Julie Pagis

May '68

Shaping Political Generations

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Protest and Social Movements

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To Agnes and Jean-Jacques,
my parents

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List of acronyms and political organisations

1986 movement	Student movement protesting against the reforms to the university system proposed by the then Minister for Higher Education Alain Devaquet. They were concerned that the proposal would mean entry selection, an increase in tuition fees, and a double standard university system. Jacques Chirac, the President, ultimately withdrew the bill and Devaquet resigned.
1995 movement	1995 saw the most significant strikes since May'68. They were held in protest against the then Prime Minister Alain Juppé's plan to reform the retirement system, pensions and social security. These strikes affected public transport, as well as major public administrations (the postal service, telecom services, electricity and gas, national education, hospitals, finances etc.). At its height, the movement attracted two million demonstrators.
ACO	Action Catholique Ouvrière. (Catholic Workers Action). The ACO is an organisation that aims to bring Catholicism to the workers through grassroots evangelism. It was founded in 1950.
AEAR	Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires (Revolutionary Artists and Writers Association). This association of Communist writers and artists was founded as the French section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers established by the Soviet Comintern in 1930.
Antifa	Action Antifasciste (Antifascist action) This is an extreme-left current of "autonomous" collectives that organise demonstration, reflection and sometimes violent action against fascism.
Attac	Association pour la Taxation des Transactions financières et pour l'Action Citoyenne (Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions and Citizen's Action) is an activist network that opposes neo-liberal dominance in globalisation.
CAL	Comités d'Action Lycéen (High-school Action Committees) Committees based in secondary schools (Lycées) responsible for organising demonstrations, barricading and sit-ins. They played an important role in May 68 in mobilising younger students.
CFDT	Confédération française démocratique du travail (French Democratic Confederation of Labour). One of the five major national trade unions in France, it is left-wing, and was born of the secularisation of the CFTC (French Confederation of Christian Workers) in 1964.

CGT	Confédération générale du travail (General Confederation of Labour). One of the five major national trade unions in France, with historical links to the Communist party.
CLEOP	Comité de liaison étudiants ouvriers paysans (Student workers peasants' liaison committee)
CPE	Contrat première embauche (First employment contract). In Spring 2008, then Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin attempted to push through the introduction of an employment contract specifically for young people that would have seen made it easier to fire a young employee in the first two years. It provoked widespread opposition and demonstrations particularly among young people. The government ultimately withdrew the proposal.
CVB	Comité Vietnam de Base (Rank and File Vietnam Committees). Radical grassroots action groups aiming to raise awareness about the situation in Vietnam through posters, placards, brochures, and selling the "Vietnam Courrier" newspaper in marketplaces.
CVN	Comité Vietnam National (National Vietnam Committee) Trotskyist committees (linked to the JCR and more visible than the CVB due to meetings that attracted public and media attention.
DAL	Droit au logement (Right to housing) A non-profit organization created in 1990 to defend housing rights for the homeless and those in poor housing, in the name of the legal right to housing inscribed by French law.
EE	The Ecole Emancipée (Emancipated School) movement claims to be the oldest current in French unionism, dating back to 1910. More recently, it has been an important current in the FEN teachers' union. It combines extreme-left positions with alternative pedagogy (Freinet) in the goal of changing society through the school system.
FEN	Fédération de l'éducation nationale (Federation for National Education) A federation of teaching unions that existed between 1929 and 2000. There were a number of factions within it, particularly "Unity independence and democracy," close to the Socialists, "Unity and Action," close to the Communists, and the "Emancipated School" close to the far left.
FGEL	Fédération des groupes d'études de lettres (Federation of Humanities Study Groups) Groups that brought together activists from the UNEF student union particularly at the Sorbonne. Contributed to the formation of the MAU.
FGERI	Fédération des groupes d'études et de recherches institutionnelles (Federation of institutional relations study groups). A collective of

interdisciplinary research groups in different disciplines, inspired by Félix Guattari's approach in the experimental clinic La Borde. It was founded in 1964 and in 1967 it was replaced by an association named the Centre d'étude, de recherche et de formation institutionnelles (CERFI), which still exists today.

Francas   Fédération Nationale des Francas (The national federation of Francas) A popular education non-profit youth organisation founded in 1944, designed to complement the school system through holiday programmes, and out of school hours activities, in order to provide opportunities for children from all backgrounds and thus work towards social justice.

