

**A Feminist Perspective on France's Youth for Equality Programme:  
discussing gender equality, sexuality and violence in school**

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## Introduction

This theoretical work comes from my professional experience during the last four years. After being a student in Utrecht, after devouring, analysing, criticising, and debating feminist theories<sup>1</sup>, I urged myself to put theories into practice. I had gone too far with the deconstruction process and had lost myself within competing ideas. If I were to compare myself with an onion, all my layers would have been peeled off. Luce Irigaray gave me a *Speculum* to reclaim my body and mind (1985-1, pp.133-146; 1985-2, pp.23-33), whilst Deleuze and Guattari encouraged becoming over being (1987, pp 232-243, 276-309). Indeed, this work is the product of this process: the need to be in, what sociologist or anthropologist call, “the field” and the need of “the field” to explore ideas. I needed to get my layers back and to do so I needed to sideline feminist ideas, not completely; they were still part of me as a framework, but enough to be able to use them in a constructive way. I needed to position myself out of deconstructionism, not in the sense of ideas, but in the sense of accepting real-life constructions and trying to work within them, trying to apply feminist theories little by little, somewhere other than in the privileged feminist sphere. I wanted to make my feminist language “speakable” for others (such as Spivak’s famous text: *Can the subaltern speak?* 1988, pp. 271-313). Could I speak of feminism in spaces outside the protected environment created by Utrecht University and universities in general? Could I speak of feminism in areas, which do not necessary welcome feminist thoughts? As it is known, feminist ideas are not acceptable in every sphere. The “Other” can easily be a feminist, even in France and other countries where equality already seems obtained. The debates in France about the so-called “gender theory”, are a good example of the work that still needs to be done in order to popularise gender and feminist theories. The opportunity to study gender at university allowed me to give a brief remark on the construction of gender studies at university. Gender concepts and theories remain an “outsider” in society (Becker, 1963) and especially in France, as I will develop in Chapter

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<sup>1</sup> Here I refer particularly to the “feminist toolbox” course followed at Utrecht University, where I dealt with different branches of feminist theory, e.g. situated knowledges, deconstructivism, objectivity, and feminist methodological approaches, e.g. interdisciplinarity in practice, close-readings, discourse analysis.

One. Thus, I wanted to have the opportunity to study what was happening in high schools and how some feminist ideas could be permeable to high schools. That is why I wanted to work from the “field”: not from theories, but from what happened in a classroom.

### **To work in “the field”**

In 2012, I chose to participate in an educational programme entitled “Youth for Equality” (*“Jeunes pour l’égalité”*) as a lecturer<sup>2</sup> from January 2012 to March 2015. During the past four years, I have been able to enter classrooms (in colleges and high schools) in order to speak about male and female relationships, sexuality and equality. I participated to all the stages of the project; I gave lectures to teachers and educational teams, to students, and I organised journalism workshops for twenty class groups in order to go deeper on the subject. I also attended and participated in the organisation of the showcase event at the end of each school year aiming at presenting the work done during the year. From this professional experience, I want to draw an analysis on gender education and theorise it. Many questions entered my mind and my colleagues’ minds, from our proper experience, but also from the exchange with students and their teachers. In this thesis work, I want to be able to unveil some of those questions. I would like to think critically and as freely<sup>3</sup> as possible about the gender discourses addressed to the students. One of the main paradoxes I encountered working on this subject concerned the alliance of three themes on which my thesis concentrates: education, youth and sexuality. Therefore, students and high schools that participated in the programme constitute my “field” of observation and my source of information. The students I have observed are roughly between the ages of fifteen and nineteen and most of them live in Parisian suburbs. I visited twenty of the twenty-nine high schools that participated in the

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<sup>2</sup> I chose to translate the original French word “*sensibilisations*” to lectures or sessions, and the original French word “*intervenantes*” to lecturers. I thought this word was the most appropriate to describe our work outside of formal day-to-day teaching. Translations have been made by Eugénie Forno and Fiona McKay, for the entire thesis.

<sup>3</sup> This notion of freedom is quite important to me in the sense of my own standpoint and identities: I am a former student of political sciences, a student of gender issues, a feminist, a Frenchwoman ... I am made of many representations and cultural backgrounds. If I am not a modest witness (Haraway, 1997, pp. 23-40), nor neutral nor hegemonic, I am aware of my standpoints and I would like to operate my thinking in this thesis as far as I can, using various theoretical sources.

programme over the last three years<sup>4</sup>, as a professional but also as an observer. I took notes, a few pictures, but I did not have the chance to interview the students directly. I chose to focus on students' lectures and on sexuality. To hear their voices, I chose to interview the other lecturers working with me, to analyse reports from the lectures, and to analyse the feedback syntheses<sup>5</sup>. Chapter One gives a detailed overview of the work I have done to collect as much information as possible and my methodological choices.

### **To work in the “field” as a modest witness**

Sharlene Hesse-Biber writes “feminist research positions gender as the categorical centre of inquiry and the research process. By using a variety of research methods—quantitative, qualitative, mixed—feminist researchers use gender as a lens through which to focus on social issues. Research is considered “feminist” when it is grounded in the set of theoretical traditions that privilege women’s issues, voices, and lived experiences” (2014, pp.22). Indeed, this thesis uses gender as a lens to explore social issues and is grounded in the set of feminist theoretical traditions and methodologies. In this context, using the term “observer” is purposeful, reminding us of the efforts made by feminist scholars, such as Harding (1993, pp. 49–82) and Haraway (1988, pp. 575–599), to unveil the so-called scientific objectivity and to make visible the “male gaze”. From the moment someone observes, it means someone is observed and someone is observing, each one from a particular standpoint. During, my research I was in the classroom but mainly outside, discovering a new position as a researcher<sup>6</sup>. I was an outsider as well as an insider working with personal experiences and self-reflexivity. I was simultaneously an “observer” and an “actor”. Feminist theorists have a large background on standpoint methodologies. As Harding and Haraway explained, the observer is not neutral. Donna Haraway proposes to situate knowledge. Harding advocates for a reflexive standpoint

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to the cartography of the high schools participating in the project in Annex n°1 and

<sup>5</sup> To see the details of the archives studied, please refer to Annex n°2 and n°3.

<sup>6</sup> Sharlene Hesse-Biber’s book stresses “a ‘hands-on’ practice of feminist inquiry; and toward this end, [...] [includes] a unique set of praxis tools. Inspired by Erving Goffman’s concepts of “front stage” and “back stage,” [they] provide the reader with a more holistic picture of just what it means on the “ground level” to conduct a research project” (pp.10, 2014). I used this idea of “front stage” and “back stage” when I refer to my position as an outsider and insider, here too referring to E. Goffman’s concepts.

methodology. It includes an examination of the researcher's own assumptions and biases from the perspectives of marginalised peoples. It is within this section that I should then situate my research and approach, using a reflective methodology. For example, when I read reports, feedbacks forms or when I interviewed lecturers, I experienced this double position; I was a researcher and an insider because I had close relationships with lecturers, students and the team developing the programme. I already knew the programme from the inside out. However, from a feminist methodological approach and specifically in reference to Harding and Haraway's theories, I was experiencing this change of standpoint and creating a new one. I chose to interview lecturers because they were the backbone of this project. They had direct access to students and classrooms; they represented the first step of the policy. I was also interested in the way they worked, and how they talked to the students. Indeed, I think the "how" is the most important issue of this work. How do we speak about equality, power relationships, and sexuality to students? How is it possible to help them change their point of view or at least consider gender analysis of the organisation of society? I did not interview students individually, I would have loved to, but I did not because the dimension that is developed in this work is a collective one, and their words are transcribed both in reports and syntheses feedbacks. This work is based on the analysis of a public regional policy with its objective to collectively address gender inequality. I am sure, and as many studies show, that students would have talked differently if they were alone with me. But this is not the core theme of this work. I want to find out how the collective norms can be changed, or not, by a political agenda. I want to understand the effects of such a policy on the group as a whole and not at the individual level. In this manner I could have worked from ethnographic material, being an observer during some sessions and writing about the reactions of students. But, I this presented two limitations; the first one was a very practical one. I did not have time to achieve it: most sessions took place during December and January and it would have been difficult to be in possession of my research material so late. The second limitation is that I did not understand very well ethnological methodology, and although this could have been the opportunity to challenge it, I felt it was unnecessary. In fact, I already had material of this type and I chose to use it and to valorise already existing archives of this type. The ADRIC (*"Agence de développement des relations*



*interculturelles pour la citoyenneté*’/ Agency for Development of Intercultural Relations and Citizenship), the institution that organised the lectures, had archives I could use<sup>7</sup>. At the beginning of the programme, ADRIC employed several people to write down what was happening during the sessions. Even if most of the reports sometimes lack precious information (on students gender for example), they provided a good source of knowledge. I also used feedback forms syntheses that students filled out at the end of sessions. Thus, I crossed examined my two sources of knowledge: lecturers’ interviews and ADRIC’s archives in order to get a better idea of what was happening during the sessions. My experience as a lecturer also helped me to classify and organise the information and to identify the repeating schema. Chapter One also explain this in detail.

### **To work in the “field” as a feminist modest witness**

I should now define what I mean by feminism and show how this definition complements these authors’ conceptions of feminist methodology. Hekia Ellen Golden Bodwitch (2014) defines feminism “as a fluid category that describes those scholars and activists whose work seeks to destabilise hierarchical categories of difference”<sup>8</sup>. Her concise definition takes into account the fluidity of feminism stressing the encounter of scholars and activists for a common goal. However, this definition misses the political agenda of feminism, which seems important, especially when the programme I have been part of openly seeks a political agenda. As Henriette Zoughebi stated on the website of the project’s presentation: “The region, as part of its educational competence, has wanted to respond to the gender-orientation of certain training, to the reproduction of inequalities, to the scale of violence against young people, and to the discrimination they suffer daily”<sup>9</sup>. Indeed, this project is part of a regional desire to disseminate the culture of equality in schools, including at a national level as Henriette Zoughebi explained in an

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<sup>7</sup> I should here like to thank Chahla Beski-Chafiq for her agreement to let me use the archives and to Dominique Pagès and Clara Domingues for providing me with the material.

<sup>8</sup> Consulted at: <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/428/351>. Viewed on January 15th, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in: <http://projetscitoyens.iledefrance.fr/actualites/%C2%AB-jeunes-pour-l%E2%80%99%C3%A9galit%C3%A9-%C2%BB-sensibilise-les-lyc%C3%A9en-ne-s-%C3%A0-l%E2%80%99%C3%A9galit%C3%A9-filles-gar%C3%A7ons>. Viewed on January 6th, 2015.

open letter addressed to the former Education minister<sup>10</sup>. Here I have to connect this political agenda with feminist issues. A part of feminist scholars' work has been to construct new categories of analysis, relying on three key concepts: sex, gender and sexuality. Often wrongly associated with one another, it is important to distinguish them individually to account for the complexity of each.

Sex<sup>11</sup> is a physical, innate and permanent (without a surgical operation<sup>12</sup>) characteristic that distinguishes men and women, male and female. As this definition may be considered inaccurate, it is taken into account:

- Genetic or chromosomal sex which means the presence of two X chromosomes (female) or an X and a Y chromosome (male). Although, this distinction can be considered imprecise: there are cases of men XX and women XY. It is also possible to consider the presence or absence of the SRY gene. Usually on the Y chromosome, it is responsible for male sexual differentiation from a primordial state that is undifferentiated (without this determinism, sexual differentiation is feminine<sup>13</sup>);
- Gonadal sex (presence of testicles or ovaries);
- The phenotypic sex (presence of female or male secondary sex characteristics such as male hair, breasts...).

These three aspects do not always overlap. The work on hermaphroditism and then on "intersex" enriched the concept of gender. Case studies of people who have a "disorder" with their sex (determined thus within several systems) and gender (male or female) paved the way for the separation of these two elements.

Gender includes a set of cultural characteristics, which may change over time, and distinguishes the prescribed social roles for men and women. Indeed, it is socially constructed and acquired. It establishes a distinction between what is biological and what comes under gender. "Male" and "female" are sex categories, while "masculine" and

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<sup>10</sup> Available at: <http://www.humanite.fr/education-nationale/egalite-filles-garcons-par-leducation-nationale-courrier-dhenriette-zoughebi-vin>. Viewed on January 6th, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> On sex and body, refer to A. Fausto-Sterling (2012).

<sup>12</sup> About this point, refer to Dean Spade (2006).

<sup>13</sup> Laqueur (1990) wrote that there was an ancient "one-sex model", in which the woman was only described as an imperfect man / human and he highlights that for a long time, the body was seen as unisex and female sex was a "lesser male" ("*un moindre mâle*"). He postulates that definitions of sex/gender were historically different and changeable. In the nineteenth century, we would have gone to a system based on biological differences between the sexes.

“feminine” are gender categories. The term refers to the stereotypes that society associates with both the female and male individuals. These socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women are not universal and vary in different societies. American anthropologists introduced the term in the field of social sciences in the 1970s<sup>14</sup>. The word gender appears in 1972, in Ann Oakley’s book: *Sex, Gender and Society*.

Sexuality concerns all the practices aimed at the satisfaction of the sexual instinct. It is independent of whether or not it responds to masculinity criteria for a man or femininity for a woman. Foucault’s *History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge* (1976) articulates the concept of power and sexuality and explores what Foucault calls the “repressive hypothesis”. Michela Marzano (2006, p.25) stresses this point, writing: “By elaborating sexual theory, it is inevitable to promote a specific vision of man and woman, of their nature and desire. Who thinks about the sense of sexual encounters has a certain number of beliefs, prejudices and values”. As I have argued in my previous academic works, I persistently think sexuality plays a central part in the development of feminist theoretical frameworks. Feminist historiography gives tools to apprehend the many layers of this theoretical framework and the different approaches made by authors of the three feminist waves<sup>15</sup>. Sexuality also plays a strong part in society, referring to the on-going debates about intimacy, laws, contraception, AIDS prevention, same-sex marriage, heterocentrism, pornography, and prostitution... Sexuality *per se* is a very wide subject encompassing relationships to others, to intimacy, to the public and private spheres; it does not only rely on ‘sex’.

Therefore, it is mandatory to take into account all norms and standards constitutive of normative discourses in order to be able to analyse gender education at school on the basis of feminist theoretical contributions and inputs, sociological evolution, and philosophical approaches. Indeed, the most important best practice<sup>16</sup> is proper education on responsible sexual conduct. A gender-specific approach aimed at young people is needed and mutual respect and responsibility must be shown on sexual matters. Such

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<sup>14</sup> In the 1930s, Margaret Mead already wrote about socially constructed roles (1980).

<sup>15</sup> On this point, refer to *Not my mother’s sister: generational conflict and third-wave feminism*, Astrid Henry, Indiana press university, 2004

<sup>16</sup> See EU debates on Sexual and reproductive health and rights (July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2002, Strasbourg), Viewed on November 24th, 2014 at: [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu)

education, however, is influenced by different political, cultural and family contexts. There is a lot at stake and it is important to allow for questioning of these representations. Thus, the articulation of the three words and concepts, described above, in a feminist methodological framework is essential to my fieldwork.

### **To work in the “field” as a feminist modest witness in order to achieve a shared political end and research**

About the relevance of my subject, the importance of doing this research and dealing with issues on sex equality education at school, I rely on Hekia Ellen Golden Bodwitch again. Her article quoted below explores the effort to “give back” through research. The originality of this work relies on this intention. If any knowledge is created thanks to this work, it is with the goal of contributing to “destabilise hierarchical categories of difference”, to “push anti-oppression debates and struggle forward” and to deliver an analysis grounded in feminist soil. Many programmes have recently been developed in France on gender equality, but there is no research on the impact of such programmes. The goal of this work is to analyse the Youth for Equality programme in the messages it delivered to students, in order to be able to positively criticize political actions and choices, in the context of public education, and to see how to approach sexuality from a feminist perspective in the classroom.

Thus, my main research question is to understand how gender equality, sexuality and violence are discussed in French high schools today, and in particular the link between lecturers and students, and how this interaction can pave the way for a feminist pedagogical perspective. Considering that the Youth for Equality programme is the first of its kind in France, this presented the perfect opportunity to study this question academically whilst also responding to a need for an analysis, which would be necessary to enable the widespread implementation of this project.

To answer it, I explain, in Chapter One, the French context in which this programme took place. To do so, I analyse the most important political events from the 2010-2015 period, in which the programme took place. I divided this period into two: the end of Nicolas Sarkozy’s presidency and the beginning of François Holland’s

government. Then, I present the Youth for Equality programme; its general objectives and I give a more detailed presentation of the programme, my research and my sources.

Then, in Chapter Two I explain how lecturers create an environment allowing gender stereotypes to emerge and I analyse questions and comments made by students participating in lectures and the two subjects constantly discussed in classrooms, which are the possibility for girls to wear a “skirt”, and same-sex marriage and “gender theory”.

In Chapter Three I analyse the kind of knowledge and competencies delivered to students by lecturers, focusing on the issue of consent and lecturer’s will to provide long-term guidance to students through responsibility and empowerment. The second section of the Chapter gives me the opportunity to specifically analyse students’ commitment during lectures and what they say about what they learned.

Chapter Four focuses on the challenges faced by students and lecturers. It analyses the cases of difficult debate from the perspective of both students and lecturers. It also proposes an analysis of feminist pedagogical tools.

## **Chapter One: French politics and presentation of the programme Youth for Equality**

While I was constructing the outline of my thesis and my arguments, I felt I was missing a section where I could present the context in France: how could I speak about a programme on gender equality without situating it, without giving it roots and a location? Indeed, I think one of this thesis' challenges is to reconcile different theoretical frameworks and go beyond French and Anglo-Saxon intellectual divisions and gaps (which emerge in feminist theories and which I have been studying in the Netherlands). Thus, this chapter emerged from the need to situate and orientate French politics in regards to gender politics and intersectionality. Obviously, I cannot, here, give a complete and total picture of French politics. However, in this chapter I have tried to provide the key information necessary for readers unfamiliar with the French context to understand my work. Moreover this chapter aims to situate France and questions its relationship to gender issues, whilst simultaneously providing a detailed outline of the programme I studied.

### **1.1 French politics on women's rights and approaches to gender from 2010-2015**

Even if Virginia Woolf's writing style and idea of being a woman without frontiers seduces me in this quotation: "As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world" (Woolf, p. 109), I cannot continue the path of questioning frontier and ethnocentrism without mentioning Adrienne Rich's "politics of location". She emphasizes spatial figuration of location and writes in her 1984 essay in the first person as the basis for theorizing identity and defining "a politics of location". She writes: "I need to understand how a place on the map is also a place in history within which as a woman, a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist I am created and trying to create. Begin though, not with a continent or a country or a house, but with the geography closest in-the body" (Rich, p.212). Thus, it is important to set the scene of what has happened in the past few years in France, about "gender theorist" and same-sex marriage,

but also the general context on gender equality. I specifically chose the period from 2010 to 2015 because it is during this time that the Youth Equality program was running.

### **1.1.1 French politics and women's rights from 2010 to 2012**

From 2010 to 2012, France was under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy. Three main aspects of the political agenda are important<sup>17</sup>.

