

Studying in a French Sensitive Urban Zone

Institutional Racism and Youth in the *Banlieues*

Abstract

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In French, the word “*banlieues*” (suburb) usually designates an urban zone located around the big cities. However, it now commonly refers to marginalized spaces in France where, since the period of urban policies, social housing and industrial growth, live a majority of immigrants from the former French colonies. Those designated as ‘youth of immigrant descent’ living in the *banlieues* are often subject to racism which emerge from discriminatory practices of various institutions such as the police, housing or employment. This study focuses on the topic of institutional racism which youngsters in the *banlieues* are exposed to, starting from the schooling system. Identifying the phenomenon as a legacy of the French imperial past but also resulting from a perpetuation of racist discourses in society, I will analyze how it impacts these youngsters, in regard of the way they shape their identity and construct their relation to society, also through the presentation of a Focus Group conducted in a West Parisian *banlieue*.