FSU   Fédération Syndicale Unitaire (Unitary Union Federation). This is one of the major unions in the education and public sectors today. It was formed in 1992 out of a schism within the FEN.

FUA   Front universitaire antifasciste (Antifascist University Front). Founded in reaction to the putsch in Algiers in 1961, this group was organized by Trotskyist students from the Sorbonne, federating various antifascist action committees among high school and university students that had been set up since the 1950s. It advocated radical opposition to the extreme-right, including the use of violence. It paved the way for the JCR that would emerge in 1966.

GP   Gauche prolétarienne (Proletarian Left) A Mao-spontex movement established in 1968, inspired by the May 22 anti-authoritarian movement and the UJC(ml), when these two organisations were banned by government decree in 1968.

JAC   Jeunesse Agricole catholique (Rural Catholic Youth) Founded in 1929, initially intended to evangelise rural and farming milieus, it also allowed farmers to organise themselves professionally (health insurances, cooperatives, unions). It was replaced by the MRJC in 1965.

JC   La Jeunesse communiste (Communist Youth) is the political youth group of the French Communist Party/

JCR   Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire (Communist Revolutionary Youth). Born of the expulsion of "entryist" far-leftists from the UEC in 1965. Involved in the anti-Vietnam war committees, high-school action committees (CAL), and antifascism. They were also motivated by anti-colonialism and internationalism. JCR activists were very much involved in the March 22 Movement, and on the barricades and in confrontations during May '68. It was officially disbanded by government decree on June 12, 1968 as part of the law against radical and armed political groups.

JEC   Jeunesses étudiante chrétienne (Young Christian Students) The group
                    originated in France but is now a worldwide movement. It encourages
                    Christian students to associate social responsibility and faith.
                    During the 1960s the JEC criticised France's opposition to Algerian
                    independence and the use of torture.

JOC   Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne (Young Christian Workers) Originating
                    in Belgium in the 1920s, this movement spread to a number of
                    countries including France. The goal was to reconcile the Church with
                    the industrial workers of the world, and to bring Catholicism to the
                    working classes.

Larzac   The fight for Larzac was a ten-year long protest movement which
                    began with farmers opposing an extension to a military base on the
                    Larzac plateau (in the south of France). From 1973 it attracted support
                    from a much wider group of activists, with rallies in 1974 numbering
                    up to 100,000. The movement became a symbol of wider resistance
                    to the Pompidou government and ended in 1981 when François
                    Mitterrand announced the project would be abandoned.

LCR   Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (Communist Revolutionary
                    League) A Trotskyist political party in France, it was the French
                    division of the Fourth International. It was formed after the JCR
                    was banned in 1968. It published a weekly newspaper called
                    "Rouge" (Red). It officially abolished itself in 2009 to form the New
                    Anticapitalist Party.

Lip   The Lip factory was a watch and clock company that was shut down
                    in the late 1960s due to financial problems. After strikes and factory
                    sit-ins, the factory was taken over by workers as a project in workers'
                    self-management in 1973. The factory was liquidated again in 1976
                    which led to a second round of protests.

LO   Lutte ouvrière (Workers' Struggle) A Trotskyist political party. Due to
                    tensions between this group and the PCF, the LO (and its predecessor
                    Voix Ouvrière, VO, Workers' Voice) adopted semi-clandestine tactics to
                    distribute bulletins in factories. The LO was established after the VO
                    was banned in the wake of May '68. It continues to run presidential
                    candidates today.

March 22 movement   A student movement that began at the University of Nanterre on
                    March 22, 1968 and led to a prolonged sit-in of the administration
                    building. It was led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, among others, and
                    brought together anarchists, situationists, and Trotskyists. Based
                    both on opposition to the Vietnam War, demand for greater everyday
                    autonomy among students, and an end to sex-segregation in dorms, it

was one of the key elements that led to the events of May '68. It was also banned in the presidential decree of June 1968.

MAU   Mouvement d'action universitaire (University Action Movement). Created by activists from the FGEL at the Sorbonne which felt that traditional union structures were no longer appropriate after the March 22 movement. It attempted to provide a unified framework for immediate action, in order to move beyond traditional organisational structures. They sought to move from "a critique of politics to critical politics."

MLAC   Mouvement pour la liberté de l'avortement et de la contraception (Movement for free access to abortion and contraception). Created in 1973, this organisation aimed to legalise abortion in France. It was dissolved in 1975 after the Veil law legalised abortion.