Firstly, a very important law was voted regarding violence against women<sup>18</sup>. Despite the Prime Minister in 2010 decreeing that the fight against domestic violence was a “great national cause”, 122 women died due to domestic violence in 2011. The importance of this issue is reflected in the Law of July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 on violence against women, domestic violence and the impact they have on children. MPs and Senators unanimously adopted it, which shows that this issue transcended all political divides. This act marked a new step in the fight against violence against women. Until then, very poor juridical tools existed to protect women and children from domestic violence. The law No. 2010-769 of July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 allows a more effective fight against domestic violence. The most significant provisions are the following: it made psychological violence within an existing or previous couple an offence: bullying of a partner became punishable (Articles 222-33-2-1 and 222-14-3 of the Penal Code). The “protection order” replaces the interim ruling on violence described in article 220-1 of the Civil Code. The Family Court Judge has civil and criminal competences (which is unprecedented), in order to quickly shelter victims of domestic violence (past or present). The same conditions apply for married couples and for couples with a civil union (PACs)<sup>19</sup>. The exercise of parental authority was also modified and allows the family court judges to take into consideration domestic violence when ruling on matters relating to parental authority. It also allows the Criminal Judge to completely withdraw parental authority from the perpetrator or

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<sup>17</sup> I could not study every gender-related event during the period. But it is important to keep in mind that the Dominique Strauss Kahn affair occurs during this time as well as other affairs related to sexual violence. Indeed, during the lectures, students referred to it.

<sup>18</sup> The law details are available online at:  
<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000022454032&dateTexte=>, viewed on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> PACs, or “*pacte civil de solidarité*”, is a civil union in France that provides legal rights to both heterosexual and homosexual partnerships and offers an alternative to marriage.

accomplice of violence. These measures aim to protect children when faced with a violent parent. The text also legislates against forced marriages, against foreigners faced with domestic violence and has put in place a mobile electronic device system that monitors perpetrators of domestic violence.

Secondly, the ban on face coverings<sup>20</sup> played an important role on the period and continues to affect French debates, politics and feminist activists. Debates on the necessity of a law cover the period from July 2010 until October 2010. The ban was an act of Parliament passed by the Senate on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and by the National Assembly on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The law bans the wearing of face-covering headgear, including masks, helmets, balaclavas, niqabs, burqas, and other veils covering the face in public places (such as full body costumes and *zentaïs*: skin-tight garments covering the entire body), except under specified circumstances. The wearing of all religious symbols in public schools was previously banned in 2004 by the law on secularity and conspicuous religious symbols in schools. This affected the wearing of Islamic veils and headscarves in schools, as well as turbans and other distinctive items of dress. Religious signs are only permitted if they are discrete. The law of 2010 transported the wearing of a veil or head covering from the domain of religion into the domain of security. Indeed, “the headscarf issue resonates within the international context of the early twenty-first century. If the anthropologist Emmanuel Terray was able to speak on this subject about some kind of political hysteria, it is because French society was mobilised by fear. Violently hostile, in its vast majority, to the theory of the clash of civilizations and massively opposed to discourses steeped in religiosity by George W. Bush about the Axis of Evil, France has not been receptive, in its way, to the fantasy of a religious war” (Sieffert, 2004, p 201). Therefore, as analysed in the quotation, the problem does not only rely on the veil as a factor of political division and recomposition. The veil (in its various forms: hijab, niqab etc.) questions crossed political and social phenomena<sup>21</sup>. Political recompositions and especially the French feminist movement no longer only handle the nature of the veil, but refer to post-colonialism, to school political choices, to the various

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<sup>20</sup> Here I refer to the “Act prohibiting concealment of the face in a public space”. Law n° 2010-1192 of October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (in French: “*loi interdisant la dissimulation du visage dans l'espace public*”). Law available at: <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000022911670>. Viewed February 14th, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> On this subject, see: Jasser (1995, pp. 51–72), (2006, pp. 76–93) and Benelli (2006, pp. 4–11)



forms of discrimination, to the interpretations of religion, and finally to the diversity of women's empowerment strategies (Dot-Pouillard, 2007; Hoodfar, 1997). As a consequence, the veil acts as a developer and a mirror of the underlying tensions in French feminist history<sup>22</sup>, and more broadly, to the social and globalisation movements as a whole.

Thirdly, a few days before the 2012 elections, the law on sexual harassment was repealed. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Constitutional Council declared the law on sexual harassment unconstitutional arguing it was too vague and repealed it with effect from the date of publication (which is very rare). Even if feminist organisations recognise the ambiguous nature of the law, this repeal created controversy because of its abruptness and because it created a legal vacuum (new sexual harassment facts could no longer be prosecuted) as well as it stopped all current procedures. Indeed, the implementation of the repeal could have been deferred. Several feminist associations immediately responded by calling for a demonstration in Paris and several politicians spoke out in favour of a new law. Civil society and citizens as well as politicians shared this global need for an urgent and improved law.

Thus, during this period, we could say there was a consensus on the need to develop women's rights<sup>23</sup> and juridical tools. But this consensus should be examined with great care and is quite limited in terms of gender perspectives and intersectionality. The government does seem to have a women's rights discourse. The law on domestic violence used previous, longstanding requests from feminist movements and associations<sup>24</sup>, who were also consulted during the development of the law. Even if the law is considered as progressing women's rights, it is important to remember that this law was enabled by a government that also advanced a social policy negatively targeting women (by

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<sup>22</sup> It is important to highlight that the Youth for Equality programme encompassed firm positions regarding the veil issue: a few lecturers participating in the programme are opposed to the veil in the public sphere and are strong defenders of secularism. One session also particularly treats the subjects of secularism and female and male equality.

<sup>23</sup> I use the term "women's rights" because the law against domestic violence, as well as the law on sexual harassment, clearly targets women (as the most common victim).

<sup>24</sup> The associations includes: "*Collectif National pour les Droits des Femmes*" (National Collective for Women's Rights), "*Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes*" (National Federation of Women's Solidarity), "*Femmes pour le dire, Femmes pour agir*" (Women for Assertion, Women for Action), "*Femmes solidaires*" (Solidarity for Women), "*Le Planning familial*" (Family Planning), "*Amnesty International*" (Amnesty International), "*Commission Femmes et Elu-es Contre les Violences faites aux Femmes*" (Women's Committee and the Elected Against Violence Against Women)

questioning abortion, by lowering credit pensions and by creating segregation among women in regards the veil). Also, in the law on violence, domestic violence is not considered as the result of a patriarchal system of domination. The threat thus comes from elsewhere, from “the other” and more specifically from Islam. To defend the law banning the wearing of the full veil in public places, Nicolas Sarkozy declared, “We need to be careful not to offer opponents of democracy, dignity and sex-equality the opportunity of a victory that would put our society in a very difficult situation”<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, the political discourse is highly ambiguous because on one hand it articulates the defence of women’s rights whilst simultaneously attacking them with austerity measures. Moreover certain differences (most notably the wearing of face coverings and headscarves) were invoked to legitimise a racist discourse, using the alibi of the “us” and “them” rhetoric combined with claims of a threat to national identity (Werbner, 2007, pp. 161-186). Here, the need for postcolonialism<sup>26</sup> as a theory and a methodology, which offers critical tools for exposing the ongoing legacies and discursive operation of Europe, seems obvious because postcolonial theories make visible the power relations between previous, current or potential colonisers and the colonised and can be articulated with gender issues<sup>27</sup>. According to Elsa Dorlin, “if all women are experiencing sexism, despite this commensurability of experiences, there is not much of an ‘identical’ experience of sexism; so much that power relationships which inform sexism revise the concrete methods of application depending on women’s experiences” (Dorlin, 2008, pp. 26-27). Among other things, class, race and gender produce diverse experiences that are mostly ignored in the French political arena<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> This quote is related in *Le monde* article, available at:

[http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2010/01/13/voile-integral-sarkozy-veut-une-resolution-sans-ambiguite-avant-un-texte-de-loi\\_1291389\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2010/01/13/voile-integral-sarkozy-veut-une-resolution-sans-ambiguite-avant-un-texte-de-loi_1291389_3224.html). Viewed on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> In general, Edward W. Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak are considered as the three pioneers of postcolonial studies. The release of the book *Orientalism* by Edward Said in 1978 is considered as the founding moment of postcolonialism.

<sup>27</sup> See Etienne Balibar (2009) and Gail Lewis (2006) for insightful analysis of postcolonialism theoretical frameworks and its articulation with gender. On sexism and racism, productive academic thoughts also exist in France, particularly around the work of Elsa Dorlin (2006).

<sup>28</sup> I wish I could develop this point, but this chapter only aims to give an overall image of the French context. I am aware that this affirmation needs to be explored.

### 1.1.2 French politics: women's rights and gender issues from 2012 to 2015

When I was studying gender in the Netherlands from 2009-2010, “gender studies” was an almost unknown field in France – apart from very specialised universities and students. Only a few universities proposed gender specialisation courses and gender studies was not a mandatory part of academic programmes. Intersectionality was not considered important enough to teach and the topic was not universally popular. For example, I spent five years studying political sciences in France without ever learning to analyse subjects from a gender perspective, and I had to study abroad, in Mexico, to encounter gender analysis. It is important to keep this point in mind in order to understand what happened during this period, which saw a new President from “the left”<sup>29</sup>.

It is due to feminists, from civil societies and within the Socialist party, that the theme of gender equality surfaced during the presidential campaign of 2012. François Hollande, then candidate for the presidential election, was slow to confront the issue. As first secretary of the Socialist party, François Hollande, engaged with the “socialist project for change”<sup>30</sup>, released in April 2011. However, in this political document no mention is made on gender equality or on women's rights. His engagement for gender equality, same-sex marriage and the right to adopt was revealed in January 2012 in his political programme entitled “60 propositions for France”. Number 25 declares: “I will fight for professional equality and equal pay between women and men [...] A ministry of women's right will look after these accomplishments” and number 31 declares, “I will legalise the right to marriage and to adoption for same sex couples”<sup>31</sup>. It is only a few months later, in March 2012, that he openly declared himself in favour of feminism: “I was not born feminist, I became feminist”<sup>32</sup>. His declaration took place during a feminist

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<sup>29</sup> I am using inverted commas here because President François Hollande was the socialist candidate, but, since his election, many political analysts have criticised the party's political positions, and many people from the left (including those from the green party and diverse left) were disappointed by its political orientations.

<sup>30</sup> The “Socialist project for change” is a report on the preliminary political propositions of the Socialist party. It aims to prepare the presidential campaign.

<sup>31</sup> François Hollande's programme is available for download at: <http://www.parti-socialiste.fr/articles/les-60-engagements-pour-la-france-le-projet-de-francois-hollande>. Viewed on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> This is obviously a political discourse inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's famous quote; “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman ” (1949, p.13). François Hollande's discourse is available online in

meeting organised and supported by most French feminist organisations under the banner “*Féministes en mouvement*” (Feminist on the move). This feminist collective wanted to discuss their proposed policies<sup>33</sup> to ensure gender equality, to confront presidential candidates and finally, to position feminism as a central issue of the presidential campaign<sup>34</sup>. François Hollande was elected on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012. He presented his new government with a perfect gender-balanced cabinet (but has been criticised because only one woman was nominated as a “kingly minister”<sup>35</sup>, Chritiane Taubira, Minister of Justice<sup>36</sup>). From this point three major events were on the political agenda.

Firstly, it was time to vote on a new law on sexual harassment. Indeed, President François Hollande, Christine Taubira, the Minister of Justice and Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, the Minister of Women’s Rights asked that a new law to be voted quickly. As a result, the law n°2012-954 of August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 was passed, providing a new definition of sexual harassment<sup>37</sup>. The law provides a more accurate, but also broader definition of the offense of sexual harassment. It increased the maximum penalties and reduced discrimination against victims of sexual harassment. It also fortified the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace. The objective is to prevent crime, to encourage victims to report the facts quickly and their entourage to testify any acts of harassment they witness, and to punish the crime more severely. The vote of the new law was very quick, less than three months, and attests to the same consensual interest of protection of violence against women that existed with the law against domestic violence a few years previously: the law was voted unanimously.

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French at: <http://www.egalite2012.fr/publication/la-soiree-feministes-en-mouvements-du-7-mars-les-videos-et-les-photos>. Viewed on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> These policies have been gathered in a book manifesto entitled: *Mais qu'est-ce qu'elles veulent encore! Manifeste des féministes en mouvement*, 3 mars 2012, Collectif Féministes en mouvement. The presentation of the book states “For the first time, more than 45 feminist organisations consider false evidence and propose 30 measures to ensure equality between women and men so that it may become a reality.

<sup>34</sup> Four presidential candidates from left parties participated: Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Eva Joly, François Hollande and Philippe Poutou.

<sup>35</sup> This is the literal translation of “*un ministère régalien*”, a category of ministers encompassing the most important positions in French government, such as ministers for justice, education, defence, interior etc.

<sup>36</sup> For example, this article speaks about this inequality:

<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/20120516.FAP3741/un-gouvernement-a-parite-parfaite-sauf-dans-les-grands-ministeres.html>. Viewed on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> The law is available at:

<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000021796942&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006070719>. Viewed on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Secondly, in November, the bill on same-sex marriage and the right to adopt was presented to the Council of Ministers. The bill establishing same-sex marriage was tabled in Parliament on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, finally adopted April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 and validated by the Constitutional Council and promulgated on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013<sup>38</sup>. The first gay marriage was celebrated on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Montpellier. Meanwhile, a strong opposition to the law was being born. At the forefront of these movements, the collective “March for All”<sup>39</sup>, then represented by the Catholic activist “Frigide Barjot<sup>40</sup>”, organised, from November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013, large-scale demonstrations against this law. This period was rampant with controversies, events, rigid political divisions and discourses both condemning and endorsing the new law. Christiane Taubira proclaimed a speech dedicated to the subject at the National Assembly on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013<sup>41</sup> where she declares, “This marriage, which has succeeded in detaching itself from religious sacrament<sup>42</sup>, is going to detach itself from a social order that is founded on a patriarchal conception of society”. She openly refers to patriarchy and connects the legal change with gender issues. The debates overwhelming French society are too large to be analysed in this chapter, but the impacts of it in the classroom is discussed in Chapter Two. The subject created violence and division within French society; a paroxysm<sup>43</sup> of homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia and transphobia were displayed and because of the strong opposition, the government had to renounce to offer medically assisted reproduction to female couples, which was a campaign promise of candidate Hollande. The government first said it was going to be included in another law, a family law, before renegeing on its claim. Thus, same-sex couples can adopt but cannot use medically

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<sup>38</sup> The law n° 2013-404 is available at:

<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027414540&categorieLien=id>. Viewed on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> The name of the collective “March for All” (“*Manif pour tous*”) states an opposition to the law popularly called “Marriage for all” (“*Mariage pour tous*”).

<sup>40</sup> This is a name which means frigid, sexless and crazy

<sup>41</sup> Available at: <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr>. Viewed on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> She refers to the French secular law of 1905, which did not recognize any marriage outside a public marriage. To get married religiously in France, you must first do so at the town hall.

<sup>43</sup> In 2013, the annual report of SOS Homophobia revealed an unprecedented increase in the number of insults and physical assaults connected with the debate on same-sex marriage. It states that one homophobic assault happened every day. During the debates, on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Wilfred Brujin suffered a homophobic assault in Paris. He posted the photo of his battered face on Facebook, attesting to the violence of the blows he received.

assisted reproduction<sup>44</sup>. The bill took place over a period of over six months between the presentation of the project in the Council of Ministers and the promulgation in the Official Journal, making this legislation one of the most extensively discussed<sup>45</sup>.

Also, during this period, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights at the time, proposed a teaching program entitled “The Basics of Equality” with the objective of fighting sexism and gender stereotypes. This program was taught experimentally from autumn 2013 until the end of the academic year to some 600 students from primary grades and kindergarten. The Basics of Equality was at the heart of a controversy over gender studies, it's opponents denouncing teaching the “gender theory”. In fact it is the conservative movements and the gender theorists who popularised the term “gender theory”, but they did so in a distorted and biased manner, which no longer has anything to do with the real meaning of the concept of gender. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Minister of Education announced that the positive trial results of the programme's experimentation period justified the creation of an “action plan for equality between girls and boys at school” with the primary aim of training teachers and students.

To conclude, considering the government's agenda of the last few years, it is important to remember that the various political discriminations and oppressions to gender equality do not operate in the same manner at all times and in all places. To analyse these various oppressions, as a gender studies student, intersectionality is a tool. Developed by the lawyer and “black feminist” Kimberly Crenshaw, in her article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a Black Feminist Critique of Discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Practice* (1989) and then in the text *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women* (1991), this concept means that different oppressions intersect; cross-oppression does not necessarily mean an addition of these oppressions and its accumulated difficulties but their co-existences produce effects, particularly during processes of resistance. Crenshaw refutes “the partitioning and prioritisation of major axes of social differentiation which are the categories of sex / gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation” (Bilge, 2009, p. 70). Classical conceptualisations of

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<sup>44</sup> Surrogacy has not been discussed.

<sup>45</sup> The bill necessitated 110 hours of discussion during 24 sessions and a review of 4999 amendments to be voted on.

oppression within society, such as racism, sexism, biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, do not act independently of one another. Instead, these forms of oppression intertwine and create a system of oppression. Intersectional analysis developed by Crenshaw does not simply recognise the multiplicity of systems of oppression operating from the intersection of gender relations, 'race', class etc. but "postulates their interaction in the production and reproduction of social inequalities" (Ibid). It reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination<sup>46</sup>. Having explored the situation of French politics during the period from 2010 to 2015, the Youth for Equality programme can now be established within its wider context.

## 1.2 Youth for equality programme

The Regional Council of the Ile-de-France region set up the Youth for Equality programme in 2011, in order to confront equality challenges in schools and particularly to educate high school students on equality between girls and boys. This programme emerged from a political desire to implement a culture of equality. This specific policy is permitted within the French system, as it assigns responsibilities to the decentralised administration. The state, through the Ministry of Education, sets policies, but the management of nursery and primary schools is entrusted to the city; college management to departments, and management of high schools to regions. Indeed, this type of organisation has a capacity for regional administration, in this specific case, to allow public finances to be used for specific programmes. This section is used to give an overall understanding of the project organisation and then to present it in a more detailed manner.

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<sup>46</sup> *Black feminism* is an example of intersectionality.

### 1.2.1 General presentation of the programme

Driven by the Regional Council and Henriette Zoughebi, Vice-President of High School and Educational Policies, the program is part of the regional Convention for Gender Equality, Women and Men in Education, signed on January 27th, 2010 by the three “rectors” (education authorities) of Ile-de-France, the Regional Prefect and the Regional Council President.

Between eighteen and twenty-three high schools from the Ile-de-France region participated each year in this program from 2011 until 2014. Between 4000 and 6000 students benefited from the programme each year. In the general and technological high schools, education lasts for three years (second year, first year and final year) in the upper level of secondary education<sup>47</sup>. The programme aims to target equality with classes of second year students (aged around fifteen). The programme has three stages. The first stage involves training the teaching staff (including nurses, social workers and psychologists if applicable). The second stage involves lectures to high school students. Lectures last two or three hours and involve at least<sup>48</sup> every class of first year high school students. The idea is that at the end of the three years of public funding every high school student had the opportunity to discuss gender issues and to become an actor or actress of change, in order to implement a culture of equality. Each school participating had a choice between four different themes of discussion for the lectures: sexual liberty, gender-based violence, gender-based professional orientation and secularism<sup>49</sup>. The third stage concerns several classes (in general two or three are freely elected by each high school) where students participate in artistic creation workshops, such as writing, journalism, slam, video, radio, forum theatre etc. This option aims at creating artwork related to gender issues, which is concluded each year by a showcase event in May, attended by 250 students. School partners and their students are invited to present their productions. This is a way to present what has been done on the subject during the academic year as well as a way to continue discussing and debating equality and male and female roles in society.

