, 1988); published in English translation as Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities (London: Verso, 1991). An older generation of Caribbean authors, including C.L.R. James and Walter Rodney, has also contributed to the development of this critical tradition, embodied most recently by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, author of Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).
Recent trans-Atlantic and trans-Mediterranean scholarship has helped to shape the more general ‘imperial turn’ taken by European history in the 1990s. From Georges Balandier, this historical literature has borrowed and developed his understanding of what he called the ‘colonial situation’. For Balandier, making the colonial situation an object of study was a way of insisting on the historical consequences of European imperial expansion, both for the peoples who became subject to colonial rule and for the colonizers themselves. Balandier’s argument explicitly criticized the insufficiencies of an earlier generation of social scientists who treated Europeans as if they were the only peoples possessed of a history, while depicting the culture of ‘indigènes’ in Africa or Asia as static, existing outside of historical time. Studies of the ‘colonial situation’ initially focused on the territories in Africa and Asia that were subjected to conquest and rule by Europeans in the nineteenth century, but recent work has expanded the optic to include the territories of European nation-states at home, with the understanding that colonization had social, political and institutional effects at the centre of Europe’s empires and among their home populations, as well as at their distant peripheries.29

While Balandier’s work and that of his successors encouraged scholars to think of ways in which spaces within Europe might be considered a part of the colonial situation, recent re-readings of the classic anti-colonial texts of the 1950s have encouraged historians to think more critically about the French republican tradition and the extent to which its development across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been entwined with the history of colonial expansion and decolonization.30 These texts provided powerful arguments for treating the history of colonial regimes not merely within the context of military conquest or economic exploitation, but as totalizing ideological systems, in which the very concepts employed to legitimate the colonial system—definitions of modernity, technological progress, and republican notions of political and economic liberty—became a part of its repressive apparatus.

Perspectives such as these offered an opportunity for historians to revisit what an earlier generation of research had taught us about the emergence of the banlieues in France. Urban geographers and social historians who studied the growth of suburbs in France tended to treat their subject as part of the modernization process,

29 Georges Balandier, ‘La Situation coloniale: approche théorique’, Cahiers internationaux de sociologie, 11 (1951), 44-79. On the impact of Balandier’s work, see Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda’, in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds), Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp.1-56. Examples of work discussing metropolitan spaces within the context of empire have included works of cultural history and also studies of forms of knowledge and technology that developed in both the colonies and in France. See, for example, Herman Lebovics, True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Patricia Morton, Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000); Paul Rabinow, French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989); and

