

**Urban sociology**  
**Prof. Claire Lévy-Vroelant**

Lecture 5. Immigrations and the city: differentiation, perception and representation
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*“People from here don't know the foreigners, but they can recognize a foreigner at first sight”,*

Karl Valentin, comedian, (1882-1948, Munich)

### Introduction

#### I. Urban studies and migration studies: the strength of representations

Stranger and the city; the stranger (TEXT G. Simmel, 1908) **(NB.nous n'avons pas vu ce texte, vous n'avez donc pas à le lire)**

Social construction of statistics: the case of so-called « ethnical data »

#### II. Race or class? Some further indications on the use of categories

A brief history of immigration in France

In France, a huge controversy

A longitudinal research on discrimination, 1997, (TEXT: Jean-Luc Richard, 1997), *Approach of the Discrimination in the Labour Market. Young Adults from the International Migration in France.* **(NB Vous n'avez pas non plus à connaître ce texte, mais juste les resultants essentiels de l'étude)**

A survey on perception, INED, 2005 **(OUI)**

### Introduction

- Cities would not exist without immigration
- The level of migrations rates is determinant to characterize cities. The nature and the moment of migrations are also determinant (origins, age, “migratory project”)
- Migration studies are an important part of urban studies

- Individual and collective representations are active: The Foreigner is the one the others consider as a foreigner
- As a result, the conception of “the other” is socially relevant; integration’s modalities of “the other” or “the others” in the city (and in the City) define different types of co-presence: multicultural societies, melting pot, segregated societies.
- Migrations are also taking place on time: generations follow each other, differing from each other

### The Stranger and the city

The position and status societies offer to « the stranger » can be observed through their behaviours, laws, categories, representations. It is a very consistent element of their experience. Only the “urban mentality” (Simmel) makes the stranger possible.

Each society develops its own process but the general statement is that this experience is always contradictory: ignorance and curiosity, hostility and hospitality, pluralism and “assimilationism” etc. There is always a distortion between discourse and “objectives data”, and collective identities are actually defining themselves through these tensions.

### The strength of representations

“Whatever its cause may be (*NB. The existence of an unknowable nucleus in each individual*), its consequence at all events is a generalization of the psychical picture of the other person, a dissolving of the outlines, which adds to the singularity of this picture a relationship with others. We posit every man, with especial bearing upon our practical attitude toward him, as that type of man to which his individuality makes him belong. We think him, along with all his singularity, only under the universal category which does not fully cover him to be sure, and which he does not fully cover. This latter circumstance marks the contrast between this situation and that which exists between the universal idea and the particular which belongs under it. In order to recognize the man, we do not see him in his pure individuality, but carried, exalted or degraded by the general type under which we subsume him. Even when this transformation is so slight that we cannot immediately recognize it, or even if all the usual cardinal concepts of character fail us, such as moral or immoral, free or unfree, domineering or menial, etc. - in our own minds we designate the man according to an unnamed type with which his pure individuality does not precisely coincide.” « (...) but the fact that the individual, with respect to certain sides of his personality, is not an element of the group,

constitutes the positive condition for the fact that he is such a group member in other aspects of his being. In other words, the sort of his socialized-being (Vergesellschaftet-Seins) is determined or partially determined by the sort of his not-socialized being. The analysis to follow will bring to light certain types whose sociological significance, even in their germ and nature, is fixed by the fact that they are in some way shut out from the very group for which their existence is significant; for instance in the case of the stranger, the enemy, the criminal, and even the pauper. »

*How is Society Possible? by Georg Simmel, American Journal of Sociology vol. 16 (1910-11)*

Consequently, it appears that each individual has his own « veil » through which he conceives the « other » and finally his own position in society. These representations result both from individual and collective influences, and contribute to impact then collective representations. Collective representations are crystallised in categories, which are historically and not consensually constructed.

So it is of high relevance to study not only one's prejudices and representations but also the categories (« types ») and their evolution.

*TEXT G. Simmel, « Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung », in Soziology, first edition 1908.*

***Human races represented by five characteristic faces, about 1920, wooden board used as a pedagogical tool in schools, Dortmund, Westfälische Schulemuseum***

Discussion



### Social construction of statistics: the case of so-called « ethnic data »

The differences between countries are linked to political history and formation of states

In Great Britain and the United States, the census includes categories referring to origins and phenotype

In France (and somehow in other countries in Europe and Latin America), a huge controversy has developed in the last two decades

All statistical classification reveal the representations that structure identity, because they offer stable and legitimated references that are then active in the process of self definition, and in the process or relation to the other. Classification then is not naïve, neither spontaneous nor natural, it is historically and politically constructed and it structures the frame of social experience.