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<sup>47</sup> To have a better understanding of the French high school system, please refer to Annex n°4

<sup>48</sup> Additionally, classes other than first year can be targeted if the high school specifically asked for it.

<sup>49</sup> The official French names are “*Liberté sexuelle*”, “*Violences sexistes et sexuelles*”, “*orientation professionnelle sexuée*”, “*Laïcité*”.



The program is implemented by seven organisations. The most prominent of the seven is called ADRIC. It is responsible for piloting, coordinating, organising the lectures and evaluating the project. Geena, Louise, Thelma and Susan<sup>50</sup> are lecturers employed by ADRIC in the second stage of the program. They give lectures to students on two themes, sexual liberties, and sexist and sexual violence. They also attend the showcase event. Thus, they have a close understanding of the whole program. The other six associations accompany young people in artistic creation workshops.

### **1.2.2 Detailed presentation of the programme and of my sources**

The programme is operating in the Ile-de-France region which means that all high schools within this territory can participate. It took place from 2011 to 2015<sup>51</sup>. From the beginning of the programme until 2015, the total number of high schools participating increased from eighteen to twenty-eight.

In 2011-2012, eighteen schools were committed to the programme, including three high schools from the Paris Academy<sup>52</sup>, eight from the Versailles Academy and seven from the Créteil Academy. Thirty-six lectures on sexist violence were organised, twenty on secularism, sixteen on sexual liberty and sixteen on gender-based professional orientation. In total 4008 high school students participated during the programme's first year. In 2012-2013, twenty-three schools were committed to the programme, including three high schools from the Paris Academy, seven from the Versailles Academy and nine from the Créteil Academy. Fifty lectures on sexist violence were organised, twenty on secularism, seventy on sexual liberty and fourteen on gender-based professional orientation. This amounted to 4729 high school students participating in the programme's second year. In 2013-2014, twenty-seven schools were committed to the programme; including four high schools are from the Paris Academy, ten from the Versailles Academy and thirteen from the Créteil Academy. Sixty-one lectures on sexist violence were organised, thirty-four on secularism, thirty-five on sexual liberty and twenty-nine on

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<sup>50</sup> Lecturers' names have been changed in order to protect their anonymity.

<sup>51</sup> To have an overview of the programme numbers and ADRIC lectures organisation, please refer to Annex n°5.

<sup>52</sup> The Paris Academy is the school and university district corresponding to the geographical zone of Paris (situated within the greater Ile-de-France region). Other Academies include Versailles, Créteil etc.

gender-based professional orientation. A total of 4263 high school students were involved in the programme's third year. In 2014-2015, twenty-eight schools were committed to the programme including three high schools from the Paris Academy, thirteen from the Versailles Academy and twelve from the Créteil Academy. In December 2014<sup>53</sup>, twenty-seven lectures on sexist violence had been organised, thirty-two on secularism, twelve on sexual liberty and thirty-nine on gender-based professional orientation. In December this amounted to 2828 high school students having participated in the programme so far during this academic year. The number of lectures given on sexual liberty rose from sixteen in 2011-2012 to seventy in 2012-2013. Was this due to the debate in society on same-sex marriage, combined with a need for discussion on the theme? The numbers of lectures given on gender based violence rose from thirty-six in 2011-2012 to fifty in 2012-2013, and then to sixty-one in 2013-2014. Is this because the programme is mostly located in suburban areas and because minority women are seen as victims of culture, religion, family and patriarchy? (Mohanty, 1984, pp. 333-358). Is it because accounts of violence tend to reinforce women's collusion in "cultural practices"<sup>54</sup> and because of the hypothesis that high schools involved in the programme face a great deal of violence at school?

I could not access for the entire programme, other information such as the division between professional and general high schools or the division of the lecture subject by type of high school and academy, but I gathered this information from the year 2011-2012. It would have been interesting to cross-examine such information with the status of high schools (for example some of them are part of special public policies<sup>55</sup>) in order to draw hypothesis in terms of class and race. Moreover, I could not gather statistics about the division of girls and boys participating in the programme, nor their age. Thus, I am limited in my hypothesis. The preliminary remarks I can formulate are that very few Parisian high schools participated whereas suburban high schools were highly

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<sup>53</sup> Because the school year is not yet finished, I could not have the final numbers.

<sup>54</sup> Ratna Kapur argues that the construction of women as victims too often justifies the adoption of strategies of intervention in the lives of native subjects that are similar to post-colonial practices.

<sup>55</sup> Schools located within 'priority education zones' (*ZEP* – "*zone d'éducation prioritaire*") are provided by the French education system, with additional resources and more autonomy to help combat social difficulties. These zones are defined by the Ministry of Education and were created in 1981.

represented. To achieve this work, I used various sources, which gave me a better understanding of the programme and my work.

Firstly, I used reports made at the beginning of the programme that described each session. Lecture assistants created these reports whilst sitting at the back of the classroom. During the period 2011-2012, the people giving the lectures are Briac, Carine, Jacqueline, Ernestine, Geneviève, Marie-Laure, Marylin, Christine, Françoise, and Catherine. These reports allowed me to track students' participation during lectures because their questions and comments were written down. I analysed all of the fifty-seven reports transmitted to me by ADRIC concerning lectures to students. I organised them by date, place and type of lecture. They cover a period from September 2011 to November 2012 in sixteen different high schools. Seven high schools are from the Versailles Academy including two general and technological, three professional and two multi-purpose high schools. Six high schools are from the Créteil Academy, including three professional, two multi-purpose and one general and technological high school. Three high schools are from the Paris Academy, including one general, one professional and one self-managed high school. These reports give a good overview of the programme since they represent almost every participating high school during the period from 2011 to 2012. Only two high schools are missing, one from Créteil and one from the Versailles Academy which are not represented. Thirty reports concern lectures on gender-based violence, out of the thirty-six from that period; so the reports represent 83% of the lectures. Eight reports concern lectures on gender-based orientation, out of the sixteen from that period; so the reports represent 50% of the lectures. Seven reports concern lectures on sexual liberty, out of the sixteen from that period; so the reports represent 44% of the lectures. Twelve reports concern lectures on secularism, out of the twenty from that period; so the reports represent 60% of the lectures. Considering the total number of eighty-eight lectures on the period, the reports I studied represent 65% of the lectures. Thus, these reports are essential to this work and have allowed me to formulate and support my arguments. I chose to focus on the reports directly addressing gender-based violence and sexual liberty, however other reports mention issues concerning these themes so they have been included as part of the evidence.

Secondly, I used syntheses of feedback<sup>56</sup> forms completed at the end of sessions by students. These feedback forms allowed me to know what students learned from sessions. I studied fourteen syntheses of feedback forms from sessions covering the period of December 2012 to January 2013. They are from lectures mostly given by Thelma and Louise, two of the lecturers I interviewed, in a multi-purpose high school from the Versailles Academy. Eight lectures address sexual liberty and six gender-based violence. Six classes from the professional section and nine from the general section answered the feedback form. ADRIC also provided me with two other syntheses about sessions on secularism, in a professional high school in Paris from January 2012. I choose to use it as an acknowledgement. All these syntheses represent the thoughts of 433 students.

Thirdly, I chose to interview<sup>57</sup> the lecturers from whom I did not have any reports relating to their sessions and who were working on gender-based violence and sexual liberty lectures: Geena, Louise, Thelma and Susan. Louise worked on the programme from 2012 to 2013, Thelma from 2012 to 2015, Susan from 2013 to 2015 and Geena from 2013 to 2014. They began by watching other trainers and writing session reports. It was a time dedicated to noticing the different styles of the trainers and to evaluating what they did and didn't like about the lectures and to find their own way of doing it. They were inspired by more experienced trainers but they never had a specific training from their own employer ADRIC<sup>58</sup>. At the beginning, Louise and Thelma worked together and so did Geena and Thelma. Susan always gave lectures alone.

With the reports and specific interviews I have been able to create a global image of the programme from lecturers and students. I could not directly interview the students because I was not as involved in the classroom as previously (due to my studying) and it was not as easy as before to have access to students, who are themselves quite busy. With a restricted time limit and on the advice of my supervisor, I choose to focus on interviews with lecturers. Then, when I felt I was missing concrete examples of student's own thoughts, I asked ADRIC to provide me with the reports they had. In summary, the

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<sup>56</sup> At the end of each lecture, students filled out a form (please refer to Annex n°6 to see it). It was a way to get their feedbacks. For some sessions, ADRIC did a synthesis of students' comments.

<sup>57</sup> I carried out semi-directive interviews. My interview methodology is available in Annex n°7.

<sup>58</sup> This point is specifically discussed in the last section of Chapter Three.

diversity of the three different areas of source material provides a balanced and realistic understanding of the impact of this programme.

## **Chapter Two: What do boys and girls say in classrooms when invited to reflect on sexuality?**

In the present case study, students participating in lectures were specifically encouraged to talk about relationships between boys and girls, sexual violence and sexism as well as sexual freedom. This chapter discusses how lecturers create a safe environment to allow students participating to their sessions to speak as freely as possible. Following this, it focus on two special issue often raised during the lectures concerning the right for a girl to wear what she chooses, and the discussion around same-sex marriage and “gender theory”.

### **2.1 Creating an environment allowing gender stereotypes to emerge**

Students are quite familiar with stereotypes on gender sexualisation, sexism and homophobia, in the sense they already know and experience such stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are common and constantly repeated in the classroom (and within society), and are related to social standards. Indeed, this section studies the interconnected links between stereotypes and the norms they convey.

#### **2.1.1 Gendered behaviours and sexualisation: creating an environment for discussion**

The objective of this section, based on interviews with lecturers, and an investigation of sexual behaviour and level of discussion, is to show and explain how lecturers enter the classroom and create a comfortable environment where students are able to discuss and transcend the soon to be discussed stereotypes and representations.

In many aspects, schools remain a place where established gendered behaviours, reflecting the traditional social roles of men and women in adulthood, are learnt. This learning is an “implicit facet of the student job” and schools unintentionally teach acceptable male and female representations (Duru-Bellat, 1990). A system of values and prescriptive representations teaches children that they must, according to their gender, favour certain ways of thinking and interacting, adopt specific personality traits and even

choose certain school disciplines. Thus, schools convey what some researchers have called a “hidden curriculum” (Mosconi, 1999). In this, far from being a protected place in society, the school system is reproducing inequalities and gender discriminations and is permeable to dominant norms. After spending three years in classrooms talking about sex equality, it could be said that society in general and the school system in particular did their job extremely well (Mosconi, 1989). From primary school onwards, there is a very marked categorisation between girls and boys, in terms of their socialisation (codified youth sociability, unequal space occupation during classes or recreation), their content and learning teaching (school textbooks and literature, activities, children's games and the attitude of the staff (expected and tolerated student behaviour according to their gender). High school students, girls as well as boys, have incorporated their individual social roles, which are even expressed on a verbal level. To say something you first need to speak. Generation Y do not escape an unequal distribution of speech between males and females. The differentiated socialisation of the sexes means that male students tend to be more verbally expressive than female students. Observations made by researchers in classrooms show that boys are less attentive, noisier and more disruptive than girls, and that they try to distract their peers and teachers. They speak more easily, without previous authorisation (Ruel, 2010): they occupy “sound space” (Zaidman, 1996). Assertiveness and establishing a power relationship with the teacher are common practices among boys (Millet & Thin, 2005). Quieter, girls use physical techniques to be, or appear to be, attentive: self-control, sustained gaze towards the teacher or the whiteboard, etc (Félouzis, 1994). Thus the male tendency to dominate in some classes did not surprise the lecturers, since verbal studies in general have concluded that men dominate mixed gender discussion groups everywhere, both within the classroom and beyond. To encourage the creation of a safe and equal debate environment, lecturers re-organised the group in order to facilitate equal contribution. They all altered the classroom space formally by establishing clear, sometimes strict, dialogue rules and through the reorganisation of the furniture, placing chairs in a circle or semi-circle (Louise is the only lecturer not to mention this point in the interview, perhaps a detail easily forgotten since she was interviewed long after she finished giving lectures). Susan, during the interview, clearly explains how she organises the classroom space:

*“I always place them in a circle without tables. If there are really too many [students], I make several circles. But I never leave them in their classroom positions, ever. From my experience, I have the impression that it alters the exchange, when they are seated in the same positions as in class, and I don't like that they have a desk because then they can sleep, or draw! I'm pretty strict about [not having] bags on knees, about coats. I tell them in a humorous way: “You should make yourselves comfortable, we're going to spend two hours together, put down your bags and take your coats off or I'll get the impression that you're going to run away!” We always have one or two who are against taking off their coats...but without their desks it puts them in a listening position. Often I sit inside the circle, as if it was a support group. I write on the board, but not much. I often remain seated with them for at least 10 minutes and it's during this time, when it becomes less formal, where there is the most discussion. I try to have alternate boy/girl seating and it upsets them; they are often unhappy with designated seating...and at the end I say to them, “You see it wasn't so bad!”*”.

Thelma also deals with this issue saying:

*“I am not a professor and I am not a teacher. I organise a debate. We are all together in a semicircle, and I sit with them. I'm not outside the circle”.*

Geena, also highlights the use of the semi-circle:

*“When I arrive in the classroom, I write the title of the lecture [on the board]. It was also a way to set the scene relative to a teacher [...] We were within a setting that they understood, even if we were sitting in a circle. So, I removed the desks and I arranged them into a semi-circle [...] so it broke the classroom dynamics and the hierarchy between them and me. Well it broke one dimension, since it can never be completely destroyed, and even so I'm paid to come here. Their parents have told them that they have to go to school [...] and the secular [French]*



*Republic has told them since they were two years old that they have to sit in school so...we don't share the same relationship...and... as a result, this subject, well... Firstly, the discussion must continue to flow, they must express themselves so that I feel a little how...who's going to be who in the next two hours...is the one who was shy at the beginning going to open up or not? Why are some people shy? It is shyness or is it because we are discussing it [violence, sexuality etc.]? It's really hard for us...to...to not...one has to be very respectful all the time...One can't rush people when they could be victims of violence”.*

The lecturers pinpointed in their comments the importance of breaking the everyday habits in the classroom learning space. They create a climate of trust, by being part of the group and they try to get everyone to speak. They don't want to reproduce a dynamic of domination by the teacher. As Weiler (1988, p. 6, quoted in *Dentelles féministes* p.275) states: “Reproduction theory in general is concerned with the processes through which existing social structures maintain and reproduce themselves”. They are aware of the system but try to create a new order”. By doing so, they create new dynamics. They favour listening. Taking away their desk sends an implicit message to students, saying that they cannot take notes, which they usually do during school time. But it is also an implicit way to operate a form of control over their bodies and minds (Foucault, 1975). Susan expresses this dimension when she says “*without their desks it puts them in a position to listen*”, or when she adds “*I'm pretty strict about [not having] bags on knees, about coats*”. In her case, humour is used as an authoritative counterbalance while Geena uses common teaching practices: “*When I arrive in the classroom, I write the title of the lecture [on the board]. It was also a way to set the scene relative to a teacher*”. Indeed, she uses the existing framework, by doing what students or teachers are expecting her to do, but soon breaks the tacit rules and challenges existing hierarchies. Being part of the discussion circles they create seems very important for Thelma, Geena and Susan. The need to be part of the group and to create a confident space such as a “*a support group*”<sup>59</sup> is significant because it challenges commonly admitted hierarchal structures between

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<sup>59</sup> Supports groups have been frequent in feminist history.

teachers/students, adults/teenagers, among students themselves, and between boys and girls. Susan explains, *“I try to have alternate boy/girl seating”*. Thelma also speaks about hierarchical structures: *“During the presentation everyone has the right to speak and hierarchy or domination processes are not allowed. It is hard to enforce strict rules, but I do it, so everyone can speak more freely in the discussions.”*

Perhaps one can question if all these precautions to make a comfortable space for debate is simply another way to shake existing hierarchies on sexuality. In fact, discussing common stereotypes and representation, sexuality is still dominated by male representations as well as heterosexual-centred representations (Foucault, 1976; Bozon & Leridon, 1993; Bourdieu, 1998; Ferrand, 2004). Investigations made on sexual practices and behaviours provide good illustrations, for example with women and girls always underreporting their number of partners (Lagrange & Lhomond 1995, Bajos & Bozon, 2008). The study on *Sexual behaviours of young people aged 15 to 18* (Lagrange & Lhomond, 1995) states that boys who declared to have had five or more partners exceed 12%, while only 5% of girls declared to be in this category. According to Bajos & Bozon (2008), who studied the sexual behaviours of persons aged eighteen to sixty-nine years old, on average men report many more partners than women (11.6 compared to 4.4). Several hypotheses have been tested and excluded to explain this persistent gap: sexual encounters with prostitutes can only explain part of the difference; women no more than men fail to count their “unimportant” partners. It must therefore be attributed to a very gendered definition of the concept of partner. The researchers highlight “a double asymmetry [that] persists in the way of perceiving sexual and emotional life, which always seem to oppose desire and needs, “quasi physiological” male need and “women's emotional aspirations and availability” (2008, p. 359). Therefore, we could make the hypothesis that the practices described above improve equal contribution which create a comfortable space for dialogue. *“We were able to talk about things that we're not very comfortable with, without being judged; we were able to speak because we had confidence in the lecturer”*, wrote a young girl on her feedback synthesis<sup>60</sup>. The lecturer, with these little modifications, set the scene for a “feminist” debate where the perception of sexual and emotional life is challenged. Using feedback provided by students, lectures

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<sup>60</sup> ADRIC's archives : Annual report 2013-2014

*“are seen as moments when speech is free and liberated, enabling self expression “without taboo” (2013-2014 in L’Essouriau high school). “Some young people found material to help them look towards the future by offering a fresh perspective on their surroundings and on themselves”<sup>61</sup>. The perception is the same, even in other high schools. “Students all agreed that the lectures were special moments allowing them to openly confide with confidence and without judgment; “we can talk about anything without experiencing shame” wrote a female student, “it’s a taboo subject, we were able to speak without experiencing the fear of others’ judgment” said a male student referring to a session on gender violence”<sup>62</sup>.*

To conclude, level of verbal expression is particularly interesting because it is related to the issues discussed during the lectures. It is not only about creating equal contribution between boys and girls in the classroom but specifically about creating equal contribution on a subject that is dominated by a male perspective.

Is sexuality, as understood by students, a male area? Can women speak about it? The subject being discussed is sexuality and violence. As shown, this theme needs to be discussed with particular care. Moreover, high school students are still in the process of building their personal identities. Fluctuating ideas of identity remain one of the key characteristics of this adolescent period, whether it is considered in terms of psychological development or in terms of transitions experienced during the passage to adulthood (Erikson, 1980). Finding their place is a social necessity for young people. When they do, they can begin to speak about stereotypes and mental representations.