30 The key texts here, of course, are Aimé Césaire, Discours sur le colonialisme (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955), Frantz Fanon, Les Damnés de la terre (Paris: Maspero, 1961), and Albert Memmi, Portrait du colonisé, précédé du Portrait du colonisateur (Paris: Buchet, Chastel, Corrêa, 1957). The association of this critique of republican ideologies with radical anti-colonial politics—and in Fanon’s case with an open endorsement of violence as the only possible response to the injustices of the colonial system—no doubt contributed to the reluctance of many French historians in France to absorb the lessons of this critique. Historians of France working in other countries—Alice Conklin, Laurent Dubois, Mary Lewis, Clifford Rosenberg, Todd Shepard, Tyler Stovall and Gary Wilder, for example—seem to have taken more seriously the implications of the connection between republican ideology in its specifically historical instantiations and colonial practices.
conceived of largely within the confines of urban history with at most a national focus. As changes in manufacturing combined with rising real estate values and shifts in the labour market, so the story went, working-class populations were forced out of central neighbourhoods into peripheral areas on the margins of France’s rapidly growing cities. From the beginning, these outlying areas were distinguished from the urban centres by a less regulated and more spontaneous practices of spatial organization and by forms of social and class solidarity which defined themselves in opposition to the wealthier and more privileged populations in the city proper.\footnote{On the growth of Paris’s suburbs see especially Jean Bastié, \textit{La Croissance de la banlieue parisienne} (Paris: PUF, 1964); Jean-Paul Brunet, \textit{Saint-Denis: La ville rouge} (Paris: Hachette, 1980); Annie Fourcaut, \textit{Bobigny: Banlieue rouge} (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1986); John Merriman, \textit{The Margins of City Life} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); François Soulignac, \textit{La Banlieue parisienne. Cent cinquante ans de transformations} (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1993); and Tyler Stovall, \textit{The Rise of the Paris Red Belt} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). On the ‘heterotopic’ nature of suburban spaces—spaces of alterity and otherness—see Henri Lefebvre, \textit{La Révolution urbaine} (Paris: Gallimard, 1970). My understanding of this literature here has been shaped by an unpublished paper on the Parisian \textit{banlieues} by Ken Garner.} In the first half of the twentieth century, much of the population growth on these urban peripheries was fed by the arrival of immigrant labourers and their families from southern and eastern Europe, above all from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Poland. Following the publication of Gérard Noiriel’s \textit{Le Creuset français} in 1988, many commentators tended to emphasize the positive aspects of this story of integration, under the assumption that dwelling on the conflicts and exclusions engendered by these population movements might lend credence to Jean-Marie Le Pen’s xenophobic and racist political campaigns, and underestimate the ability of French society to absorb newcomers. According to this position, even the venerable French Communist Party became an active agent for integrating newly arrived immigrants from elsewhere in Europe into the French republican nation.\footnote{Anne Sa’adah, \textit{Contemporary France: A Democratic Education} (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp.113-15. On the continued significance of racial and cultural bias among French workers, however, see Michel Lamont, ‘Immigration and the Salience of Racial Boundaries among French Workers’, in Chapman and Frader (eds), \textit{Race in France}, pp.141-61.} In spite of this retrospective historical optimism, however, the work of other historians has shown how the development of the working-class \textit{banlieues} in France was accompanied by a long history of violence, social exclusion and racial stigma, a history that can only be understood by thinking of these urban developments in the context of France’s wider imperial policies and conquests.\footnote{On the connection between the \textit{banlieues} conceived of as sites of political and social exclusion and racial hierarchies, see especially Tyler Stovall, ‘From Red Belt to Black Belt: Race, Class, and Urban Marginality in Twentieth-Century Paris’, in Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (eds), \textit{The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 351-69. Stovall develops here an argument also made by Queendolyn Wright in \textit{The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism}, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).} It is worth noting, for example, that the populations of Paris’s marginal and peripheral spaces were explicitly racialized in middle-class commentaries long before the arrival of large numbers of colonial subjects from Africa and Asia. Historian Patricia Morton cites a telling example, from 1926, in a guide to the Paris suburb of Saint-Ouen that described a neighbourhood known as ‘Morocco’:

\begin{quote}
The detritus and filth invade everything, here is a pile of chicken carcasses, further a heap of old Camembert boxes, elsewhere a small mound of rags; the same filth covers the walls, the pavement of the streets, and all that lives in this empire. The humanity that swarms in the refuse
\end{quote}
seems to form a body with it. Clothed in rags, unkempt women desperately excavate the heap to separate the wood from the iron, the wool from the silk, the bone from the paper; their arms are covered with wounds badly dressed by dirty linen, their red and weeping eyes tell of the grinding dangers of this corruption [...] but what is unimaginable is the filth that covers their skin, a black filth that scars their faces, blackens their cheeks and makes their eyes and mouth appear white.\textsuperscript{34}

One might assume that racial ideologies adhered most powerfully to people—here we have an example of racial significance being associated with space: these inhabitants, who may have come from anywhere, have assumed the characteristics of colonial subjects (i.e. ‘Moroccans’) by virtue of their residence here, in a marginal location whose filth conveniently blackened their skin, so that their true nature was visible to all.\textsuperscript{35}

Precisely because of this association of the working-class banlieue with the allegedly primitive and dangerous populations of the Empire—ready to revolt at a moment’s notice, in need of pacification, in need, in short, of civilization—Paris’s eastern edge at Vincennes was chosen as the site for the massive 1931 Exposition Coloniale, which celebrated the accomplishments of France’s civilizing mission in Africa and Asia.\textsuperscript{36} The director of the exposition, Hubert Lyautey, a military officer and former Resident General of Morocco, had originally wanted a site in central Paris, but he succumbed to arguments made by his staff and others that the pedagogic value of the exposition would be better served by placing its elaborate pavilions as closely as possible to those working-class populations who might benefit from its lessons. With its extensive esplanade, dotted with buildings celebrating the blending of French and indigenous cultural styles, the exposition coloniale used architecture to offer a particular vision of a syncretic modernity, in which African and Asian cultural forms marked their entry into the world of the twentieth century under French sponsorship. The exterior surfaces of the buildings reflected “traditional” architectural motifs from the various colonies, while the interiors contained exhibits displaying the ways that French science and expertise had transformed the colonies, bringing them into the modern world.