MLF   Mouvement de liberation des femmes (Women's liberation movement) Formed in the wake of the American Women's Lib movement and May '68, this movement aims to gain access to reproductive rights for women, as well as the fight against misogyny and all forms of oppression of women.

MRJC   Mouvement rural de jeunesse chrétienne (Rural Christian Youth Movement) A movement run by young Christians aged between 13 and 16 years old. It claims to be motivated by goals of social justice and equality. It is one of the only movements to be entirely run by and for young people.

NRP   Nouvelle resistance populaire (New Popular Resistance) Created as the armed wing of the GP following the death of an activist killed during an intervention in a factory in 1972. However, the GP refused the use of violent action and the NRP remained nonviolent until the GP was banned in 1973.

OCI   Organisation communiste internationale (International Communist Organisation) Born of the Trotskyist International Communist Party in the 1967, it was also banned in the wake of May '68 but later revived.

OG   Opposition de Gauche (Left Opposition) An organisation founded by Félix Guattari around anti-psychiatry.

Panthères Roses (Pink Panthers) This is an international LGBT organisation created in Montreal in the 2000s. It fights against homophobia, sexism, transphobia, racism and classism.

PCF   Parti communiste français (French Communist Party) The PCF remains a strong political force in France, although it has declined in recent decades. During May '68, the PCF supported the workers' strikes but were critical of the revolutionary student movements.

PLR   Prolétaire ligne rouge (Proletarian Red Line) A Maoist group founded
                             in 1970.

PSU   Parti socialiste unifié (Unified Socialist Party) This party was formed
                             in 1960 through the union of two socialist autonomous parties.
                             Unlike other socialist parties at the time, it supported the student
                             movements during May '68. As self-management was part of its
                             platform it also supported the self-management movement at the
                             Lip Factory.

Ras l'Front   This is an extreme-left antifascist network created in 1980 to combat
                             the rise of the Front National in France.

RESF   Reseau education sans frontières (Education without borders
                             network) A support network for undocumented immigrant families
                             with children enrolled in French schools, as well as for young adult
                             undocumented migrants.

Scalp-Reflex   Section carrément anti-Le Pen (Completely anti-Le Pen Group) An
                             anti-fascist and anarchist group that developed during the 1980s
                             and was associated with violent actions (or attempted actions). It
                             published a revue called REFLEX which is an acronym for the French
                             of 'study network on fascism and the fight against xenophobia and the
                             extreme right'.

SGEN-CFDT   Syndicat Général de l'Education nationale – CFDT (National
                             Education Sector General Union) A union federation affiliated with
                             the CFDT, drawing its membership base from all kinds of employees
                             within the national education system (teachers, researchers, lecturers,
                             but also ministerial personnel, librarians etc.)

SNECMA   Snecma is a French public aeronautical company that has been
                             subject to a number of strikes, with workers protesting against
                             insufficient pay increases and dismissals of workers.

SNI   Syndicat National des instituteurs (National Primary School Teachers
                             Union) Between 1920 and 1992 this was the main union for primary
                             school teachers in France.

Socialisme   (Socialism or Barbarianism) A French non-Stalinist Marxist group
ou barbarie   founded in 1948 whose members included workers as well as
                             intellectuals such as Cornelius Castoriadis, Guy Debord and many
                             others. They produced a journal of the same name from 1949.

SUD   Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques (Solidarity, unity, democracy)
                             A trade union federation favouring progressive views and working
                             with the anti-globalization movement, created in 1981. It operates
                             unionism based on struggle, in opposition to the more reformist
                             unions like the CFDT.

UCMLF   Union des communistes marxistes léninistes de France (Union of
                 French Marxist Leninist Communists) A Maoist group between 1963
                 and 1985, it was opposed to other far-left groups of the time, including
                 the GP.

UEC   Union des étudiants communistes (Union of Communist Students)
                 Independent of but close to the PCF, particularly on student issues.
                 In 1965 the UEC expelled a number of members, accused of being
                 "entryists," extreme-left activists, who were excluded for refusing to
                 support François Mitterrand's candidacy for the presidential election
                 and for their support of Trotskyism. This expulsion led to the creation
                 of the JCR (trotskiste) on one hand and the UJCml (maoïste) on the
                 other.