### **2.1.2 Commonly encountered stereotypes.**

This section, based on interviews with lecturers, ADRIC’s internal records and archives, and literature on assigned roles to girls and boys, is exploring the process of the construction and deconstruction of stereotypes during and after the lectures (also including students’ artistic creations on the subject as research material), as well as revealing commonly encountered stereotypes.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> ADRIC’s archives : Annual report 2013-2014

Firstly, a short introduction to the term stereotype is necessary. It comes from two Greek words (“footprint” and “solid”). It was first employed to refer to a solid printing plate, used for duplicating text. Since then, the term has acquired a figurative sense including “shared beliefs about personal characteristics”, “personality traits”, and “behaviour” of a group of people (Herzfeld 1992, pp.67-77 ; Amossy 1989, pp. 29-46). Stereotyping is to apply a prefabricated judgment to a group of people and to make individuals interchangeable within that group. Stereotypes are used to characterise but also to distinguish. They facilitate the understanding of the world by bringing the unknown to the known. Whether negative or positive, they have a normative value, and function as common references, representation or even language (Barthes, 1957). The information will be interpreted to fit common representations, and the same behaviour will be read differently depending on the group to which the person belongs. This is a concept frequently argued in the social sciences (Amossy, 1991; Plantin, 1993; Dufays, 1994; Gauthier, 2001; Boyer, 2007). Stereotypes fulfil an identity function in a community (or in a given group within a community) and are indeed used as an ethno-sociocultural filter. As a form of representation, but with even more strength, stereotypes work as a simple and efficient argument and make an indispensable interdiscursive ingredient. Deconstruction of stereotypes is one of the aims of lecturers’ work. Gender stereotypes are common and constantly echoed in the classroom (and within society), such as “men are strong, brave, and rational” and “women are sensitive, sweet, and emotional”. They are related to standards such as “men do not cry; they act” and “women take care of children; they are concerned about others’ well being”.

When lecturers introduce the theme of sexism and sexual representation, students often refer to professional inequalities. They are aware of unequal salaries between men and women but are not able to explain the wider process of these inequalities. For example, they rarely know about such concerns as the glass ceiling, female part-time work, and the unequal repartition of domestic tasks. On the contrary, they are aware of the problem of pregnancy in the workplace. Their ability to speak about the subject is quite interesting because their discourse is not as fluent as when it comes to speaking about sexuality. Contrary to racism, sexism and homophobia are seen as “normal” by a large number of young people that the lecturers have met. While high school students are

able to give quite an accurate definition of racism, they are unable to define sexism, often associating it with “*machismo for women*”. Students are very aware of sexual inequalities and are able to identify them, however they sometimes have an insufficient vocabulary and wider understanding of gender discrimination processes.

If students lack words or vocabulary on gender domination processes, they do not ignore it and are able to identify it. Boys and girls often feel pressured to conform to these gender norms in order to be socially accepted, even if within themselves they disagree or suffer from these representations and diktats. Therefore, the work of lecturers is to make visible the invisible, that is to say, to make visible hierarchies and domination processes.

During this “making visible” process, boys declare to submit themselves to the diktats of masculinity associated with physical strength, increased sexual experimentation and the non-expression of feelings. In one of my lectures, in a single sex class a boy said: “*I don’t want to ask a girl out because I’m afraid to fail and to be refused*”<sup>63</sup>. His statement is representative of stereotypes attached with boyhood. Failure to comply with these stereotypes may lead to rejection by peers (e.g., contempt for effeminate boys or boys who express their feelings, labelled as “buffoons”, “fags” or “*canard*”<sup>64</sup>). Researchers found the most common stereotypes associated with boys<sup>65</sup>, including them being described as enormously interested in sexuality (Duquet & Quéniart, 2009; Murnen, 1998), able to seduce any girl (Murnen, 1998), never expressing their emotions, being aggressive (Levant & Fisher, 1998), independent (Auster & Ohm, 2000; Levant & Fisher, 1998), liking sports and using their leadership skills and business sense to succeed in life (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Likewise, common stereotypes associated with girls<sup>66</sup> describe them as being less interested in sex than boys, they should be desired by boys, being beautiful and feeling the need to be sexually desirable, needing a boy in their lives,

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<sup>63</sup> Notes from a lecture held in January 2015, with five male students, studying in a professional section.

<sup>64</sup> This is a French word, which does not make sense when translated literally. It means “duck” but is used by students during lectures, meaning “a boy who is judged too much in love with his girlfriend, or too sentimental”.

<sup>65</sup> Website of the “Sex Educator”: <http://www.casexprime.gouv.qc.ca/en/magazine>. Viewed on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Quoted in *The sex educator, a magazine for educators who conduct sex-education activities with high-school students*, n°19, Winter 2012, Québec, Canada.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

using their looks and sexuality to succeed in life (Murnen, 1998), emotional, loving fashion and the arts (Prentice & Carranza, 2002), not aggressive and soft (Auster & Ohm, 2000). Girls respond to these stereotypes in two ways, by adhering to the image of the objectified attractive woman (a dangerous exercise because there is always the risk of falling into the category of “easy girls”), or the image of the “good girl”. Other girls, particularly in disadvantaged areas, implement strategies to escape the imposed roles of very docile or easy girls by denying their femininity and adopting a self-imposed tomboy behaviour in order to gain respect. High school students typically employ these stereotypes. It is rare to find someone for whom these characteristics, attributed to each sex and social role, do not sound familiar. Nevertheless young people are generally surprised to realise that stereotypes are part of their daily life and have existed since their first interactions with children's toys. *“It's an interesting topic that should be discussed to stop stereotypes”*, wrote a female student<sup>67</sup>. Indeed, lectures are an opportunity for some students *“to rethink about their childhood toys such as dolls, princess costumes etc. A student remarked that “at [his] parent’s house, it’s [his] father who does the housework and not [his] mother”*<sup>68</sup>.

## 2.2 Students’ questions and comments

Considering the wide range of subjects addressed during the lectures, I have chosen to focus on two special issues. Firstly, what I have called the “skirt case” – i.e. the codifications of female clothing and its significance. I chose this issue because it constantly appears during lectures and is repeatedly a subject of debate among students. Secondly, I chose to address one of the biggest issues lecturers and students faced during the three years of the programme – i.e. the social and political debate on same-sex marriage and the emergence of a right-wing advocacy for a supposed “gender theory”. It was important to focus on this issue because it has been the most prominent subject peppering debates in classrooms.

### 2.2.1 The “skirt case”: sexist representations

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<sup>67</sup> ADRIC’s archives : Annual report 2013-2014

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Stereotypical representations of female and male behaviour have an impact on students' common beliefs and social organisation within school institutions. Concerning these issues, lecturers share a common observation: talking about girls wearing skirts is a subject that helps raise the theme of common codes and rules, imbedded in social structures, as it exemplifies sexual roles by defining forbidden practices. A short reminder of anthropologist work is necessary when thinking about social composition, taboo and forbidden practices. Françoise Héritier, an anthropologist who continued the work of leading structuralism theorist Claude Lévi-Strauss, studied social organisation from a gender perspective. She developed a concept entitled: "the differential value of sexes" ("*valence différentielle des sexes*"). This deep and concealed differential "value" is instilled in every society and expresses a hierarchical relationship between the masculine and the feminine and is relatively consistent because it is transmitted via social and cultural environments, and inculcated through education (1996; 2002). It defines the relationships between men and women and determines the situations of women in society. Thus, anatomical gender dichotomy generates a set of discourses on body fluids (blood, milk, semen) and provides the basis for the rise of unequal social rules (family relationship, incest prohibition, exchange of women). Any system of thought, according to social anthropologists, is based on a relationship between the "same" and the "different", legitimising inequality, whether socioeconomic, generational, or ethnic etc. Regarding sexual differences, this hierarchical relationship is always in connection with male domination (Héritier, 1996; 2002). The underlying reason for this hierarchy is the male need to ensure the continuance of the male line, achieved through reproduction and the childbearing abilities unique to the female.

Indeed, Héritier argues women were considered as essential resources for the propagation of the human species in general and in particular to produce male heirs. In social systems based on the gift exchange (a very influential term in anthropology that focuses on reciprocity and exchange), women were considered as valuable: as Lévi-Strauss pointed out (1949), men exchange women and not the other way around. This concept of value can be used and applied to contemporary society. In the specific case of schools, girls' bodies should not be depreciated and lose value on the market of exchange (present or future, i.e. loss of virginity). Indeed, the skirt is one of the regulators

of girls' values. Norms differ slightly from one high school to another but the economy of the system remains the same. Girls are categorised, ranging from respectable (recognised as the official girlfriend) to unacceptable (marginalised because they do not fit the norms), with the skirt as a symbol and a factor of their categorisation. A photograph made by the Canadian artist, Rosea Posey, became famous in January 2013 after going viral on the Internet. It explored the way women are judged by the length of their skirt and perfectly resumes and illustrates the categorisation of girls at school. The picture<sup>69</sup> shows a series of hand written markers with associated words down the back of a woman's leg, beginning with "whore" at the top of her thigh (just beneath her bottom), and finishing with "matronly" on her lower calf. It is really important to note here, that both girls and boys are integrated within this "economy" of sexual respectability. Beyond controlling women's bodies, are the persisting norms surrounding skirt length a way to avoid and/or repress the subject of sexuality?

Christine Bard describes this sexualisation of the skirt: "the erotic power of clothing is attractive: the easy flirting, the sensuality of contact with bare legs, sophisticated games with stockings and suspenders, which create a body-for-others but also a body-for-oneself, anticipating the pleasure of an amorous meeting, providing a kind of narcissistic and autoerotic satisfaction" (2010-1, p.66). No question of claiming femininity, skirts and makeup are prohibited. A skirt is synonymous with whore. Those who dare to dress as a "girl" suffer insults from the group and especially from other girls. Their reputation is quickly made as being an easy girl. Isabelle Clair's investigation on youth and love in suburbs and estates (2008) compares the place of living with a panoptic system. The same idea could be used in high schools, where students live under the look of others and the threat of rumours, which make and break reputations and create a "lasting social etiquette" (Ibid). Most of the time the skirt is socially prohibited when coupled with tall boots, low necklines etc. There is a range of acceptable conditions for skirt wearing at school: it depends if the girl is wearing tights, if it is summer or winter, the length of the skirt, if she wears additional signs of femininity (heels, make-up etc.). The skirt is a sign of sexual provocation, it is a sign of a guilty mind: here too, girls cannot embody sexuality.

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<sup>69</sup> Please refer to annex n°8



### 2.2.2 Social debates influence students' concerns, the example of same-sex marriage and the "gender theory"

High school students are very susceptible to current affairs and news from the media.

The "marriage for all" debate, during 2012-2014, impacted all discussions on sexuality at school and divided social debate. Right-wing supporters and activists developed a critique of gender that they call "the gender theory". This rhetoric postulating the existence of a "gender theory" was mainly propagated by the Intercollegiate National Union (UNI), an association close to the political party the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), although more right-wing, which brings students and teachers together. It was very actively opposed to gay marriage in early 2013. Geena and Louise point out the difficulties. They were not giving lectures to students at the time of the interview, so they were not focused on the then-current political issues, but instead were thinking of the past when debates on same-sex marriage, "gender theory" and education programs for gender equality were at their peak. Geena explains: "*in the spring we were in a malicious environment, and in relation to what we were doing, due to a context critical of the "basics of equality"*"<sup>70</sup>, *people confused what I came to do [in the schools] with the debates in the media*". Louise remembers, "*in 2012, we were in the middle of a societal debate including strong activism of Femen*"<sup>71</sup> *and debate over same-sex marriage. The media's impact is strong*". She also emphasises the students' reactions to the topic: "*same-sex marriage debates clearly affected our sessions: questions on homosexuality were raised every time*". Homophobic discourses were raised everywhere in society, espoused by politicians themselves and read as newspaper headlines. Thus, students were affected by this environment, which contributed to the intensity of their positions in relation to the debate. I heard many violent opinions such as: "*if my sister is a lesbian I*

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<sup>70</sup> The Basics of Equality was a French teaching program proposed by Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights at the time, with an aim of fighting sexism and gender stereotypes. This program was taught experimentally from autumn 2013 until the end of the academic year to some 600 students from primary grades and kindergarten. The Basics of Equality was at the heart of a controversy over gender studies, its opponents denouncing teaching the "gender theory". On the June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Minister of Education announced that the positive trial results of the programme's experimentation justified the establishment of an "action plan for equality between girls and boys at school" that primarily aims to train teachers.

<sup>71</sup> Femen is a radical feminist protest group founded in Ukraine in 2008, now based in Paris. The organisation became internationally known for organising controversial topless protests against sex tourism, religious institutions, sexism, homophobia and other social, national and international topics.

*will slit her throat*". Some of the students dared to have more liberal views (which is not easy in a collectively reluctant classroom) but the general environment was homophobic. As lecturers, we spent much of our time speaking about sexuality being natural, about religion and sexuality and about same-sex families with children. The environment was tense and strained, sometimes revealing a feeling of fear from lecturers, their employers and school directors. It is important to understand how this period on same-sex marriage and gender theory debate gave birth to a movement contesting the dominance of gender at school. Thelma refers to this period in her interview. She was working in a high school one day during Farida Belghoul's<sup>72</sup> absenteeism protest programme against "the Basics of Equality". Thelma explains "*during the famous day where some parents decided to forbid their children from going to class in order to protest against the politics of gender equality in school, I was going to give a class. My employer (ADRIC) asked me not to use the word "gender". I didn't agree. There is a difference between sex and gender, which is why we use two different terms*". Debate began between lecturers and questions emerged such as: should we keep using the term "gender", should we continue to speak freely about sex in high school? The programme did not stop. Lecturers were continuing to go to schools and speak about gender equality but the conditions were more challenging. I remember going into a class the day after this absenteeism protest day, where one young student was very enthusiastic and participative. At the end of my lecture I concluded by asking if anyone wanted to add anything. This young boy raised his hand to say it was very interesting, but that he as well as his parents were opposed to gender theory. He was surprised when I told him we had just spent two hours conversing about gender and identity constructions, as he hadn't realised we'd been discussing it. Afterwards, we had the opportunity to have a small individual talk and he maintained his point of view. I realised the conflict he was experiencing between what he heard on TV and at home and what actually happen at school.

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<sup>72</sup> Since October 2013, Farida Belghoul has opposed the teaching of gender theory to school children. She is troubled by The Basics of Equality's programme. She launched an absenteeism protest programme on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013, by which she hoped to pressure the authorities. The first absentee day was January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

## Chapter Three: What knowledge and competencies emerged from the lectures?

Interviewed lecturers agree that consent is the central notion of their talk and also that it is important to speak about male domination and violence. They even say that their two sessions on sexual liberty, and gender-based violence are really similar. They speak about sexuality, desire, pleasure, consent and violence in both. Indeed, the students' knowledge of what constitutes rape is incomplete. It is explained in the first section of the chapter how they formulate a more accurate definition of consent with lecturers' help and how this work interconnects with responsibility and empowerment by students participating in the lectures. In the second section, the students' reaction to the delivered knowledge and competencies are analysed through their commitment during lectures and what they say they have learned.

### 3.1 Knowledge and personal competencies delivered to students

While discussing sexuality during sessions on sexual liberty and gender-based violence, consent is raised as a central notion of discourses made both by students and lecturers. This paragraph reveals what kinds of questions students raise and what are lecturers' answers.

#### 3.1.1 Acquiring knowledge on consent

When asked to give a definition of what consent means, students answered: *“It's to make love to someone without their knowledge”*, *“without their consent”* or *“to steal their virginity”*<sup>73</sup>, *“one of the two doesn't want to fuck”*<sup>74</sup>. The lecturers complete these definitions that, as the last quote highlights, sometimes perpetuate religious morality (virginity, sexual intercourses outside marriage...). To do so, they use both numbers and quote the law.

*“Lastly [The lecturer] mentions some figures. A woman is raped every 10*

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<sup>73</sup> ADRIC's archives : February, 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012, on secularism.

<sup>74</sup> ADRIC's archives : November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011, on gender-based violence.

*minutes in France. So this is about 350 women raped every day, 198,000 each year. Some are regularly raped by their partner”.*

In her interview, Thelma highlights the importance of providing data. She says, *“I give numbers and statistic. It helps to remember”*. The law is also a powerful tool to define consent. Lecturers often (if not always) give the penal definition of rape:

*“Any act of sexual penetration, whatever its nature, committed against another person by violence, coercion, threat or surprise is rape” (Penal Code, Art. 222-23).*

Lecturers explain in detail what is understood by this definition. *“Any act of sexual penetration”* means oral, anal or vaginal penetration with a sex, an object or fingers... The ways to force someone into having sexual intercourse are defined by the law as *“violence, coercion, and threat”* and are quite well understood by students. The last one, the *“surprise”* is the most difficult notion for them to understand. While the lecturer gives the definition of rape, one of the reports states:

*“[The lecturer] adds that rape is defined in Article 222-23 of the Penal Code as “any act of sexual penetration, whatever its nature, committed against another person by violence, coercion, threat or surprise”. The notion of “surprise” triggers laughs among students. [The lecturer] explains that the “surprise” refers to cases where the victim knows the abuser or the victim was drugged<sup>75</sup>...”*

Discussing such subjects can be uncomfortable so laughter is often a way of creating distance. Also, laughing allows attenuating the effect of knowing exactly what rape is. Another example of laughter used as a defensive mechanism is explained in a different report:

*“[The lecturer] specifies that the legal measure of rape is also aimed at men since the law of 1980. In the definition of rape, reference is made to physical or moral violence and coercion. It is when “I give you candy!” launches a female student. Laughter rings out<sup>76</sup>.”*

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<sup>75</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February, 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012, on secularism.

<sup>76</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February, 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012, on gender-based violence.

In this quote, the girl puts herself in the position of the aggressor; she embodies the aggressor; she voices the kind of phrases she could use to make someone her victim. Laughing could be interpreted as a negation of danger and the reality of the meaning of rape: “I am not afraid of this, I am stronger” etc... But it is also a way to escape the abnormal; it is a strategy to protect oneself. These two quotes above (“surprise” and “candy”) trigger laughter from a situation. The next one also shows how the repartition of violence is based on the stereotypes of gender roles:

*“One student asks if men are abused. Laughter rings out<sup>77</sup>”.*

This quote conveys the idea that females are the victims and males the aggressors. The inversion of the social roles of the victims and aggressors creates laughter. The status of victim is easily given to females but when it comes to considering males being abused and considered as victims, laughter ensues. It suggests, as in the above situational cases: “it is impossible”, “it is not real”. It could also explain recurrent questions from students such as:

*“And what if a woman raped a man?<sup>78</sup>”*

These questions are a manner of inverting social roles, making men out as possible victims and women as potential aggressors. Also, this is a way to reassure legal equality between males and females. But it is important to state that evidence shows that mainly women are assaulted with men as the aggressors, and in cases where men or boys are assaulted it is mostly by other men. Another point is often asked by students and highlighted by lecturers. Rape can come from a known person, such as a family member, but also boyfriends, husbands, ex-boyfriends or ex husbands.

*““Is it rape if it’s my husband?” asks a girl. “And if it’s a boyfriend, a former boyfriend etc?” continues [the lecturer], which informs the class that since the law of 1980 marital exemption no longer exists. Previously, a “conjugal duty” existed, which corresponded to a right to the body of the other. But since 1980, marital rape is punishable under the Penal Code.”*

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<sup>77</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February, 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012, on secularism.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

The work of lecturers here is to deconstruct the idea of an unknown rapist. A well-known French feminist, Emmanuelle Piet, founder of the “Feminist collective against rape”, often says in public conferences: “You are safer in Pigalle<sup>79</sup>, at midnight, wearing a mini-skirt in a car park, than at home”.