The colonial pavilions at Vincennes—built on a site that is the gateway to Paris’s eastern banlieues—were torn down when the exposition was finished, but they were soon replaced on the skyline with ubiquitous blocks of low-rent housing, whose uniformity and rigorous line, devoid of decoration, spoke to an alternative utopia. This project of urban renewal was in response to a real crisis: the shantytowns of the urban periphery had blossomed in the decades after the Second World War, and they persisted in many areas until the 1970s. Between 1960 and 1973, the state organized the construction of up to 600,000 housing units per year. The result was the creation of enormous apartment complexes known as the cités. Constructed on marginal land on


\textsuperscript{35} For a discussion of the ways in which racial associations such as these were linked to violence against immigrants from southern and eastern Europe in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Peter Fysh and Jim Wolffreys, The Politics of Racism in France (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), pp. 10-23. This argument is a powerful corrective to the neo-republican story of French success at assimilating waves of immigrants prior to 1945.

the periphery of larger urban areas, often adjacent to highways, railroads, airports and industrial zones, the cités lacked the basic infrastructure of healthy cities, such as easy access to public transportation, commercial centres, parks, playgrounds and other public services. The buildings themselves were constructed using cheap materials, and, subject to heavy use, they deteriorated rapidly. Some have since been demolished, and those that remain have severe problems that affect their residents’ quality of life on a daily basis, though some researchers have emphasized the persistence of a vital atmosphere of community sustained by residents in the face of such hardship. Although the cités were initially conceived of as socially diverse spaces in which young working and middle-class families could live together as they established their first households, many nevertheless evolved into isolated quartiers d’exil, concentrated spaces of social dysfunction, where the combination of persistently high unemployment rates, failing schools, crime and drugs have created a downward spiral that has so far defied all attempts at intervention, whether by local authorities, neighbourhood associations, or successive governments of both the left and the right. In such a context, the riots of 2005, like the periodic outbursts that preceded them, have been described as a ‘kind of hate and rage reminiscent of a prisoner’s violence against his own environment’.

Tyler Stovall argued recently that the role of racial ideologies in marking the exclusion of the quartiers d’exil must be nuanced, both to avoid the simplistic comparisons with the United States that are a staple of contemporary French debate, and to understand the extent to which class exclusions (and solidarities) still play an important role in French society. Stovall was certainly correct in his assertion that it is possible to overstate the extent to which racial barriers trump other forms of social marginalization in France, and he emphasized that the cultural dynamism of France’s banlieues might also provide an example of an identifiably ‘French’ yet hybrid space that has nurtured the emergence of dramatic and expressive literary voices, a new genre of French film, and new forms of popular music that now count among France’s best-known cultural exports. It is equally clear, however, that the race-blind policies followed by successive French governments to address the persistent social and political isolation of the quartiers d’exil have had only limited effects. Gwénaëlle Calvès pointed out that the primary strategy used by the French state to address this isolation has been to address the isolation of spaces, rather than specific groups of people. The creation of incentives for zones d’entreprises (1986), zones urbaines sensibles (1991), zones de redynamisation urbaine (1995) and tax-free zones (1996 and 2002) have, in Calvès’s words, functioned as a ‘proxy to implement a form of affirmative action very close to the American model, while avoiding the stigmatizing effects that might be triggered by more explicit and more exclusive forms of designation’. By 2000, these zones urbaines sensibles constituted over 700 neighbourhoods throughout France with 4.5 million residents, among them many of the nation’s most vulnerable populations, with average


unemployment figures hovering between twenty and thirty percent, and even higher for those under the age of thirty. In these areas, violent confrontations between young people in the cités and the police are now routine, and the government’s response, even before the riots of 2005, has been to move away from preventive measures, and embrace a repressive approach.41