UGE   Union des Grandes Ecoles. This union was established in 1974,
                 independently of the major student union, UNEF, to specifically
                 address students from the elite universities, management and
                 business schools known in France as the Grandes Ecoles. After May
                 '68 the UGE was entirely integrated into UNEF.

UJCml   Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-leninistes (Union of
                 Communist Marxist-Leninist Youth) A maoist organisation born
                 in 1966 of the expulsion of the maoïsts students of the UEC, the
                 UJCml absorbed most of the UEC's members at the Ecole Normale
                 Supérieur in Paris. Banned in 1968 by government decree, it led to the
                 emergence of the GP.

UNEF   Union nationale des étudiants de France (French National Student
                 Union) is the main national students' union in France, working to
                 present the interests of students in both the national and European
                 political spheres.

Vie nouvelle   Vie Nouvelle (New Life) is an independent popular education
                 organisation, founded in 1947. Its objective is to help its members
                 achieve self-fulfilment while working to improve society. Its
                 philosophy is based in Christian humanism and it works towards
                 equality, justice, inclusion and an end to poverty.

Introduction

"Let's stop everything!
Let's think about it!
And it'll be a blast!"[1]

Why do we so rarely think about what preserves the social order? Perhaps the cost of such reflection is too high, perhaps it is better to not think about it, rather than have to face one's own powerlessness. And yet, if we all simultaneously stopped doing what we are doing – and followed the utopian instructions of *l'An 01* in the epigraph above – this order would be brutally thrown into question, and each of us would realise how much we contribute to maintaining it. The social world does not lend itself to the kind of experiments that are popular among physicists, which momentarily suspend a particular force in order to analyse its nature and effects. But there are rare historical moments that come close to this, during which the established order trembles, ordinary time and social laws are temporarily suspended, and everything that is ordinarily self-evident is thrown into question. These situations constitute veritable experiments, spyholes into the wings of the social world, which reveal the arbitrary and habitually hidden nature of its foundations. During such events, the present and the future are no longer the simple continuation of the past: everything becomes – temporarily – possible. This is particularly true for those participants who share the feeling that they are making history, that they are historical actors and no longer simply bystanders. In these moments, the dialectic between biography and history – do we shape history or are we shaped by it? – takes an unusual turn; it becomes disjointed, as the event destabilises the course of individual and collective destinies.

Is that what an "event" is? A "de-fatalizing" conjuncture that shakes the established order and modifies the course of existence, to the point where one or several cohorts are transformed into "political generations?" This is one of the questions that motivated my work on the events that took place in France during May and June of 1968, and on the biographical consequences for those who participated in them. Who are the people who brought about

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1   Gébé, *L'An 01*, Paris, Éditions du Square, 1972. This comic was originally published as a regular strip in the alternative newspapers Politique Hebdo and then Charlie Hebdo. It traces a popular utopian project, the first resolution of which is "We stop everything". It became an emblematic reference for this period and was later made into a film (1973).

May '68? Why and how did their individual trajectories resonate with history? Did the course of their existence change as a result? Do they still bear the marks of these events? Did their children inherit these marks?

In more prosaic terms, the goals of my exploration into the effects of May '68, are also rooted in my own personal experiences as the daughter of *soixante-huitards*[2] ('68ers). I should have grown up in a middle-class inner-city family, but instead I had a country life, complete with goats' cheese and the rejection of consumerism. I learnt to write "farmers" on the school forms asking for my parents' professions, understanding only later that they were not ordinary farmers.

The autobiographical origins of my research

I am a daughter of the "neo-rural" shift (Léger, 1979), born in 1980 on a farm at the foot of Mount Ventoux in Provence. My parents, both agronomical engineers, resigned in 1974 from the departmental services in Marseille where they worked, to move to a farm in the Drôme region in south-east France.[3] From urban engineers, they became apprentice peasants in a rural village of five hundred people. They raised goats there for nearly twenty-five years. This professional and biographical sea change can be imputed – among other factors – to the events of May '68. Agnes[4] (my mother), was then a student in Toulouse, close to the situationists[5] and active within the Students Workers Peasants Liaison Committee (CLEOP). In the years that followed she participated in various post-'68 movements (environmentalism, the anti-nuclear movement, feminism, the protest movement in Larzac[6] etc.). She also adopted the "critical renovation of everyday life" (Mauger, 1999,

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2   In French, the people who participated in May '68 are referred to as "soixante-huitards", literally "sixty-eighters". Here we will refer to them as '68ers.