The coping method of creating distance in uncomfortable situations should not be confused with another phenomenon lecturers noted during sessions. During students’ participation in class there is a perpetual suspicion of lying linked with rape. Most of the time students try to find excuses or a way to question the denunciation of rape. For example, in the excerpt of a session presented below, they raise the alcohol issue:

*“A student challenges [the lecturer]<sup>80</sup>: “If the girl was drunk and the next day she said she didn’t agree?” This involves having sex when one is sure of the consent of the other, specifies [the lecturer], otherwise you refrain”. “And if both are drunk?” asks someone else. It is an aggravating circumstance for the perpetrator, explains the lecturer”.*<sup>81</sup>

In student participation, female denunciation is always suspected of being false. A girl is not trustworthy; she can easily change her mind as a female student says:

*“And what if a girl says yes and then presses charges?”*

In another report, a student expresses almost the same idea:

*“What if a woman files a complaint when she has had consensual sex?”<sup>82</sup>”*

This idea is close to the perception of females as being treacherous and financially motivated. This is shown in two different reports where lecturers discuss the “Dominique Strauss-Kahn case”<sup>83</sup>:

*“The session ends with one student recalling the DSK case: “We can’t be certain about the DSK case”. Some add: “perhaps they used the women to press charges.”*<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Pigalle is a famous district of Paris known for its sex-shops and nightlife, including clubs with prostitutes.

<sup>80</sup> The term “lecturer” is used instead of the name of the person in order to preserve anonymity.

<sup>81</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>82</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>83</sup> *The People of the State of New York v. Strauss-Kahn* was a criminal case relating to allegations of sexual assault and attempted rape made by a hotel maid, Nafissatou Diallo, against Dominique Strauss-Kahn at the Sofitel New York Hotel on May 14, 2011. In 2012, due to the presidential debates taking place, this case remains in students’ minds.

*“What is the reaction of the group when faced with a female victim of sexual violence?” asks [the lecturer]. “Pity”, “We think that she exaggerated”, “She asked for it” launches students. “What do you say about DSK?” [asks the lecturer]. “She wanted to make money”, “it’s a set-up” answer students.”<sup>85</sup>*

In the minds of the students, the idea of women using rape to ‘trap men’ is common for well-known people such as Dominique Strauss-Kahn but also for everyday women. The limits of consent are very strict and students look for flaws in lecturers’ discourses. Also, money is still at the heart of the debate with thoughts on consent often concentrating on female prostitution, of women doing it for the money, but also on questioning the idea of “buying consent”. This is obvious in this excerpt:

*“Prostitution involves buying someone’s body and therefore to consider it as an object”, [says the lecturer]. “But she’s willing to!” refutes a student. “They don’t all have the choice!” contests another”.*<sup>86</sup>

The question raised by students is about whether or not consent can be purchased. I am not going to enter into the different feminist theories on this matter, and I understand that the Netherlands and France do not have the same position and laws on the subject. In order to stay very close to the programme I am studying, I only want to state that all lecturers are for the abolition of prostitution and the discourse delivered by them is clear: you cannot buy someone’s consent as you cannot sell your body. One of the lecturer’s on this point illustrates the idea by saying that in France you cannot sell your blood, organs or genital cells: you give them, so the same applies for your entire body. Finally, lecturers construct a complex definition of consent, using concrete examples, such as asking: “Can you say no if you are already naked in bed?”. Three of them use a game called “agree/disagree” where they ask questions and students are required to position themselves behind one of two lines – the agree line or the disagree line. This activity helps students to construct their own ideas relative to the questions being asked.

This central theme of discussion shows that speaking about consent is not only about evoking a set of rules or numbers. It is important to replace the thinking in a much

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<sup>84</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>85</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

global approach, by deeply analysing social representations: the role and place of women and men in society and the domination process at stake<sup>87</sup>. The workshops do not look for a strict definition of consent that students can apply to their lives, but embrace a more profound thinking on consent, also discussing it in the case of pornography and prostitution. Lecturers' goals are for students to leave the sessions more aware of the complexity of consent and how it depends on a nuanced understanding of context rather than a mere box-ticking exercise. To do so, lecturers pay particular care to empower students and make them aware of their responsibilities.

### 3.1.2 Being responsible and empowered

In their interviews, lecturers emphasize the importance of bringing something new to the students participating in the sessions. As discussed in Chapter Two, they change classroom norms. They also try to provide long-term skills, so students participating in lectures can use them without needing further help. Indeed, with lectures only lasting two hours, lecturers try to provide students with the necessary tools to lean to be responsible and to empower themselves.

They look to make students responsible for themselves and others. This is noticeable both in lecturers' interviews and assessment reports. In one of her sessions, Catherine insists on the role students play in society:

*“In conclusion, [the lecturer] explains to students their dual responsibility:*

- Their individual responsibility within a group that could lead to the exclusion or bullying of a group member. [The lecturer] reminds students that collective mechanisms of passivity and complicity have consequences.*
- Their responsibility if someone comes to tell them they have suffered a violent experience. She specifies, that in this case, the person should write down everything that the person says. She also points out that there are associations that can provide psychological support to victims, such as the permanence of the Feminist Collective Against Rape, AVFT (The*

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<sup>87</sup> On this subject, refer to Dworkin (1974, 1976) and MacKinnon (1988, 1989).



*European Association Against the Violence of Women in the Workplace) and Family Planning<sup>88</sup>”.*

This excerpt of a session shows the importance of providing students with the necessary tools to face violence: they are able to identify it, they know how to react to it and they know where to go for help and assistance. It is also a way to prevent potential bullying. Geena also explains it very well during her interview:

*“ I felt that, when students came out of a session, they were going to ask themselves questions and above all go looking for ... find... the answers. My message was ... I open the door and I basically give them an emergency kit, a survival kit ... or a “trust yourself” message, look, be curious, ask questions ... and be responsible if you don’t want to open the door, well ... you can stay behind the door ... and do not think that there is nothing behind it, it’s that you have chosen to stay there”*

This quote is interesting because it shows the kind of tools given to students. Geena refers to these tools as an “emergency” or a “survival kit”. It is a way to prepare students to be able to use these tools to protect themselves. She invites students to think for themselves and to continue to question social sex roles, social structures and, more generally, to be able to decentre their point of view. It is a message of empowerment that says, “trust yourself”. She also presents them with a choice when using the metaphor “you can stay behind the door”, which reminds me the Allegory of the Cave presented by the Greek philosopher Plato in his work *The Republic* (514a–520a). It sets out, in detailed terms, “the effect of education and the lack of it in our nature”. It illustrates the terms of accession to reality’s knowledge and the transmission of this knowledge.

Susan links the talking issue discussed in Chapter One to this interest of students’ empowerment. She says:

*“I think the school system, ... but that’s normal, I do not call it into question at all, except perhaps, I don’t think it gives teens much of a chance to talk, ... it offers them little opportunity to be actors and actresses. They are very passive, listening to what is going on, and thus I think they need that moment when they become all at once, we ask them*

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<sup>88</sup> ADRIC’s archives : February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

*what they truly think, we pay attention to them, their words become important, as a result it also allows them to be responsible and involved”.*

Susan’s quote is very interesting on many levels. She analyses how the French school system works and perceives the limits of it. Even if she does not want to openly criticize it, she recognises this system is not made to empower students. She develops the idea of empowerment coming from the possibility to express oneself in the public space of a classroom. This idea is quite central in feminist studies. It is the essence of feminist political theories in private and public spheres. Feminist political theorists rethink basic political categories and integrate women as well as marginalised men into the political space (Arneil, 1999, pp-43 -76). Carole Pateman describes the relationships between men and women in society:

*“The way in which women and men are differentially located within life and the public world, is... a complex matter, but underlying a complicated reality is the belief that women’s natures are such that they are properly subject to men and their proper place is in the private domestic sphere. The essential feminist argument is that the doctrine of “separate but equal” and the ostensible individualism and egalitarianism of liberal theory, obscure the patriarchal reality of a social structure of inequality and the domination of women by men.”(Pateman, 1989, p.120)*

Bell hooks completes this analysis of public/private spheres by adding “awareness of the lives of women and men who live in the margin” (hooks, 1984) and criticising the assumption that “men” are in the public sphere and recalling the fight for men and women of colour to obtain access to the public sphere. Thus, Susan’s urge to consider teenagers as actors and actresses is a way to free them and empower them because she recognises their right to belong in society. Boys as much as girls are empowered to change society: this is not a female-only issue. By doing so, they are becoming involved in society. How can you ask someone to participate to the public sphere and political space (in the sense of *polis*, meaning “city” in Greek) without giving him/her the recognition of his/her belonging to this same society? Indeed, this involvement and empowerment process is necessary to be responsible for its own acts and maybe, to give

students the opportunity to deconstruct male domination, as it seems important for Thelma when she states:

*“The goal is that everyone can identify a situation of violence and know what to do. I also want them to leave the session with an idea on how to diminish male domination”.*

The empowerment process is linked to the idea of not only delivering pre-conceived messages to students but also to give them tools to question and position themselves in society. It is not only about giving them facts and figures, but also knowledge of the general pattern of how society works and where they are situated within it. A great difficulty lecturers face is that they cannot enter the classroom with a rigid program, as each session must be adapted to that particular class.

To conclude, empowerment and involvement as described by the lecturers is linked to the awareness of being part of society: students are part of the public sphere and the *polis*. It is also their role to be active in society and to make change happen by deconstructing social structures. Lecturers can only transmit this awareness when students are engaged and receptive to the information presented in the sessions. It is the examination of students' reactions to the lectures and lecturers' abilities to engage students that provide further information on the impact of this programme.

## 3.2 Students reactions to knowledge and competencies delivered by lecturers

### 3.2.1 Students' engagement during lectures

Students' level of engagement during lectures, that is to say if they participate in the debate, is difficult to define. Two questions emerge: what kind of indicators can be used to measure their engagement, and secondly how can we define their engagement? This section discusses these two questions.

Firstly, I rely on my experiences<sup>89</sup>. Students passively commit to a certain level of engagement as soon as they accept the new rules created by lecturers, as discussed in Chapter Two. I noticed that they were more involved when their environment was favourable to discussion. Firstly, a few pragmatic remarks can be made. Lectures taking place early in the morning, between eight and ten o'clock, did not receive a welcome audience. With classes between ten and twelve o'clock, students were in a better condition to engage in the lectures, however towards lunchtime, the dynamic of the class changed as students became increasingly prone to fatigue and distraction<sup>90</sup>. The same can be said for the end of the day when fatigue negatively impacted their concentration and commitment to the lecture. Indeed, when timetabling the lectures, lecturers and ADRIC should take into account these periods of student fragility. I also noted that teachers did not present the lectures in the same way; sometimes they spoke about it a great deal and were very involved in the programme, and other times they did not even realise a lecture was going to take place. Based on the reports I analysed and from my personal

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<sup>89</sup> On this issue I rely on Sharlene Hesse-Biber's chapter *Centering Women's Issues and Lived Experiences as a Basis for Knowledge Building*, (2014, pp. 23-24). She writes: "according to Jaggar, it is unrealistic to assume that emotions and values will not affect the data, especially because emotions often motivate the researcher's selection of topics and questions as well as the methods by which those topics and questions are studied" (Jaggar, 1997). She also states: "feminist standpoint epistemology is rooted in the shared Marxist and Hegelian idea that an individual's material and lived experience structures his or her understanding of his or her social environment". Thus, I question the "objective" truth and rely on standpoint theories and methodologies in order to uncover "subjugated knowledge" that often remains hidden when utilising traditional approaches (Hesse-Biber, 2014, pp.29-45).

<sup>90</sup> This remark can be interpreted as anecdotal, but it really emerges from students' feedbacks and attitudes. It is usual that students can write this on their feedback sheets. For example, in the panel of feedbacks I studied, it is stated on a lecture of December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

experience, students were more involved in lectures when they had been prepared by their teachers, and even more so when the whole high school administration promoted the importance of the programme. Furthermore, the session must be prepared: it is imperative that the classroom where the lecture takes place is reserved and that the necessary material is already in place<sup>91</sup>. I noticed that sometimes, teachers impede good debate dynamics; a point that is expanded on in Chapter Four. I know that my experiences alone are insufficient evidence to provide a solid argument.

Thus, I support these remarks by an examination of different reports. In light of these reports, I noticed that students' engagement differs depending on the number of students participating in the lectures. Indeed during the first year of the programme, fourteen lectures had ten to twenty-nine students<sup>92</sup>, twenty-three lectures had thirty to forty students<sup>93</sup>, and twenty lectures had forty-eight to eighty students<sup>94</sup>. This large number of students present during the lectures can be explained by the phase of experimentation of the Youth for Equality programme. After this experimentation, it appeared that it was impossible for lecturers to correctly address all the issues raised by students. A report<sup>95</sup> states that the room was noisy, which is normal during a debate, but with eighty students it becomes even more of a problem. Another report relates<sup>96</sup>: "The debate was lively. Around fifteen students spoke several times, their input took various forms, ranging from questioning and mature thoughts on the subject of gender equality to provocative and radical comments". This reports shows that the quality of dialogue is limited if too many students are present, with only a few (fifteen out of sixty) contributing to the debate). Comparatively, lectures since 2012 have been addressed to only one class (generally thirty second year general students or twenty-four second year professional)<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> A few lecturers used films to introduce their lecture, mostly at the beginning of the programme.

<sup>92</sup> These were mostly second year students (doing professional classes) sometimes combined with other classes; these classes can have few students, which might explain the need to combine them.

<sup>93</sup> This included thirteen classes of thirty to thirty-five students in second year general classes with the remaining students a mix of second year professional and general.

<sup>94</sup> This was a mix of between two and three classes.

<sup>95</sup> ADRIC's archives : October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, on gender-based violence.

<sup>96</sup> ADRIC's archives : October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, on secularism.

<sup>97</sup> The lecturers I interviewed did not address so much students.

Secondly, I addressed the kind of indicators that could be used to measure students' participation and engagement. A variety of indicators presented themselves to me. Whilst examining the reports, questions and comments originating from the students provided a good indicator of engagement in the lecture. In the reports, students answer lecturers' questions and voice their point of view. Another indicator of engagement in the lecture was to examine their answers to the feedbacks form. Were they satisfied with the lecture? In most of the feedbacks forms I studied from fourteen lectures, regarding the question "did this lecture interest you", a large majority of students say they appreciated the debate. They had the choice to respond to this question by choosing "yes", "no" or "a little". Students who replied "yes" to the question of their interest concerning eleven lectures ranged from 68.4% to 96.65% (with the percentage being substantially higher if the replies of "a little" were included). The remaining three lecturers did not have strong student support, with 50%, 43.3%, and 37.5% of students answering "yes". For the session where 37.5% of students found the lecture interesting, a further 62.5% answered "a little" and no one checked the box "not interested". For the session where 43.3% found it interesting, 40% answered "a little" and 16.7% did not find it interesting. For the session where 50% responded "yes", the remaining students were divided equally, with 25% each responding "a little" and "not interested". When having a closer look to their feedback forms, I noted that for two of the sessions, the students' comments concerned their opposition to same-sex marriage and their homophobia. For the last session, it seems more to be their dislike of speaking about sex and gender equality at school, which explains their negative responses on the feedback forms. For seven of the lectures, none of the students responded "no". In cases where one or two students checked this box, it was because they felt they already knew everything, that they didn't learn much or because it was information they had already heard elsewhere.

Thirdly, I wanted to address the question of how to define students' engagement. Is there a difference between girls and boys? Girls are very reactive to the subject of gender equality; but sometimes, boys can be too, for example with one boy writing on his feedback form "*now, we need to remember*"<sup>98</sup>. Girls and boys do not raise the same subjects: a student (although it is not specified, the remark suggests it was most likely a

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<sup>98</sup> ADRIC's archives : Annual report 2013-2014.

girl) said: “[our] *brothers are controlling us*”. The “us” is especially interesting, as it means “us the girls” but also “us as the in the ‘us and them’ dichotomy”. In another report a student (again, most likely a girl) talks about virginity and the control of sexuality: “*Me, I would have put [red] nail polish on the sheets*”. Boys can play the role of protector to some girls or they sisters. In the following case<sup>99</sup>, the lecturer asked students what would they do if one of their sister decided to go to a night club dressed in a short skirt and a low cut top. Here are their answers: “*You go change yourself*”, “*I’ll kill her*” (figurative sense), “*First I try to convince her, then I move to the second stage*”, “*Anyway, she won’t go to the club*”, “*I would ask her whether she is going out with a good person and if she is not going to regret it*”, “*I’ll worry about what will happen to her*”, “*When you stand up to your sister, she does stuff to fuck you up*”, “*It depends on the age of the brother*”, “*Guys who control the whole world, that’s in the past. Most of the time it’s Arabs who do that*”<sup>100</sup>. Here the stereotypical role of the male protector is sometimes violently embodied by students, Also, students articulate racist discourses based on cultural criticisms and the “us and them” dichotomy. Geena reinforces this point when she states:

*“Two hours is definitely insufficient to let everyone speak. The dynamic of the class creates a boundary. It was often the confident girl or the very assertive one who spoke a lot while other girls said nothing. Some nodded in silence, drew and looked around for others. It was not necessarily different among the boys. Among some of them there was a lot of giggling and a lot of assertion of their “power”, as well as silence for others. Some would speak very loudly, interrupting me to contradict an argument or even stand up to shout when they disagreed. Their behaviour could not only be explained by social construction based on sex. Class, colour, religion and family history were and are, essential to understanding the dynamics of each class”.*

To conclude, every stereotype and discourse on men’s and women’s roles in society are evoked during the lecturers and students reproduce the discourses and

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<sup>99</sup> ADRIC’s archives : December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 on sexual liberty.

<sup>100</sup> I think most of these answers are from boys but “*it depends on the age of the brother*” is more likely a girl’s response.

inequalities they hear, and are confronted with, in wider society. As Geena says, the dynamic of classrooms are complex and depend on context. Generally, students' engagement during lectures seems participative, and students use the space of discussion to share their ideas and are mostly interested in the lectures. Thus, the vast majority of students were interested in the lectures and found things to think about as it is discussed in the next section.

### 3.2.2 What do students say they learned?

I decided to begin with what the programme was about and the messages the lecturers wanted to pass on. I spoke about consent and empowerment. Thus, I wanted to know if students re-used this on their feedback form. I also wanted to know what other things they mentioned. For this section, my sources are feedback syntheses provided by ADRIC and annual report. I chose not to include references from all the feedback forms I consulted, as there were too many, but instead to quote the most common sentiments stated on feedbacks forms.

In general, the responses were spontaneous and students did not hesitate to write critiques such as *“the lecture was too long”*, that *“the lecture was not interesting”*, *“boring”*, or that they were *“tired”*, that they *“already knew”* and that they did not learn anything. They often explained that these kinds of lectures happen every year and that they were tired of it. In contrast, some wrote that they had *“discovered the subject”*. Even if they already knew *“things”*, lectures provided additional information or clarified information that was not always well understood. *“I learned not to generalise and to look towards human society”*, wrote a girl. Lecturers describe that statistics seem to have an impact on some students. One boy wrote: *“thanks to percentages we observed that woman are not the equal of man”*. Many students enjoyed the opportunity to express, exchange and debate in confidence without judgment<sup>101</sup>. Exchanges with other students and learning about their comrades points of view seems to be very important in the eyes of students. Even if sometimes they disagreed with lectures or between themselves. Sometimes, they do not hesitate to write about such disagreements and reinforce

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<sup>101</sup> As mentioned in the quote on page 32.



stereotypes and male domination. One girl wrote “... *male violence; I find it normal that men solve their problems with violence; we must respect man, I think*”. For most of the students, what they learned and discussed during the lectures prepared them to react on these issues in the future. They also expressed an eagerness for change.