From the point of view of the extreme right in France, as well as a good portion of the rest of the electorate, the violence of the cités is evidence of the failure of the republican doctrine of assimilation, colour-blind or not, and Jean-Marie Le Pen is not alone among leading politicians in their use of highly racialized vocabularies as they place the blame for this situation squarely on the excluded inhabitants of the cités themselves. In their rhetorical descriptions of the banlieues, one hears the echoes of the kinds of racial language used earlier in the century, a sign of the persistence of such fantasies, and their continued utility in political debate. A common tactic of the National Front in local elections since the early 1980s, for example, has been to spread rumours of ‘Arabs’ who slaughter sheep in the showers of their state-subsidized apartments.42 These rumours—never confirmed, but nonetheless quite powerful in their effects on a fearful population—are remarkable for the deft way in which they reverse the hopeful aspirations of an earlier vision of colonial modernity, the cultural syncretism of the 1931 exposition coloniale, for example, in which indigenous architectural motifs were given expression on the exterior of the pavilions, while the interior documents the achievements of French civilization. In the right-wing fantasies of the cités, the message is reversed—here, the alleged monstrosity arises from the violation of the modern lines of the building’s rational and hygienic exterior by the irreducibly foreign practices occurring within the cité’s walls. Racial associations such as these are inseparable from French debates about which modernity they have opted for, and the very fungibility of these racial stigmas makes them tempting tools for demagogic politicians who seek electoral advantage in exploiting the anxieties of the French population. Recognizing this history is important, for example, in understanding the vitriolic reaction of young people in the banlieues in the summer of 2005, only months before outbreak of violence, when Nicolas Sarkozy, then Minister of the Interior, promised to clean out the cités ‘au Kärcher’—a reference to a pressure washer frequently used by municipalities to clean graffiti off the walls—literally, to whiten them, with a powerful blast of superheated chemicals and bleach.

In France, as in the United States, sociologists and historians have done more to explain the social and economic processes that have contributed to the isolation of the banlieues, and rather less to understand the place of racial ideologies in producing such exclusions.43 Nevertheless, one group of militants in France tried to connect the history of racial thinking and colonialism to the violence in 2005: the so-called Indigènes de la République. Taking as their point of departure an enumeration of the burden of

41 This history was summarized by Le Monde during the violent weeks of November 2005 in ‘Politique de la ville: trente ans de traitements d’urgence’, Le Monde, 8 November 2005. For a perceptive account that emphasizes the history of the banlieues both as sites of exclusion and sites of cultural vitality, see Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault, ‘Urban Violence in France’, Middle East Report Online, November 2005 (http://www.merip.org/mro/interventions/silverstein_tetreault_interv.htm, consulted 21 February 2006).

42 For an essential account of the effects of such electoral tactics at the local level, see Françoise Gaspard, A Small City in France (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

discriminations in housing, health care, schooling and employment faced by ‘people from current or former colonies, or from postcolonial immigration’, the *Indigènes de la République* argued that a direct continuity could be traced between the treatment of ‘indigènes’ under French colonial rule, and their descendents in France today. Their manifesto, posted first on the internet in January 2005, called for a radical critique of the history of colonialism, and a ‘decolonization of the Republic’. Because the moment of their appearance on the public scene coincided with the parliament’s passage of an ill-conceived and quickly modified law, which called upon schools to teach the history of colonialism ‘in its positive aspects’, the *Indigènes de la République* enjoyed a certain notoriety during most of 2005. When de Villepin’s government invoked the law of 1955 to respond to the violence in the suburbs in November 2005, the *Indigènes* quickly claimed that this was a vindication of their position. In the press and on television, however, the spokespeople for the *Indigènes* were universally attacked by the defenders of the republican tradition, who assumed from the start that the *Indigènes*’ critique could be reduced to a simple ‘communitarianism’, that is, a movement by people of colour, for people of colour, as opposed to a political movement with ostensibly universal goals. Few bothered to consider the extent to which the *Indigènes*’ invocation of the history of colonialism might work as a refutation of the very abstractions being used to exclude their position from legitimate debate.