3   My father (born in 1944) and my mother (born in 1948) had worked for several years for the Departmental Facilities Service (Direction départementale de l'équipement – DDE) and the Departmental Agricultural Service (Direction départementale de l'agriculture DDA).

4   I call my parents by their first names, a trait that I share with half of the children of '68ers interviewed for this study (see Chapter 5).

5   The situationists movement was an international revolutionary movement prominent in France between the late 1950s and early 1970s. The most famous books associated with this movement are Guy Debord's The Society of Spectacle, and Raoul Vaneigem's The Revolution of Everyday Life.

6   This was a resistance movement that began in 1971 in opposition to the commandeering of a large portion of the Larzac plateau in the south of France for the extension of a military training base, which took on a "back-to-the-land" alternative lifestyle dimension.

p. 235) by living in a commune in Marseille in the early 1970s. That was where she met Jean-Jacques (my father), who had watched the events of May '68 from a distance, and who only became political in the years that followed, via anti-imperialist movements, and a period of cooperation in Nicaragua. Their dream of taking political action through their profession was rapidly quashed against the rigidity of the institutions in which they worked, and their project of going "back-to-the-land" stemmed in part from the disconnection between their aspirations and the actual possibilities of satisfying them.[7] As children of the intellectual bourgeoisie,[8] my parents were therefore among those whose post-'68 experiences have been referred to as the "betrayal of the inheritors," who, unable to change life in general, at least managed to change the course of their own (Léger and Hervieu, 1978, p. 69). In their case, this reconversion marked a durable and definitive break from their probable destinies, and as a result, a break from those of the 'second generation.'

My brother and I went to the local village school where, for many of our classmates, we were 'hippy kids'; we were dirty, we smelt of goat, we slept with the pigs and brought lice to school. My own investment in school can be seen as a way of rebelling against this form of stigmatisation that we were subject to. Academic excellence enabled me to more or less consciously take revenge for my stigma of illegitimacy and my marginalisation. I only found the words to express this experience much later, particularly in reading the novels of Annie Ernaux, who as a child rebelled against domination through academic excellence[9] (Ernaux, 2003, p. 66-67).

I always loved school and it repaid me well because I was always the top of my class – all the way to my entry into the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Paris, in biology. Although this acculturation socialised me to the dominant academic norms, in the family sphere I had interiorised a system of countercultural dispositions, a veritable rejection of conformity and of the bourgeoisie. These two dimensions of a fractured habitus found

7   Jean-Jacques tried in vain to incorporate environmental questions into urban development, and Agnes dreamed of participating in the agrarian reform in Cuba, and living her politics through agriculture.

8   My paternal grandfather, a left-wing Catholic, was a high school principal. My maternal grandfather, a Hungarian Jewish refugee, met my grandmother (who was a Resistance fighter and came from the bourgeoisie in Lyon), during the war. After several professional failings, he created a successful business (in office supplies). This success however did not prevent him remaining close to the intellectual spheres of former resistance members and communist sympathisers.

9   In my case however, these early experiences of stigmatisation were less directly linked to class differences than to cultural differences between the established and outsiders (Elias et Scotson, 1965).

no room for expression at the ENS, where I felt that I did not fully belong, and where I progressively experienced the prospect of a scientific career as a kind of symbolic amputation. The ENS Diploma was a symbol of successful social revenge, but it by no means shed any light on 'my place', nor on the possible coexistence of these dissonant dispositions. Moving into sociology and undertaking a PhD on the biographical consequences of activism during May '68 was probably a way of pursuing my academic trajectory whilst reconciling myself (with myself) by putting my academic and intellectual abilities at the service of a subject dear to my heart.