On the feedback forms there are two questions with the first one being “did this lecture interest you?”. Students who answered “no” can be divided into three groups, the ones who already knew the materiel, felt the subject was repetitive or that the lecture was too long, the ones who did not felt engaged with the subject and the ones who were opposed to gender-equality and wanted to state they have different points of view. Students who answered “yes” explained it through different reasoning such as their interest in the debate and argumentation and that they realised there were many positions on the subject, their interest in learning new things on the subject, feeling involved, participating in the change of attitudes or ways of thinking, and sometimes because they wanted to be provocative. Students who checked the box “a little interested” can be divided into two categories, the ones who were rather less interested and the ones who were rather more interested. The ones who were rather less interested explained it in three different manners: they were not interested by the subject and felt the lectures repeated subjects they already knew, they disagreed with the points of view proposed during the lecture, or they did not like the quality of the debates and the reactions of other students. The ones who were rather more interested explained that the subject is important, that they learned new things, that they discovered other students’ points of view and that their awareness on the subject had increased.

The second question on the feedback form was “did this lecture make you think or reflect on something?”. Students who answered “no” still evoked a feeling of “*déjà vu*”, stemming from their lack of interest on the subject and because they think gender equality has already been achieved or because they were opposed to the subject and did not have the same opinions. Students who answered a “little” or “yes” spoke about gender equality and inequalities, liberties, the organisation of society and their own past, present and future behaviours.

The subject of rape greatly concerned students due to the severity of attacks: it is a crime that is regularly comitted. They also said that they now understood the feelings of a

rape victim and knew how to react, where to seek help and were eager to help victims. *“When you have a problem (meaning assault, rape or other) you must talk to someone you trust such as the nurse or [someone] at the family planning center”* wrote a male student. They also realised that it *“doesn’t only happen to others, it can happen to us”*, wrote a male student. In response to the second question on the feedback form (“did this lecture made you think or reflect on something”), they wrote *“consent”*, sometimes even in capital letters, stating how important it was for them after the lecture. They also stated that the lecturers made them reflect on prostitution. Sometimes, students wrote about their own experiences and about violence they have been victims of. In this quote, which seems to be a cry for help, one girl wrote, *“The lecturer made me realise what I had experienced and what I risk to experience later on in my life and what I saw, heard and experienced in my life”*.

Regarding their perception of the debates, the terms “shame” and “taboo” are often used. The lectures seem to provide a way to address these issues in a confident manner. Also, it is important to note that the safe environment of the debate and the trust that lecturers created with the students enabled them to write very personal things, such as this young girl who thought about her lesbian friend who deliberately cuts herself, and another girl who thought about her friends who were in trouble.

On empowerment and awareness, students realise they are actors and actresses of society. One female student wrote, *“We don’t realise that we’re actors of sexism and inequality”*. The work on vocabulary done by lecturers is understood by students *“Insults are not just words, it can affect people’s lives,”* wrote one female student. A male student wrote, *“I know who to go to, to speak about sexuality”*. They question themselves on their behaviour at home or at school and are also aware that they have their own vision of society. Students understand that it is important to continue the fight for equality. One girl wrote, *“We need to fight for equality”* whilst another wrote, *“girl power”* as a call for gender equality. They want change to happen and are aware of the tools proposed by lecturers. One girl wrote : *“we could react thanks to the different ways we discussed”*. Many students, boys and girls make resolutions or at least say they will change something in their daily life.

Reading the feedback forms, students' awareness goes beyond simple words. It seems that they increased their level of awareness of others and their entourage. In general, their views on liberty, sexuality, violence issues, behaviours and inequality between girls and boys changed. Even if some irreducible opinions remain.

## Chapter Four: What are the challenges faced by lecturers and students?

After describing the processes of lectures, the main themes discussed and students' reactions, it is important to analyse the challenges faced by lecturers and students in order to pave the way for feminist pedagogical tools. In the first section, I examine particular cases where debate was difficult or unsuccessful, whilst reserving particular scrutiny for the obstacles presented by students, their teachers and the lecturers.

### 4.1 When debate is difficult

#### 4.1.1 Obstacles originating from students and their teachers

As discussed in Chapter Three, certain conditions help to put students at ease and interest them in the subjects discussed. In this section, I explore the obstacles originating from students and their teachers. I have specified two obstacles originating from students and two originating from their teachers.

In Chapter Three, the analysis of feedback forms filled in by students showed that the subject of gender equality might have encountered resistance due to two main reasons. First, students might have felt that the subject was repetitive and that they did not learn anything (sometimes in the same classroom one student can judge the lecture too repetitive while others found it new). Also, feedback forms filled in by students showed that sometimes they have strong opposition to the subject, exacerbated by strong debates within society, as discussed in Chapter Two. In the panel of lectures I studied, one report was particularly relevant and I decided to study it thoroughly. It relates the happenings during the second lecture of half a class of second year boys specialised in electrotechnology. As is stated in the report, a second lecture was provided because the first one did not go well. The following exchange between the lecturer and the students happened at the beginning of the session:

*“What do you remember from the last lecture ?”* probed the lecturer.

*“The shower”, “the weird sexism”, “we talked about gays”* answered the students. *“You said at the end of the lecture that you think I took you for morons.”*

*Why did you say that?" asked the lecturer. "We were talking about sexism. It looked like we don't know what women are!" said a student.*

This excerpt suggests that students feel stigmatised and protest against gender equality concepts (including homosexuality and sexism). The lecturer continued the discussion trying to help them to understand what sexism by comparing it to another form of discrimination: racism. Students' replied:

*"Women cook and men watch TV, it's normal", "It's since the beginning of time, since Jesus Christ. It's not going to change now", "You try to make things change? Religion, it exists since we were little. It will not change",* fired students.

*"So racism is not going to change?"*, fires back the lecturer.

*"It's not the same. It concerns everyone".*

Student opposition was founded on the argument that nothing will change, because they did not see why it should change since the situation is "*normal*". They also relied on religion. They were unable to see the parallel between racism and sexism, stating that racism "*concerns everyone*" while sexism does not. The lecturer pursued, by asking what would they do if a woman asked them to mop. They answered:

*"Why can't a man use a mop?"*, "*With my mom, I mop the floor, but with my wife...*", responded one student. The lecturer tries to show their own contradictions. He said: "*It's weird, if you are superior human beings, how is it that your mother has authority over you?" "It's like that!"*", "*You want to turn our brains inside out?"*, formulated two worried students.

Students differentiated between women, evoking different roles for wives and mothers, conforming to stereotypical categories of "the mother, the saint and the whore" (as was often heard during lectures). They also assert their position, stating that they are aware that the lecture is intended to make them change their point of view. Throughout the lecture, the lecturer tried to encourage them to see things from a different perspective but students continued on their path, even legitimising domestic violence. Two students in particular provoked the lecturer. One of them said, "*Your husband beats you because he loves you too violently*". He linked violence and love, which showed that for students who are sometimes victims of family violence, the boundaries between these two

reactions are thin. One student contested his remarks. He stated : “*It’s meaningless to hit. Your mum hits you, but do you stop doing what she hits you for?*”. Violence is legitimated in the family circle; this student explained why violence should stop. He pointed out it is “*meaningless*” but not that it is unacceptable. The whole group, lead by two goading students, seemed to reinforce each others’ stereotypes and rigid statements. However, one student contested this dynamic: “*It’s only them two who talk like that. Me, I know I will change*”. That statement is really interesting, because when someone in a difficult classroom dares challenge the main negative dynamic, it can impact the whole group. Indeed, there is a difference between when a lecturer says something and when a student says the same thing; because students identify more easily with other students than with the figure of the lecturer. A few minutes after, at the end of the session, the lecturer is speaking of domestic violence and aggressors. Then, one of the two goading students, slightly softened said when referring to a hypothetical incident of violence, “*If there’s a lack of respect, I will [make the aggressor] change*”, a statement which another student did not fail to mock: “*You’ve changed, guys!*”. Another student followed the discussion stating : “*We’re sixteen years old, women are in a long time. We don’t need to know about that right now*”. This conclusion shows that the previous position might be explained by the fact that students feel too young to discuss these issues – apart from the arguments used before: religion, and the fact that things will never change. This example is interesting because it shows how students’ opposition is constructed and how, with the help of other students, it can be reduced. Also male students do not always understand the need to have lecture on the subject as they do not feel concerned. It is the work of the lecturer to help them think differently and to analyse their own stereotyping and positions. It should be noted that this lecture was given on by a male lecturer, addressing male students. Thus, would the boys have reacted in the same way if the lecturer had been a woman? This point can be linked to the comment of a male student on his feedback form (about another lecture driven by female lecturers) who wrote: “*the lecture takes the side of women too much*”. It is probable that female lecturers have to face more regularly the comment that they take “*the side of women*”. That is why it is important to organise a fair debate and not to marginalise boys on the issue of equality. In reference to this case study, the position of the teacher assisting in the lecture must also be highlighted

and helps to understand students' positions. A small but relevant detail is that students were sometimes late for the lectures and in one particular case the teacher apologised for arriving late with the students and explained that they were tidying up their workspaces. This is unsurprising; sometimes high school management is overwhelmed with planning organisation. But in this case, it is representative of the teacher not taking the lecture seriously. This is highlighted by the comment he made at the end of the lecture: *"It's important, but the problem is that we think it's always the woman who is disadvantaged compared to men. Today, there is an injustice towards men,"* a point of view which he justifies with several personal anecdotes. This kind of behaviour is highly counterproductive, because the teacher diminishes the role of the lecturers and students' changes in attitude that exist at the end of a lecture can be lost. Of course, men also experience sexism, but this should not put into question the wider problem of societal inequalities. Indeed, the teacher remains with the class for a whole year, maybe longer, and the seed that the lecturers try to plant may vanish very quickly.

Thus, besides the efforts made through the Youth for Equality programme, which also trained the teachers, some of them remain reluctant of gender equality and the unequal organisation of society. Teachers represent authority and it is important that they understand the principles of such lectures because if not they can contradict the objectives of the programme. Other teachers retain fixed views on learning processes, calling for calm and insisting students remain quiet during lectures. This kind of attitude impeded the effectiveness of lectures and the capacity of lecturers. If students were asked to be quiet, who was going to speak? As developed in Chapter Two, lecturers needed to create a safe environment for open dialogue to flow from students' ideas. It is normal that on such subjects, students did not agree, showed their disagreement, sometimes even displaying it by standing-up. However, lecturers tried to implement a culture of debate and argumentation. Teachers' reactions might be explained by the fact that the French school system is not used to open student debate. Also, if in some classrooms, students felt at ease with their teachers' presence, this was not the case for them all, which may have lead to student reservation. Sometimes up to five adults assisted in a lecture. This poses the problem of students feeling observed. Normally, putting adults at the back of the classroom and asking students for their consent solved the problem. But, lecturers

need to be particularly sensitive to the issue. Also, the relationship between students and their teacher has repercussions on a lecture. Sometimes, when teacher felt students' reservations they offered to leave.

To conclude, I want to specify that the excerpt studied came from a session addressing students in professional classes. But the same obstacles can exist among students following a general education pathway. However, the resistance in these classes is more implicit because students have already absorbed codified behaviours and do not have the same boundaries. By that, I mean, they do not speak as freely and already use normative concepts when speaking. From personal experience, deconstructing stereotypes is easier as a lecturer with students from professional classes because, as demonstrated in the case study above, they are not afraid to share their views and sometimes rigid positions whereas students in general classes feel that, because they conform to the discourses accepted in society, they have nothing to discuss or deconstruct. Nevertheless, both type of students need to work on deconstruction processes, even if general class students seem to have less to deconstruct.

Moreover, students' resistance emerged when they did not feel involved and engaged with the subject, when they thought there is was no need for discussion because things will not change. I also demonstrated that empowerment and valorising attitudes from lecturers helped to surpass the obstacles, using other students as leverage for change. Finally, teachers can be the biggest obstacles when they do not adhere to the type of lectures offered in their classrooms. Lecturers too are faced with problems each time they enter the classroom, depending on the students, but also on other teachers and therefore the challenges they face merit further analysis and discussion.

#### **4.1.2 Obstacles originating from lecturers**

The role of lecturers is discussed in order to see how and why dialogue was unsuccessful. Because lecturers come from diverse backgrounds, the information given to students is plural. Because they adapt their lectures to each context, they create a “piece of art”<sup>102</sup>, which is never the same. Lecturers also evoke the need for more training

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<sup>102</sup> Geena speaks about “artwork” in her interview.



between themselves and the absence of an exchange of practice. This sections aims to explore their limits and analyse their work and the programme in general.

Firstly, it is important to understand how lecturers have been trained and what their limits of training are. During their training period, (as briefly presented in Chapter One), they all say they were free to choose what subjects to discuss and how to broach them. And they are happy about it. This freedom allows them to speak on a wide range of subjects and not just to follow specific guidelines. Sometimes they raise concerns about not being managed enough. They wish they had had a more formal discussion centred on an exchange of practice organised by their employer. Indeed lecturers discuss informally when working in pairs or when they happen to meet in the same high school. Lecturers rarely have the opportunity to discuss their work within the greater group. Also, Thelma raises an important issue in her interview. She speaks about the lecturers' meeting and describes the feeling of a hierarchical structure that reduced free speech and remained unchallenged even in this feminist environment. She describes this hierarchy as an unequal relationship between lecturers and their employers: "*during the discussion and the practical analysis lecturers were treated unequally, by their employers, due to their social class and belonging*". She explains this social structure, which can be unconscious, is mostly felt through this hierarchy, and that lecturers do not exert any 'privileges', if any such privileges do exists. This is interesting because it allows us to explore a certain question. All the lecturers I interviewed have a similar age and a similar university background. But the ones I did not interview are the ones with more experience, and are between forty and sixty years old. Thus, what has emerged from Thelma's point is that maybe, behind the critique of too little practical analysis, appears an unsatisfied right to speak and be heard. This right to speak and be heard is important in the classroom and is ensured by lecturers, however it is unsurprising that hierarchical structures also have an impact on professional environments. Lecturers are in a difficult position as they play a duel role: they embody free speech in front of the students and yet are unable to enforce this outside of the classroom. At the same time, it is interesting to point out that their employers had a great deal of confidence in the lecturers and what they were doing. If not, why would they have allowed them free reign with their teaching?

Secondly, this lack of discussion and collective thought, not only about gender equality, but also about race and class politics, might put lecturers in uncomfortable positions. During sessions on sexual liberties or sexual violence, students often introduce other subjects, in particular related to religion and secularism. But, on this issue, only Thelma says she answers directly, giving her opinion. She says, even if she is not a specialist on the subject, she would not leave students without an answer and spoke about her own opinion using “I”. Since 2011, students’ desire to discuss such subjects is particularly strong, with the debate in French society being focused particularly on same-sex marriage, prostitution and the Islamic veil, which are subjects where religion also plays a strong role. Lecturers sometimes need to address subjects they are unfamiliar with or that they are unsure of how to discuss with students due to their sensitive nature. In such situations they sometimes choose not to open up certain subjects for debate or they broach the subject in a more personal, and less academic, way. This remark can be made about all sensitive subjects and also about feminism in general. Is a discourse on male domination, patriarchy, race and class acceptable in the classroom? Is there a particular moment, following the experiences in France in the past year for example, where the word “gender” can no longer be used? At one point in the height of the “gender theory” activism, our employer asked us to reduce our free speech and was questioning our use of the word “gender”. This anxious time did not last long, but it shows how quick feminist thoughts can be consumed by conservative movements and also shows the coldness with which schools and school directors opened their doors to lecturers. Also, Louise evokes the political correctness of feminism and uses an accurate definition of the feminism shared by lecturers with students:

*“I talk about feminism, but I give a very large, general and consensual definition: I speak about right equality and example in every day life, which is the lowest common denominator of feminism”.*

Indeed, as a lecturer you need to find a common denominator with which to address your audience, otherwise your two-hour discussion won’t have the slightest chance of ever being truly heard. She pursues:

*“It is hard to keep them interested without making them balk. You always have to reorganise your thought in order not to be counter-productive.*

*You try to make your feminism 'soluble' in their vision of the world. You have to simplify things. You can't give it all at once. To be simple helps you to clarify things for yourself"*

The core sentence of this quote is when she speaks about making “your” feminism soluble in “their” vision of the world. Feminism is multiple and even in between lecturers themselves it does not have the same resonance. Lecturers didn’t necessarily position themselves in the same ideology or circles. For example, I could distinguish lecturers influenced by second wave feminism (which appeared to be the majority) and some by the third wave. Thus, despite the richness of the diversity of feminism, when you have to face a classroom you need to propose something clear to the students you are addressing and sometimes this means you need to simplify it. This simplification does not mean you cannot later expand on it. But this is the first step you need to take if you want to go further with the students. In a community there are rules and practices. We could assume Geena, Thelma, Louise and Susan are the product of this community organisation and unconsciously sometimes share those rules and practices<sup>103</sup>. They are self-regulating because they are part of a wider community fighting for women’s rights and equality. They all make their feminism “soluble” in the classroom, they have been free to set up the training the way they wanted to and they all followed the same avenue.

Thirdly, lecturers question their relations with students and their own legitimacy (the “us vs. them” dichotomy). Louise and Thelma prepared their session frameworks together. During the interview, they both explained how hard it was, in the beginning, to specifically address the students they were going to visit. They had no previous knowledge about their questions nor their interests. It was difficult to understand the needs of the audience they were going to address. To counterbalance this, lecturers, in their interview, introduce the idea of co-training. As Thelma states: “*Students and lecturers trained themselves together*”.

Finally, one of the limits of their work is a very material one. Thelma, Geena and Louise used the feedback form given to students at the end of the session as a means to allow them to reveal personal experiences of violence. They specifically say during their

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<sup>103</sup> On this subject, see: Saul David Alinski, *Manuel de l'animateur social*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1976 and V.V. Kulkarni, Fr. V. Louis, Mahadev Jadhav, *Principles, steps and indicators of community organization*, Review of Research, Vol 2, Iss 12, Pp 1-4 (2013).

session that the feedback form was also a way to express oneself and seek help. All three received a high number of disclosures<sup>104</sup>, much superior to Susan or myself because we did not use the feedback form the same way. Even if everything was done to ensure that no student will be let alone with this revelation, by informing the nurse of the high school for example, the programme was not created to respond to student disclosures and was unable to help them due to a lack of a widespread support system. The programme tried to provide a psychologist for students if one was needed following a lecture, but this has been difficult because high schools should be in charge of supporting students. A more concerted effort is needed to improve students' access to support and services for sufferers of sexual violence<sup>105</sup>.

## 4.2 Paving the way for feminist pedagogical tools

### 4.2.1 Lecturers pedagogical roots: “Feminist popular education” – The female tour in the classroom

I argue the way lecturers are recruited is fundamental in order to adapt to each classroom and to create pedagogical methods on gender issues. Lecturers are recruited with diverse professional backgrounds but have in common their interest for gender issues and their involvement in the Paris feminist network. They were all recruited by word-of-mouth in the Parisian feminist community<sup>106</sup>: Louise was recruited by one of her feminist friends already working for the company. Susan heard about it through a gender studies teacher. Geena met the program coordinator at a trial that was attended by many feminists and Thelma was lead to the job by her acquaintances at Family Planning.