The process of classification and construction of categories needs to reduce reality that leads to put the emphasis on similarities and dissimilarities which are reflecting the normative system of the considered society. Categories are also often hierarchical.

### A brief history of immigration in France

France is a country of ancient and strong immigrations, just after Canada and States  
 France has also a long colonial history. Ancient colonies are where most of migrants are coming from

There are other factors of immigration in France: geographical proximity, asylums seek from dictators, family regrouping

## 1 - Répartition des immigrés par pays d'origine

	en %				
<b>Pays d'origine</b>	<b>1962</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>1975</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1990</b>
<b>Europe</b>	<b>78,7</b>	<b>76,4</b>	<b>67,2</b>	<b>57,3</b>	<b>50,4</b>
dont : Portugal	2,0	8,8	16,9	15,8	14,4
Espagne	18,0	21,0	15,2	11,7	9,5
Italie	31,8	23,9	17,2	14,1	11,6
Autre pays de l'UE à 12	10,6	9,5	7,4	7,1	7,3
Pays de l'Est	12,3	11,2	8,8	7,3	6,2
Autre pays d'Europe	4,1	2,1	1,7	1,2	1,5
<b>Afrique</b>	<b>14,9</b>	<b>19,9</b>	<b>28,0</b>	<b>33,2</b>	<b>35,9</b>
dont : Algérie	11,6	11,7	14,3	14,8	13,3
Maroc	1,1	3,3	6,6	9,1	11,0
Tunisie	1,5	3,5	4,7	5,0	5,0
Autre pays d'Afrique	0,7	1,4	2,4	4,3	6,6
<b>Asie</b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>8,0</b>	<b>11,4</b>
dont : Turquie	1,4	1,3	1,9	3,0	4,0
Cambodge, Laos, Vietnam	0,4	0,6	0,7	3,0	3,7
Autre pays d'Asie	0,6	0,6	1,0	1,9	3,6
<b>Amérique, Océanie</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>1,1</b>	<b>1,3</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>2,3</b>
Non déclarés	0,8	0,1	-	-	-
<b>Ensemble</b>					
%	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>
Effectif	<b>2 861 280</b>	<b>3 281 060</b>	<b>3 887 460</b>	<b>4 037 036</b>	<b>4 165 952</b>

Source : Insee, recensements de la population.

In France, a huge controversy...

Categories are supposed to be a descriptive instrument of societies, but they are also a formidable tool for public action (see positive discrimination). As a consequence, the categories are not stable; they are at stake in conflicting representation of the world.

Censuses are the more evident places where categories are legitimated and serve the understanding but also the framing, or even manipulation (the case of the Yugoslavian census, 1991) of society structure. Social facts are then thought through the schedule.

When the 1999 census occurred, an open conflict took place between pro and against

- Favourable: “visible minorities” are victims of specific discrimination. There are no available data to deliver evidences about it. Social relations in French society are more and more shaped by “ethnicity”
- Against: Not because discrimination based on “race or origin” will be statistically documented, there will be defeated. Categorising a group contributes to give it reality, then the risk is to stigmatize and to substitute “ethnic” interpretation of social problems instead of economical problems.

**A longitudinal study to put in light discrimination factors: Jean-Luc Richard, 1997, *Approach of the Discrimination in the Labour Market. Young Adults from the International Migration in France. (1)***

This study is based on an analysis of different methods that can be used to establish a possible discrimination against some young people (< 33 years old) of foreign origin who are living in France. Because of its size, the French Permanent Demographic Sample (EDP, an INSEE longitudinal data base which is the French equivalent to the English LS) enables the study for both migrants' children populations: young foreign-born people who grew up in France and young people of foreign origin who are born in France. The only comparison of cross section unemployment rates among the different national origin's groups and the sons and daughters of the French by birth is not sufficient in order to measure discriminations and the analysis must focus on the long term unemployment's situations. Logit models are very useful to understand the effects' complexity. The main individual characteristics are taken into account: national origin, current citizenship, place of birth, eventual date of the migration toward France, social background of the family they're originating from, individual qualification of the young and of their parents (professional occupation, diploma).

Using separate models for the male and female populations from each main different origin's group is, of course, firstly necessary because we need to understand the peculiar logic occurring on the labour market.