Partially unsatisfying representations of May '68

My academic interest in May '68 evolved on the basis of a surprising dissonance between my experience of '68ers, being a "child of '68ers" myself, and the representations of these categories that emerged in literature, the media, but also in academic work. Here, I will provide a brief critical synthesis of these representations of May '68.[10]

With the exception of a recent rise in interest and studies in this area, the rarity of empirically founded academic research on May '68 is in stark contrast to the plethora of essays and interpretations of the events. This contributes to progressively burying the historical and social reality of this period under successive layers of interpretation.[11] Thus the fight for the monopoly over the legitimate definition of May '68 began immediately after the events, and would continue to be constantly fed, with peaks of interest and production at each ten-year anniversary (Rioux, 1989). Over the years, the reconstruction of the history of the events and the solidification of a genuine doxa on May '68 became founded on an opposition between the much-exalted version of the events, "the lovely month of May, peaceful and painless," and the excoriated extreme-left version and its Marxist ideology (Sommier, 1994). This denunciation – and de-legitimisation – of the political extreme-left thus contributed to a final reading of the history of May '68 that proposed (imposed) an amusing, pacified representation, constructed around several mediatised figures.

10   An exhaustive presentation of this literature would constitute a research programme in its own right – already partially accomplished elsewhere (cf. Gobille, 2003, Chapter 1; Gruel, 2004, Chapter 1; Mauger, 2008).

11   Philippe Bénéton and Jean Touchard had already documented more than a hundred different interpretations in 1970 (Bénéton and Touchard, 1970).

Something similar happened in the United States when a number of former activists from the 1960s were depicted in the media in the 1970s and 1980s as "yuppie opportunists." Figures like Jerry Rubin, Eldridge Cleaver or Tom Hayden – or Serge July, André Glucksmann and Olivier Rolin in France – cast a long shadow on the destinies of all those activists who, because they did not become famous and did not rise to prominence in publishing or journalism, did not attract public attention (Gitlin, 1987). For Doug McAdam, these media figures were taken up in the collective imagination because they helped to more easily disqualify a particular version of the past (McAdam, 1989, p. 745). Similar ways of justifying de-politicisation, by reducing radical activism to "non-serious" or "youth" activities also occurred in the context of May '68 in France.

During the 1980s, this work of reconstructing the memory of May '68, founded on the selection of certain events and destinies, and the relegation of others, was reinforced around the invention of a "generation '68." The publication of *Génération* (Hamon and Rotman, 1987, 1988) contributed to the banalisation and mediatisation of this label, effectively erasing the experiences of more ordinary participants. It also reinforced the representation of an opportunistic generation, uniformly and successfully converted to liberalism-libertarianism (Thibaud, 1978), and which now occupied powerful positions in politics, the media, and literature.[12] In the face of such broadly unsatisfying literature, one of the initial motivations of this research was to deconstruct the "generation '68" category. To do this, I wanted to use empirical evidence revealing the different micro-units within the generation, which could not be reduced to a univocal interpretation.

In the academic sphere, after twenty-five years during which the events of May-June 1968 provoked scant scientific interest,[13] historians began to make it a subject of their research from the beginning of the 1990s (Mouriaux, Percheron, Prost and Tartakowsky, 1992; Dreyfus-Armand, Frank, Levy and Zancarini-Fournel, 2000). In the early 2000s there was renewed interest and an increase in scientific work in this area, primarily produced by young researchers.[14] Xavier Vigna's work provided a welcome

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12   This characterisation of "generation '68" was to durably mark the representations of this event, feeding both the hagiographic essays, but also pamphlets such as the "Open letter to those who went from Mao to the Rotary Club": "*Lettre ouverte à ceux qui sont passés du col Mao au Rotary*" (Hocquenghem, 2003 [1986])

13   Except for a few interpretations "in the heat of the moment" and some rare later works (Mauger and Fossé, 1977; Lacroix, 1981).

14   Although she is not a member of this younger generation, Kristin Ross also participated in this renewed attention. See in particular the book by Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

remedy to the historiographical deficit on the workers' movement in May '68 (Vigna, 2007), and Ivan Bruneau's study on the Peasants Confederation (Confédération Paysanne) shed new light on the participation of peasant workers in these events (Bruneau, 2006). These studies allow us to question the connections made between students, workers and peasants, which had previously been more objects of fantasy than of empirical study. Boris Gobille's PhD thesis provided precious material concerning the writers of May '68 and his theoretical approach provided a renewed perspective on this past more generally. Gobille encouraged the production of a socio-history of the short term (Gobille, 2008) that does not reduce the short term (events) to the long term (trajectories), and that is the approach this book also adopts. Finally, several collective books published for the fortieth anniversary of May '68 provided new material for this field of research.[15]