An insight into their academic and professional commitment and a view on their personal herstory<sup>107</sup> should demonstrate my argument. Thelma, Geena, Louise, and Susan

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<sup>104</sup> Here, I am missing some numbers. As it is a sensitive issue, I could not have more precise numbers other than the ones given by lecturers.

<sup>105</sup> The necessity of a new law, aiming to reinforce child protection measures, is being discussed in the *Sénat*, since September 2014. Article available at: [http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2014/09/23/deux-senatrices-veulent-reformer-la-protection-de-l-enfance\\_4493080\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2014/09/23/deux-senatrices-veulent-reformer-la-protection-de-l-enfance_4493080_3224.html). Viewed on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>106</sup> Here, I specifically focus on the lecturers I interviewed but this argument could also be made for the one working in the programme I did not interview. They all belong to the feminist sphere.

<sup>107</sup> ‘Herstory’ is history written from a feminist perspective, emphasising the role of women and their standpoint. It is a neologism coined in the 1970s by Robin Morgan in “Sisterhood Is Powerful” (1970). Also refer to Mills (1992).

have similar university backgrounds<sup>108</sup>. For Louise and Geena, studying abroad was the trigger for involvement in gender issues. Thelma and Susan acquired professional experience before heading back to university lecture halls. All of them were involved in humanities studies. Thelma studied sociology and did her master's thesis on the reputation of female high school students. She has planned to complete her study next year by taking a course on "victimology". As a volunteer at Family Planning, she was already familiar with speaking about sexuality in the classroom. Geena studied political sciences and wrote a PhD in law about patenting in the pharmaceutical sector. In her thesis, she constantly refers to feminist studies and uses their analyses to challenge juridical approaches. She discovered gender studies during her academic stay in India and then in the United States where she met and worked with Catharine MacKinnon, an American feminist, scholar, lawyer, teacher and activist who greatly influenced her. Susan first studied law and became an accredited lawyer. After her accreditation, she pursued a two-year master's program in gender studies at Paris University. She is currently finishing the second year of her master's. She wrote her thesis using a feminist psychoanalysis approach to question her professional practice in high school as a lecturer. Susan also has volunteer experience at SOS homophobia. She organised pedagogical interventions in high schools discussing free sexual choices and orientation. Louise studied political sciences. During her year abroad in England she took a class on gender issues and following her return to France, she wrote a master's thesis directly inspired by what she had learnt abroad. She is currently working for the French government on gender-based violence. University played quite a role on their careers and individual choices. Personal commitment, education and choices were also influential in their involvement. During the interview, Thelma refers to her patriarchal family education, evoking her Spanish and Tunisian roots. Susan refers to LGBT rights and her involvement as a volunteer in an organisation called "SOS homophobia". Geena spoke about northern France, her home region, as a disadvantaged zone with rampant poverty,

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<sup>108</sup> The assumption that university fosters gender analysis and practices could be made: gender differences are becoming a part of professional conversations and consciousness. On this matter, see: *Transforming scholarship: why women's and gender studies students are changing themselves and the world*, Michele Tracey Berger, Cheryl Radeloff, New York ; London : Routledge, 2011.

violence and incest. Louise spoke about her childhood and her early protests against what she refers to as unfair rules.

What is interesting to note is that whilst lecturers did not receive any group training prior to entering the classroom, their sessions were organised according to the same principles and the same goals. This can be explained by the fact that they decided to provide gender equality awareness sessions in order to transmit a feminist agenda. When they describe their sessions, three of them say they speak about feminism from the very beginning. To do so, they all refer to the principle of “popular education” which they describe as a way to work from students’ knowledge, which is the base of empowering students such as previously discussed. Louise gives a description of “popular education” saying it is a way to get students to talk about their experiences, create some distance, question and compare ideas, and which leads students to reposition themselves in relation to their preconceived opinions on the subject. The lecturers I interviewed all agree on the same idea, sometimes even using the same words to express it. Geena explains using a nice metaphor the need to adapt to every situation and student:

*“When you plant a seed, it depends on the soil, the wind, the sun, the humidity, on everything. You can’t arrive with your gardening kit and plant your seed between the desert and a wetland. It’s just not the same thing. So, there are some students who need us to do things step by step, that we deconstruct everything, and there are others for whom it has clearly already been done. So, we had to use the ground, the inequalities of the awakening of each student to make sure the discussion flowed and to use students’ words. And ensure that the messages are passed on but not to be a robot that puts definitions on the board”.*

Geena’s quotation is illuminating because it also shows that before going into a classroom a lecturer needs to know the public s/he is going to address in order to adapt his/her discourse. On this subject, it is important to state that ADRIC provided this information before each lecture: the numbers of students, the type of class and eventually if there was anything special to know about the group (e.g: sexist violence in the classroom, in the high school etc.). Louise recalls, *“The risk is to enter a cycle and not to*

question it, to apply a recipe and not to adapt to the demands of each student". Susan completes Geena and Louise's ideas by showing lecturers themselves are multifaceted and that this must be taken into account as well as their professional position:

*"What is interesting in these kind of lectures, in front of adolescents, is to work on your position. It's strange to work in a school [...] knowing that schools are at the highest level of the [French] Republic, which defends equality, and at the same time is very contradictory and ambivalent in the way that it produces very standardised and gendered behaviours [...]. So you, in terms of a lecturer on this subject, I think you always have to be careful, [...] we have integrated, as part of ourselves, lots of standardised and gendered attitudes and behaviours. You, your position, it's important because you've come to deconstruct ideas. And then, you have to ask yourself in what type of environment you've come to deconstruct things. Have you yourself already deconstructed what you're about to deconstruct for the students? I don't have an answer, but I think that it's essential, when you give lectures in this way, to have previously, seriously, worked on yourself and to be aware of your personal issues. It's not easy to be face to face with teenagers, there are so many things from your own adolescence...These are everyday subjects for them, but also for you too: societal relations, it's something that strikes you to a certain extent. I wonder a little bit, and sometimes I find myself in a position where I ask myself: did I just reproduce something [a stereotype]? ...I find it interesting to have this approach. But I wonder if all the lecturers are properly armed for that. Do we have enough perspective on ourselves, on the subject, on our position, to really...after all it can never be neutral, otherwise we'd need a robot! But you can't allow yourself to lecture on this subject and reproduce significant standardised discussions or activities".*

This reflexion by Susan on herself – and other lecturers' - positions shows the complex look lecturers have on their work. It also demonstrates the particular care and nuances with which they teach their work. Even if, and this idea is developed later on, lecturers

adapt their discourses to their public and surroundings (they do not always work in welcoming spaces), they all have in common a sound understanding of feminism and feminist theories and develop an intersectional approach, not only for students but also for themselves, to be able to label and criticise their own standardised gendered behaviours.

#### **4.2.2 Defining feminist pedagogical tools**

In this section, I gave an evaluation of the most recent feminist pedagogies, humanistic education and engaged pedagogy. Indeed, pedagogical practices have been widely discussed among scholars. Here, three main approaches - complementary to each other – have been investigated: the humanistic approach, investigated by Yves Bertrand (1979), the feminist pedagogies, described by Claudie Solar (1992), and the ‘engaged pedagogy,’ characterised by bell hooks<sup>109</sup> (1994). In light of my research and of the statements I have made throughout my thesis, I present the best practices and recommendations for lecturers speaking about sexuality and gender equality.

Feminist pedagogies have been influenced by humanistic education. In defining a humanistic education, Yves Bertrand (1979, p.17) summarises the facilitating work as follows: “to create a climate of trust, to allow individuals to define their objectives, to serve as a guide if necessary, to make available the most possible resources, to be seen as a resource group, to accept both the intellectual and emotional expressions; to become a participating member of the group, a student; to express feelings, to try to understand the views and attitudes of others, and to accept one’s own limitations”. Greta Hofmann Nemiroff (1988, p.20) sums up the contribution of humanistic education in feminist pedagogy: “Humanistic Education can inform Women’s Studies pedagogy with the stated recognition that affective and cognitive learning must be mutually reinforcing”. Indeed, feminist pedagogies were inspired by the idea of putting human beings – in this case women, especially – at the centre of learning. During second wave feminism, individual history played a strong role in the development of a collective history (such as the development of support group), distinguishing between the public and the private. As

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<sup>109</sup> Deliberately written in lowercase, bell hooks is the author’s pen name.



Carole Pateman argued (1983), “The dichotomy between the private and the public is central to almost two centuries of feminist writing and political struggle; it is, ultimately, what the feminist movement is about.” This perspective also emerged in Johnella Butler’s interpretation (1984, p.15). She writes, “Self-knowledge is the basis of all knowledge.” Additionally, in Briskin’s description of a feminist pedagogical approach, “[it] seeks to incorporate the affective, emotional and experiential into the learning process and to replace the competitiveness of the classroom interaction with communal, collective and cooperative ways of learning” (Briskin, 1990, p. 23, in *Dentelle de pédagogie féministe* (p. 274). Claudie Solar (1992, p.267), in particular, explains feminist pedagogic characteristics and analyses some of their limitations. She offers helpful criteria in pinpointing feminist pedagogies. She goes on to define: “The ‘feminist pedagogy’ is the science of education that simultaneously examines the teaching, learning, knowledge and the learning environment from a feminist perspective, that is to say in a body of knowledge that underlies the movement towards a transformation of the social division between the sexes.” She is careful using the singular and prefers using the plural stating there are multiple and diverse feminist pedagogies since feminism is multifaceted. Indeed, the multifaceted nature of feminist pedagogies is an important idea, which brings about the complexity of delimitating a framework. Bell hooks reflections on pedagogy mentions education as the “practice of freedom,” where the lecturer has a strong role to play. Bell hooks’s pedagogy is grounded in a deep knowledge of the experiences of oppressed and marginalised individuals. She has been influenced by Paulo Freire’s theories<sup>110</sup> and specifically black feminism, which she played a role in starting. Hooks sees transformation as essential to human beings and has developed a pedagogy that supports transformation in both personal and societal realms. Her pedagogy provides hope and envisions learning communities in which people are capable of transformation.

The manner in which we speak about sexuality is changing. Lecturers contribute to change, as they are familiar with gender issues and their experiences in the classroom

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<sup>110</sup> Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, placed adult literacy in the heart of oppressed emancipation (Freire, 1974). He is best known for his book entitled, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*; which is considered one of the foundational texts of the critical pedagogy movement. On the artistic session developed for students in the Youth for Equality programme, one of the sessions proposed was dedicated to forum-theater, directly inspired by Paulo Freire.

grow. Sex education is no longer only about health prevention<sup>111</sup> but has taken a new turn to focus on sexism, violence and sexual order. The four interviews with lecturers demonstrated that, during lectures at school, sexuality is more about gender relations and power discussions than explicit sexual behaviour. Thus, it is important to think in terms of feminist pedagogical tools because a programme on equality can be something that has nothing to do with gender and political objectives. Indeed, by reading different authors' views on pedagogies, shared criteria emerged and paralleled the practices of the four lecturers interviewed; interactive practices are a way of enhancing and valuing female experiences and common knowledge, based on individual experience, and a perspective on social changes, individual and collective transformation. Indeed, my research work showed that lecturers' profiles and practices, classroom organisation and the consequences of lectures generate insight into successful and unsuccessful pedagogical tools.

Concerning lecturers' profiles and training, a good training of lecturers allowing an exchange of practice seems necessary. Also, the selection of lecturers involved in feminist issues, in a professional or academic capacity seems to ensure that the information provided achieves, as bell hooks described, social "transformation". With this perspective a comprehensive understanding of intersectionality and sex and gender division is necessary as well as taking into account classrooms specificities. Indeed, lectures need to be capable of adapting to each classrooms and every student, taking into account the questions and experiences they have (for example, being aware of the positions of students if they belong to professional or general classes). No prefabricated recipe for success can be used. Furthermore, debates and knowledge competencies provided to students should take into account social debate and topicality. The thought developed through gender analysis is the basis of deconstruction discourses transferred from lecturers to students. It should take into account experiences by boys and girls and engage boys as well as girls in order not to marginalise one sex over the other. During a session, the students' inputs and best practices are leverage for change. Thus, dynamics between students can be used to go push the boundaries of debates and deconstruction

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<sup>111</sup> On this point, refer to *The Male in the Head: Young People, Heterosexuality and Power* by Janet Holland; Caroline Ramazanoglu; Sue Sharpe; Rachel Thomson (1998).

process. It aims at valorising students' thoughts. Concerning this point, this research also showed that creating a safe environment for debate, students' self-empowerment and self-valorisation is successful. Also, lecturers need to be clear (including taking into account the level of comprehension of students) and to ensure a clear position (on prostitution and consent for example).

Concerning classroom organisation and materialistic problems, this research showed that students need the right type of environment to be receptive. The care taken in the class ensuring smaller classes was an asset – no more than one class or around thirty students. Gender-balanced classrooms work well since they allow an exchange of different experiences. Moreover, the need for teachers to be trained is essential.

Following the end of the lectures, two points are important. Firstly, partnerships between teachers, nurses and the whole education team is beneficial, as well as the partnership with the organisation managing the programme and the people organising artistic workshops when they take place in a classroom. In fact, these partnerships help to reinforce the programme as a whole policy and ensure a global awareness. Secondly, spontaneous attestations on feedback forms of violence suffered by students needs a comprehensive answer and the implementation of a support system.

To conclude, the Youth for Equality programme complements the traditions and footsteps of larger feminist pedagogies developed by scholars.

## Conclusion

The Youth for Equality programme has no precedent policy in France. As such, studying this programme allowed for the examination of the ways in which gender equality, sexuality and violence are discussed in high schools. In particular this paper aimed at exploring and analysing the interactions between lecturers and students and was able to show how these links contributed towards a teaching method based on feminist pedagogies. Before arriving at the analysis however, I first began my research by firmly positioning the Youth for Equality programme within the relevant political and societal situation.

To answer this, I described, in Chapter One, the French context in which this programme took place. I analysed the most important political events from 2010 to 2015 and, through the thesis, I showed how these political and societal events had consequences on the lecturers' and students' engagement. I also gave an overview of the Youth for Equality programme; found its general objectives and presented my sources. In Chapter Two I demonstrated how lecturers created a special setting for conversation; I noticed the importance of creating an environment adapted for discussion and I showed how it allowed gender stereotypes to emerge. I focused on two case studies, the "skirt case" and the influence of same-sex marriage and "gender theory" on the daily life of students. I showed how in classes with deeply rooted stereotypes, lecturers were still able to fulfil the aims of the programme by opening up discussions on the culture of equality. In Chapter Three and Four I focused on the contents of the lectures; its accomplishments but also its obstacles. I carefully analysed the knowledge and personal competencies transferred from the lecturers to the students. I also examined how students received this knowledge and if the programme was able to achieve its goals. However in my research, I found that students, teachers and lecturers were all challenged by the programme. This was followed by an explanation of why and how. Finally, I researched how lecturers responded to these challenges and investigated their pedagogical methods. From this analysis, I put into perspective what academic researchers wrote about pedagogical tools

and more specifically feminist pedagogical tools. Then I discussed the academic literature in relation to the Youth for Equality programme and offered a summary of the principal issues and tools that can be reinvestigated.

This deep analysis of the programme is important, because as previously mentioned, this programme, or anything similar, has never been implemented in French high schools, and has the potential to be more widespread. But to achieve this, it is important to recognise the positive and negative aspects and draw on its founding principles and pedagogical tools.

As a general statement, the issues France has faced, especially regarding same-sex marriage, impacted debates particularly during 2012. It is important to note that once this law was passed, students reacted differently to the topic of same-sex marriage and accepted the change more willingly. In order to advance the objectives of gender equality, this kind of programme is fundamental (especially after reading the candid feedback forms, or after hearing some of the statement made by students during lectures) as well as a global societal policy.

Some of the limitations encountered during this research include three main areas requiring further research. I could have been more focused on intersectionality to take into account gender, class, and race etc. One of the problems is that France's definition of diversity prohibits the gathering of statistics on ethnicity. Thus, this issue remains partial, but I hope further research will develop it. Moreover, the Youth for Equality programme is in its early stage of realisation, having been implemented for only four years, and I think it is difficult to measure the "culture of equality" in such a short period of time. That is why this kind of programme should be further expanded in the future, not only in the Ile-de-France region but also elsewhere, and be further analysed academically. I did not deeply analyse the division between professional and general students, but I also feel this point needs further research. As explained in Chapter Four a gap needs to be addressed, as do stereotypes about professional students and general students.

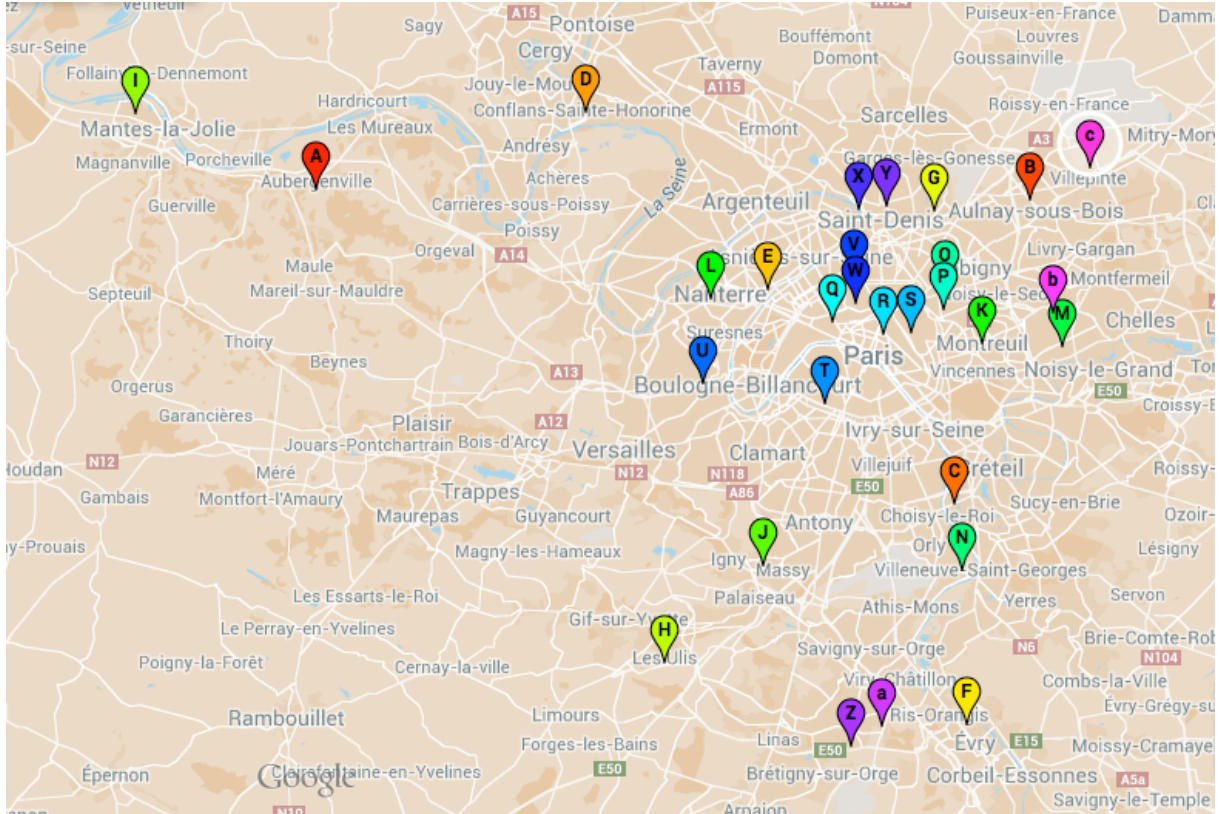
To summarise the importance and relevance of this thesis, it is interesting to note that the vice-president of the Ile-de-France region, upon hearing of this research paper, understood the importance of analysing this programme and commissioned a report, currently awaiting budgetary approval. Any future implementation of the Youth for

Equality programme should take into consideration the points developed in this paper, for example when students wrote on feedback forms about being abused, and also the areas, mentioned above, that require further research.