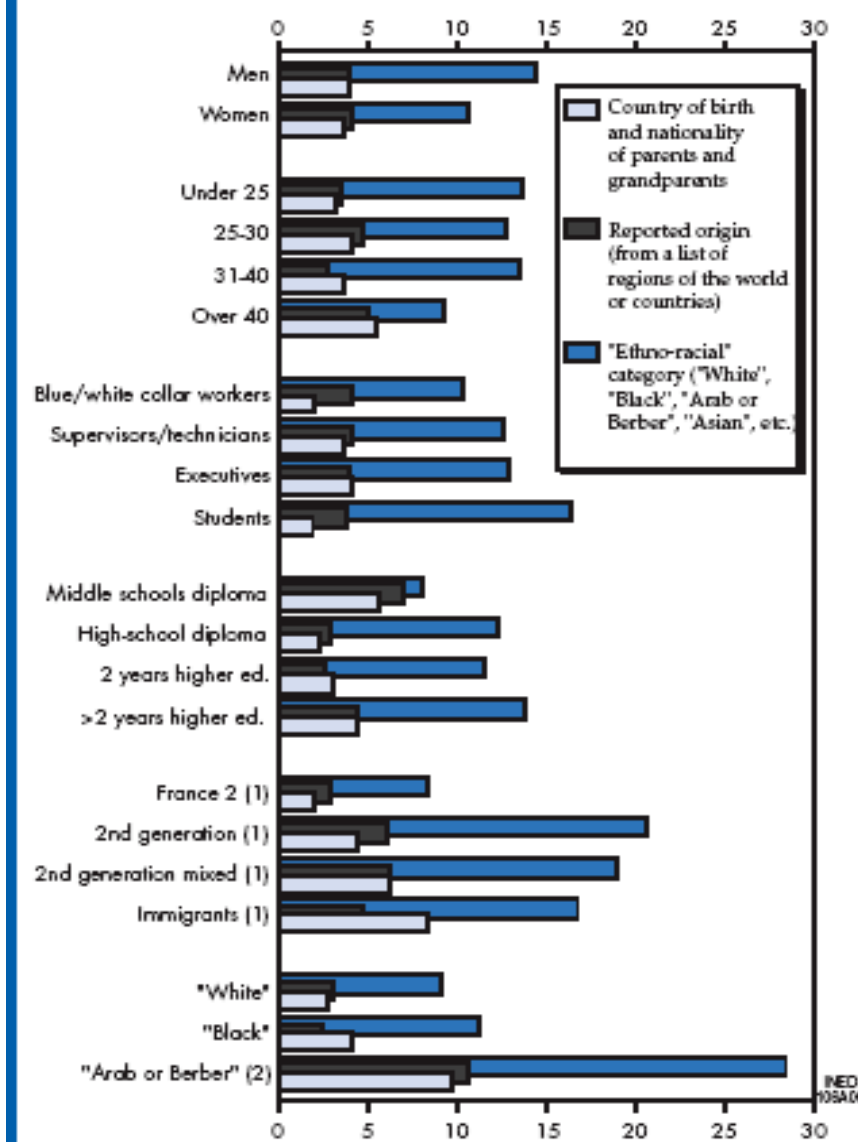
However, as we can consider that national origin seems to be the most explanatory reason of unemployment rates' differences among the groups, it is necessary to use longitudinal data and to introduce in the models variables that can have an influence on employers' choices. It appears that the introduction of national origin variables in logistic regressions concerning long term unemployment of all migrants' sons or daughters highlights the reality of discrimination against some of the young people of foreign origin (especially North African migrants' sons).

Statistical data combining national origins, place of birth, gender, date and age of arrival in France are possible with existing national data. No need of “ethnic statistics”.

- **Discussion of the main results of the paper, see TEXT**
- Another enquiry: *How should the diverse origins of people living in France be described? An exploratory survey of employees and students' perceptions*, by P. Simon and M. Clément, Population et Société, INED, 2005. Founded by FASILD and commissioned by French ministry of Equal Opportunities, the “measuring diversity survey” was conducted in 2005-2006 in seven companies (Axa, SNCF, Eaux de Paris, L’Oreal, Adecco, Ranstad, ED), three universities and a local government body (Région IDF)

1327 employees and students, not representative but a large range of employment situations.  
Method: discussion groups then answer to a personal questionnaire.

*Figure – Proportion of respondents who are ill at ease or very ill at ease with the three methods of recording origins, by personal characteristics*



## Conclusion

- Cities would not exist without immigration, but their integrative capacities are dependant on symbolical and practical categorisation as a result of long term history and socio-economical circumstances. Algerian are not by case the less favoured regarding access to work, and it goes beyond the “first generation”



- In order to understand the differences in the “stranger’s status, it is necessary to carry longitudinal studies (long term unemployment but also mix unions, participation in terms of citizenship etc), and to try to identify and measure structural trends and circumstantial effects.
- Categories regarding origins are challenging social identity. Consequently they are not stable and their definition is rarely consensual.
- There is a tendency towards changing the representation of social structure: shift from an analysis in terms of class to an analysis in terms of origin. French “melting pot” is under question. Sociologists should be able to unveil the conditions of such a shift.