There are many signs, however, that the events of 2005 have begun to stimulate a more productive debate in France that would include a dialogue with those who live in the *cités*, as well as a discussion of the unfortunate consequences of previous policies of urban renewal and an unreflective reliance on the fallback position of ‘republican’ values of universalism, *laïcité* and anti-communitarianism. Olivier Masclet’s research on political mobilization among the children of immigrants in Gennevilliers should be a wake-up call to mainstream political parties on the right and the left, for what it tells us about the costs of ignoring local attempts to participate in the political process. Sylvie Tissot of the Université Marc Bloch in Strasbourg has written a perceptive critique of the very concept of the ‘quartiers sensibles’, in which she demonstrates that the institutionalization of urban renewal projects that aim at improving ‘le lien social’ (the social fabric) has in fact made such political dialogue more rather than less difficult. Even historians long associated with the defense of the immaculate republic have nuanced their positions in their more recent writings, leading one to think that the historical conversation that has been taking place outside of France, on the links between racial thinking, the French empire and social exclusion in contemporary France, might find its echoes within the metropole itself.

In spite of this atmosphere of ouverture, however, the recent initiatives of Nicolas Sarkozy’s new government show that the obstacles still remain. By appointing Rachida Dati, a woman of Moroccan and Algerian origins, as Minister for Justice, and Rama Yade, a French-African woman

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44 Olivier Masclet, ‘Des Quartiers sans voix’.
46 Already in 1999, Gérard Noiriel offered a more critical account of the exclusionary potential embodied in the social programme of the Third Republic, which he sees as an important predecessor of the more notorious social policies of the Vichy regime during the German occupation. See Gérard Noiriel, *Les Origines républicaines de Vichy* (Paris: Hachette, 1999). Although Noiriel makes no attempt to connect this story to the Third Republic’s imperial policies, the argument nevertheless is an important corrective to the use that is often made of the arguments he provided in *Le Creuset français*. Meanwhile, in 2007, Noiriel published a monumental account of the history of racial thinking in France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, *Immigration, antisémitisme et racisme en France, XIXe-XXe siècle: discours publics, humiliations privées* (Paris: Fayard, 2007).
whose childhood was spent in Senegal, as Secretary of State for Human Rights, Sarkozy appeared willing to break with the tendency of previous governments to select their members from a narrower circle of haut bourgeois—and white—elites. At the same time, however, his very public attacks on those who seek to enumerate the inhumanity of successive French regimes during the colonial era or during the Vichy period seem to indicate a break with the more apologetic posture taken by his predecessor, Jacques Chirac, and an attempt to preclude the kind of reappraisal of France’s history that would be required to speak openly of the historical connections between racial thinking and definitions of the Republic. Meanwhile, a report released in November 2006 by the National Observatory of the ‘zones urbaines sensibles’, soon after the first anniversary of the riots of 2005, noted that in spite of the ongoing programmes of urban renovation that ‘the new face of our suburbs will not be visible until approximately 2010’.47 One might well wonder what colour that face will be.

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Colonial history, postcolonial memory: contemporary perspectives

La seule chose que nous puissions et devrions tenter—mais c’est aujourd’hui l’essentiel—c’est de lutter [...] pour délivrer à la fois les Algériens et les Français de la tyrannie coloniale.1

Nous sommes entrés, qu’on le veuille ou non, dans la postcolonie.2

Recently targetted by Perry Anderson for omitting any sustained reference to colonial history from the essays that constitute Le Lieux de mémoire, the editor of the collection, Pierre Nora, bristled with indignation. Presenting the monumental Gallimard publication as a clear rupture with the ambitions of the Annales school Anderson had described the work in La Pensée tiède as a ‘soutien consensuel aux institutions du présent’, an attempt to forge an ‘union sacrée dans laquelle les divisions et les discordes de la société française se fonderaient dans les rituels attendris de la remémoration postmoderne’, i.e. a nationally shared memory that forms part of an explicitly ideological programme of national cohesion.2 Central to such a critique is the recognition of the absence of any traces of colonial history, which is ‘objet’, according to Anderson, ‘d’un non-lieu au tribunal de ces souvenirs à l’eau de rose’ (p.52). Dismissing, by way of illustration, Charles-Robert Ageron’s essay on the 1931

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47 For a discussion of this report, produced by the Observatoire national des zones urbaines sensibles (Onzus) and submitted to parliament on 10 November 2006, see ‘Les écartes entre zones urbaines sensibles et autres quartiers se sont creusés entre 2003 et 2005’, Le Monde, 8 November 2006.