In order to have an impact on creating lasting gender equality, the education system that implicitly teaches gendered behaviours needs to change. This programme has the potential to offer a long-term solution by empowering young people to take responsibility for a future that breaks taboos and aims to eliminate normalised sexist, homophobic, racist, and violent attitudes.

## Annex n°1: Cartography

### High schools' names and territorial distribution.



- |                                   |                                  |                                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Lycée Van Gogh           | <b>K</b> Lycée Jean Jaurès       | <b>S</b> Lycée Diderot         |
| <b>B</b> Lycée Voillaume          | <b>L</b> Lycée Joliot-Curie      | <b>T</b> Lycée Jean Lurçat     |
| <b>C</b> Lycée Jean Macé          | <b>M</b> Lycée Cugnot            | <b>U</b> Lycée Santos Dumont   |
| <b>D</b> Lycée Jules Ferry        | <b>N</b> Lycée Armand Guillaumin | <b>V</b> Lycée Auguste Blanqui |
| <b>E</b> Lycée Paul Painlevé      | <b>O</b> Lycée Lucie Aubrac      | <b>W</b> Lycée Marcel Cachin   |
| <b>F</b> Lycée Charles Baudelaire | <b>P</b> Lycée Simone Weil       | <b>X</b> Lycée Bartholdi       |
| <b>G</b> Lycée Arthur Rimbaud     | <b>Q</b> Lycée Belliard          | <b>Y</b> Lycée Suger           |
| <b>H</b> Lycée l'Essouriau        | <b>R</b> Lycée Guimard           | <b>Z</b> Lycée Paul Langevin   |
| <b>I</b> Lycée Jean Rostand       |                                  | <b>a</b> Lycée Albert Einstein |
| <b>J</b> Lycée Parc de Vilgénis   |                                  | <b>b</b> Lycée Blaise Pascal   |
|                                   |                                  | <b>c</b> Lycée Jean Rostand    |

## Annex n°2: ADRIC's archive

### Details of the lecture reports

#### Gender-based violence lecture reports

Date	Type of high school	Type of the class	Number of students	Number of boys	Number of girls	Other participant
10/02/12	Professional	2nd year electrotechnology	10	10	0	2 librarians and 1 teacher
21/11/11	Professional	2nd year	14	3	11	NA
07/11/11	General and Technological	2nd year professional A class of 2nd year elective "health and social"	20	15*	5*	NA
03/02/12	Multi-purpose	Electrical and numerical systems	21	1*	20*	NA
06/02/12	Multi-purpose	Sciences and laboratories	24	24	0	1 teacher 1 teacher of social sciences and economics
06/02/12	Multi-purpose	1st year STG en information-communication	24	11*	18*	Principal teacher, CPE and the creative workshop teacher
13/02/12	General and Technological	Bac professional commerce	25	10*	15*	NA
05/12/11	Professional	commerce	26	7*	19*	NA
13/01/12	Professional	2nd year Healthcare A class of 2nd general	29	3*	26*	NA
10/11/11	General	3 classes of mostly boys	30	14*	16*	2 teachers
08/12/11	Professional	3 class of girls and two of boys	30	30	0	NA
08/12/11	Professional	A class of 2nd year general	30	20*	10*	NA
24/01/12	Professional	general	30	14*	16*	NA
25/01/12	General and Technological	A class of 2nd year general	30	14*	16*	NA
07/02/12	General and Technological	A mix of 2 class of 2nd year	30	17*	13*	1 teacher and 1 CPE
09/11/12	General and Technological	one class of 1st year science stream	30	14*	16*	NA
09/02/12	Multi-purpose	A mix of 2 classes: One of 2nd year and one of bac professional	34	17*	17*	2 teachers and the creative workshop teacher 1 librarian, 1 teacher, the creative workshop teacher (for the theater project)
09/02/12	Multi-purpose	A class of 2nd year general	35	17*	18*	2 teachers
01/12/11	Professional	NA	40	36	4	2 teachers
19/09/11	Professional	NA	48	46*	2*	NA
22/09/11	Professional	A Professional class	48	46*	2*	NA
26/09/11	Multi-purpose	2 classes of bac professional	48	4	44	NA



14/11/11	Multi-purpose	2 class of 2nd electrotechnology 3 classes: one of 2nd year professional and one of Bac professional	48	46*	2*	NA
01/12/11	Multi-purpose	professional	50	23*	27*	NA
04/11/11	Multi-purpose	A mix of classes	60	28*	32*	NA
24/11/11	Multi-purpose	2 classes: one of 2nd year and one of BTS A mix of 3 classes of 2nd year 2 classes of 2nd year general and 1 of 2nd year professional	60	44*	16*	NA
10/10/11	General and Technological	1 of 2nd year professional	70	32*	39*	NA

### Gender-based violence and sexual liberty lectures' reports

15/11/11	Self-managed	A mix of classes	50	24*	26*	6-7 adults form the pedagogical team
15/11/11	Self-managed	A mix of teachers and students	60	28*	32*	NA

### Sexual liberty lectures' reports

27/09/11	Multi-purpose	2 class of 2nd electrotechnology	27	0	27	NA
16/11/11	Multi-purpose	2 class of 2nd year health and social	27	1*	27*	NA
13/02/12	Multi-purpose	A class of 2nd year general	30	14	16	NA
16/02/12	Multi-purpose	A class of 2nd year general	30	14	16	NA
17/02/12	Multi-purpose	A class of 2nd year general	30	14	16	NA
13/12/11	General and Technological	2 classes of Bac professional 2nd year and Bac Professional 3rd year	40	18*	22*	NA
02/12/11	Professional	2 classes: one of 2nd year professional and one of Bac professional	50	23*	27*	NA

### Secularism lectures' reports

02/02/12	Multi-purpose	A class of 2nd year élective STI	20	19	1	
03/02/12	Multi-purpose	A class of 2nd year general	30	14	16	
07/02/12	General and Technological	A mix of 2 class of 2nd year	30	14*	16*	1 teacher, 1 CPE
09/02/12	Technological	A class of 2nd year general	35	17	18	
08/11/11	General	A class of 2nd year general	36	18	18	
05/12/11	Professional	A class of 2nd year professional	40	18*	22*	NA
23/09/11	Multi-purpose	2 class of 2nd year general	60	28*	32*	
03/11/11	Multi-purpose	NA	60	28*	32*	
04/11/11	Professional	A class of 2nd year general	60	28*	32*	
01/12/11	General and Technological	2 class	60	28*	32*	3 teachers, the principal and the deputy head
03/01/12	Professional	A mix of 1st year and 2nd year de CAP et de plusieurs sections	50	42	8	9 teachers, 1 CPE
18/10/11	Multi-purpose	NA	80	38*	42*	

### Gender-based orientation lectures' reports

26/09/11	Professional	classe de CAP commerce	11	5	6	NA
14/12/11	Professional	1 classe de Bac Healthcare	24	1	23	NA
12/01/12	Professional	A class of 2nd year general	30	14	16	NA
14/11/11	Multi-purpose	CAP 2nd year electrotechnology et 2nd year general	35	26	9	3 teachers
10/02/12	General and Technological	2nd year general	35	17	18	1 teacher
14/11/11	General	2 class of 2nd year general	37	17	20	NA
17/11/11	General	2 class of 2nd year general	60	33*	37*	NA
29/11/11	Multi-purpose	A mix of 2 classes: One of 2nd year and one of BTS	70	33*	37*	NA

Bac = Baccalaureate (French leaving certificate)

BTS = two year technical degree

CAP = professional aptitude certificate

CPE = Principal educational advisor

NA = not available

STG = French technical high school diploma

STI = French IT high school diploma

*\* Numbers on the repartition of boys and girls in the classroom were missing. These numbers are approximations. They are based on the guidance of Dominique Pagès from ADRIC, considering the gender-based orientation and numbers on youth demography. They are just here to give a general idea.*

## Annex n°3: ADRIC's archive

### Feedback forms analysed and other documents

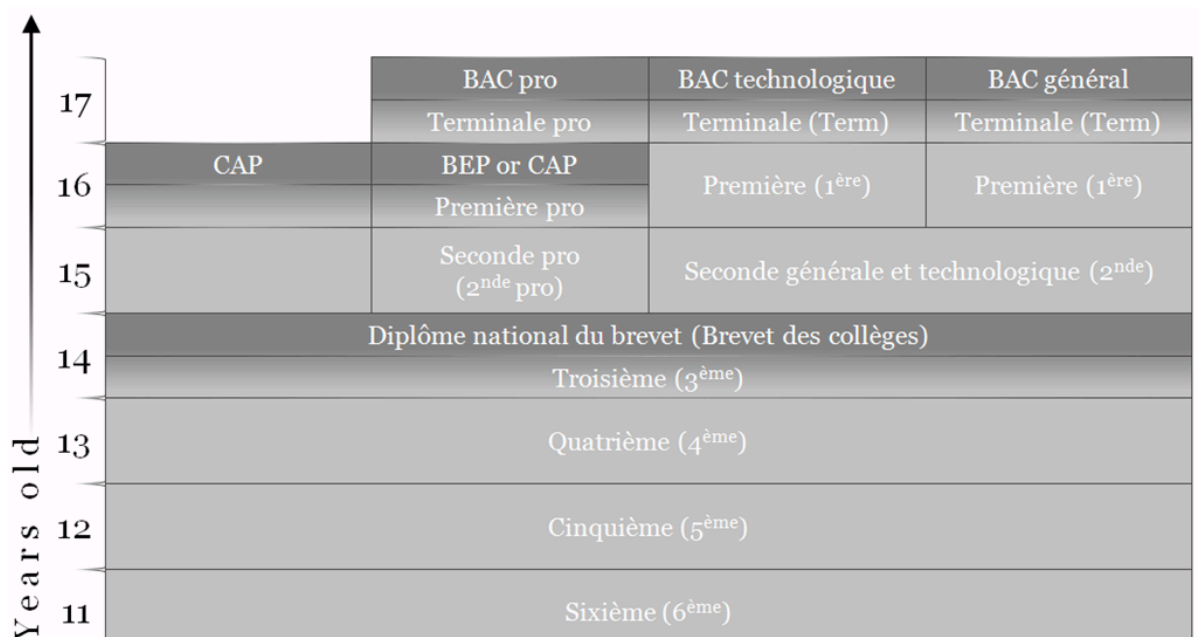
Date	Type of lecture	Number of feedback forms analysed	Type of class	Boys	Girls
10/12/12	Sexual liberty	32	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	18	14
	Gender-based		2 <sup>nd</sup> year Bac		
10/12/12	violence	19	Pro	19	0
17/12/12	Sexual liberty	30	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	12	18
	Gender-based		2 <sup>nd</sup> year + 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
17/12/12	violence	16	year Bac Pro	14	2
	Gender-based		2 <sup>nd</sup> year Bac		
19/12/12	violence	16	Pro	7	9
19/12/12	Sexual liberty	31	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	15	16
	Gender-based		2 classes 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
15/01/13	violence	23	year Bac Pro	11	12
	Gender-based		2 classes 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
15/01/13	violence	28	year	13	15
22/01/13	Sexual liberty	30	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	14	16
	Gender-based		2 <sup>nd</sup> year Bac		
22/01/13	violence	19	Pro	19	0
23/01/13	Sexual liberty	29	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	16	13
23/01/13	Sexual liberty	30	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	15	15
25/01/13	Sexual liberty	25	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	13	12
25/01/13	Sexual liberty	31	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	12	19

High school n°1	Annual Report 2013-2014
High school n°2	Annual Report 2013-2014
High school n°3	Annual Report 2013-2014

For information:

03/01/12	Secularism	25	NA	NA	NA
03/01/12	Secularism	49	NA	NA	NA

## Annex n°4 : Diagram : the organisation of France's high school education system



*Translation :*

Seconde = second year

Première = first year

Terminale = final year

Pro = Professional students

Technologique = technology students

Général = general students

*This diagram has been find at : <http://thelyceetimes.blogspot.fr>*

## Annex n°5 : Facts and Figures

### Synthesis of ADRIC's role in the Youth for Equality programme

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of high schools participating</b>	<b>Adults (educative team)</b>	<b>High school students</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	18 high schools	41 lecturers 955 adults	88 lectures 4 008 high school students
<b>2012-2013</b>	23 high schools (including 16 new high schools)	18 lecturers 435 adults	154 lecturers 4 729 high school students
<b>2013-2014</b>	26 high schools (including 7 new high schools)	8 lecturers 163 adults	159 lecturers 4 263 high school students
<b>2014-2015</b>	28 high schools (including 9 new high schools)	20 lecturers 353 adults	<i>164 lecturers*</i> <i>4185 high school students*</i>
<b>TOTAUX</b>	<b>29 high schools</b>	<b>87 lecturers</b> <b>1 906 adults</b>	<b>401 lecturers</b> <b>17 273 high school students</b>

**\* provisional figures**

*This is an internal document kindly provided by ADRIC.*

## Annex n° 6 : Feedback form

### « Jeunes pour l'égalité »

Séance auprès des jeunes du lycée Jean Macé, Choisy-le-Roi, 94

18 novembre 2011, de 10h à 12h

Intervention de .....

#### FICHE D'EVALUATION

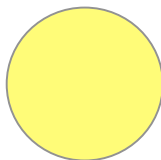
Nom/prénom :

Classe :

E-mail :

#### COMMENT VOUS SENTEZ-VOUS EN CETTE FIN DE SEANCE ?

Dessinez votre smiley :



#### CETTE SEANCE VOUS A-T-ELLE INTERESSE-E ?

oui       non       un peu

Pourquoi ?

#### QUELS POINTS IMPORTANTS RETENEZ-VOUS DE CETTE SEANCE ?

**TRANSLATION**

**"YOUTH FOR EQUALITY"**

Session with the students of Jean Marcé High School, Choisy-le-Roi, 94

November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, from 10am to 12pm

Lecturer: .....

**EVALUATION PAGE**

**Last name/ first name:**

**Class:**

**E-mail:**

**HOW DO YOU FEEL AT THE END OF THIS SESSION?**

**Draw your emoticon:**

**DID THIS LECTURE INTEREST YOU?**

Yes

No

A little

**Why?**

**WHAT IMPORTANT POINTS DO YOU REMEMBER FROM THIS SESSION?**

## **Annex n°7: Methodology**

### **Thematic guideline for the interviews**

*I chose a semi-directive methodology, prepared with the following thematic guideline. To start the interview, I asked a general question about lecturers' experience on the Youth for Equality programme. If necessary, I asked a question included in the thematic guideline.*

#### **Initial circumstances of the job:**

- **Circumstances** (initiating event, personal links with the subject, personal links with feminism)
- **The decision making process** (protagonist, discussions, resolutions, why did you choose to do this job?)

#### **The implementation of the terms of the contract:**

- **Arrangements on each side** (sessions organisation, communication/link between trainer and schools, training of trainers, balance sheet, session framework: content and shape, meetings with teachers/school directors, formal and informal implicit)
- **The beginnings** (How did you approach this job, first souvenirs, surprises, shifts, first inconvenience; what surprised you, upset, or disappointed you?)
- **Attitudes and unexpected reactions** (in the classroom, in the high school, disturbance and their explanations: differences on social class, on behaviours, other...)



**Session organisation:**

- **Time frame** of the session (limited, unlimited)
  
- **Creation of the session** (individual/collective work)
  
- **Content of the session** (general issues, core themes: which and why, do you use any feminist theories – on conscious or unconscious level). What do you say about patriarchy, gender, and sexuality in your lectures? Can you speak about non-heteronormative sexuality such as bisexuality, homosexuality, transsexuality...? How do you manage speaking about race, ethnicity and class?
  
- **Key messages:** how do you do? Do you need to adjust your vocabulary? Do you feel you have to respect some standards?
  
- **Goal** of the session (personal and professional)
  
- **Type of the session** (organised vertically: such as courses, or organised as a dialogue; how do you handle student discussions), do you address your lectures equally to male and female students? Why? Do you use authority? → Which pedagogic and animation techniques do you use?
  
- **Material/tools** for the session (on the preparation time, during or after the session) Do you use any pedagogic material? Which ones? Why? Do you think you need one? Do you think we need to be given some material?)
  
- **Public reaction** during your session (reluctance, resistance, free speech...)
  
- **Support, monitoring after the session** (cases, consequences)

**Trainers' positioning at school:**

- **Roles** (authorisations, delegations, relation between trainers and teachers or educative workers, scope and limits of the training, the impact of the presence of teachers on the group free-speech)
- **Presentation of the interviewed lecturer** (how does she situate herself: teacher, external trainer, young woman, feminist? Do you think students in the classroom will identify with your involvement with feminism? Why?)
- **Strategies of adjustment** (gap between school and your mission, between school standards and your goal? “Creative constraints”)
- Relations with **the outside world** (news, same-sex marriage debate, prostitution, gender issues... Knowing the controversial use made of “gender theory” by conservatives movements, are you still willing to use it? Why? How those exterior elements do or don’t influence your work at school?)
- **Autonomy** (is your session framework free or controlled, do you have any obligations or restriction imposed by others or yourself, personal change/transformation after your sessions)

**Your work on the long-term period and the end of it**

- **Fears, prevention and initial hopes** (outstanding examples, commitment, theory, activism, personal journey)
- **Opinion and perception** of sessions (those that you have done) and of the **general system** (JPE project). Which difficulties are you confronted with? How do you deal with them?
- **End of this experience or continuity** (circumstances, gaps between criteria the employer and the employee)
- **Conclusion** (and what if you had to start again)

**Annex n°8: Rosea Posey artwork**  
**Artwork entitled “Judgements”**



@Rosea Posey

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Law n° 2010-769 of July 9, 2010 (in French : *Loi relative aux violences faites spécifiquement aux femmes, aux violences au sein des couples et aux incidences de ces dernières sur les enfants*, consolidated version (March 15, 2015) :

<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000022454032&dateTexte=>

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Law n° 2012-954 of August 6, 2012 (in French : *Loi relative au harcèlement sexuel*) :

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Law n° 2013-404 of May 17, 2013 (in French : *Loi ouvrant le mariage aux couples de personnes de même sexe*) :

<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027414540&categorieLien=id>

#### **Archives**

L'Agence de développement des relations interculturelles pour la citoyenneté (ADRIC)'s archives : 57 lecture reports, 14 syntheses of feedbacks, 2013-2014 annual reports from 3 high schools.

## **Interviews**

Ms. Thelma, personal communication, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Ms. Geena, personal communication, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Ms. Louise, personal communication, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014

Ms. Susan, personal communication, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

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