At the beginning of my investigation, the term "child of '68ers" had not (yet) been coined, and no academic study had focused on the question of the family transmission of the memory of these events (see, however, Birnbaum, 2005), or the destiny of these "children of." I was not, however, surprised to see a range of essays, articles, novels, documentaries, and films emerge on this subject for the anniversary of the events in 2008.[16] In the vast majority of these productions, we find a certain number of over simplistic clichés, once again built on a handful of trajectories set up as the legitimate inheritors of this past. Although Virginie Linhart denies that she sought to 'settle the score' with her parents,[17] this is not the case for many authors who have been publishing pamphlets on their parent's generations for a decade now, accusing them of every ill imaginable. For example, they accuse them of disavowing their past ideals, stealing their children's childhoods, refusing to transmit anything to their children, and bringing them up without limits (Taillandier, 2001; Buisson, 2001; Bawin-Legros, 2008). Often fuelled by the resentment of their authors, these publications present an image of the children of '68ers as being disenchanted, sacrificed, depoliticised, individualist, or even simply as an unremarkable generation. This was an image with which I could not identify at all.

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15   See, in particular, three collective contributions, which provide both empirical elements and a new perspective on the events of May-Jun '68 for the 20th century (Damamme, Gobille, Matonti and Pudal, 2008; Artières and Zancarini-Fournel, 2008; Savoir/Agir, 2008).

16   I myself participated in this movement by co-authoring a documentary entitled, "The Children of Utopia", (*Les Enfants de l'utopie*), which screened on French television on 15 April 2008.

17   Virginie Linhart is the daughter of Robert Linhart, who was the Maoist leader of the Union of Communist Marxist-Leninist Youth (UJCml). In 2008, she published a novel on her childhood, and that of a dozen other children whose parents were friends with her father (Linhart, 2008).

The biographical consequences of activism in May '68

Two important issues underpin the reflection in this book: on one hand, the encounters between individual trajectories and political events, and on the other, the impact of participating in the events of May '68 on two generations within a family. Both of these issues are rooted in the sociology of (political and familial) generations and the relations between generations.

By what processes, and in what socio-historical conditions, do one or several cohort(s) become a "political generation?" For Karl Mannheim, the driving connections within a generation lie in its members' shared exposure to the "social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic destabilisation" (Mannheim, 1972. [1928] p. 303). This definition raises a number of questions however. Were the different participants all exposed to the political crisis of May '68 in the same way? Are the shifts that have occurred in their trajectories dependent on what they were before the event? Do they still bear the marks of this past engagement thirty-five years later? If they do, how can we account for this?

Answers to some of these questions provide the context for this research perspective, which follows Doug McAdam's approach in his study of American civil rights activists, which led to the publication of his book Freedom Summer.[18]

Generating the 'generations of '68'

It would be impossible to account for the biographical impacts of activism without firstly going back to what this activism is the product of. In other words, any study seeking to outline the form of a (hypothetical) "generation of '68" cannot ignore the analysis of the joint effects of life cycle, cohort, and period.[19] The articulation of these factors prior to 1968 contributed to the modes of "generating generations" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 373-427; Sayad, 1994). Yet the sociology of generations often has difficulty disentangling

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18   This book is based on a corpus of former American civil rights activists who went to Mississippi (or who applied to go but did not) during the summer of 1964 to help the Black population register to vote (among other things). Doug McAdam first traces the "roots of activism", then looks specifically at the forms of participation in this 'Freedom Summer', and finally analyses what became of these activists in the 1970s and 1980s (McAdam, 1988)

19   The life cycle effect refers to the individual's age and position in the life cycle. The cohort effect refers to the socio-historical and cultural context in which all members of an age group grow up. Finally, the period effect refers to the impact of a particular conjuncture on those who are involved in it (Kessler and Masson, 1985, p. 285-321).

these different effects. The genealogical and longitudinal approach adopted here allows us to move beyond this limitation and go back to the multiple matrices of participation in May '68. Several distinct "generations as actuality" (Mannheim, 1972 [1928], p. 302) which had experienced distinct forms of primary socialisation (political, familial, and academic) – and therefore modes of generation – prior to 1968, will be brought to light.

Siméant has shown that "evoking socialisations liable to structure attitudes towards politics does not imply anything about their activation" (Siméant, 2003, p. 177). It is therefore important to analyse the processes by which socialisation is converted into action (particularly the conversion of religious commitments into political commitments) in the context of the Algerian and Vietnam wars. Indeed, the period effect brought about by the participation in the struggle against the Algerian War produced a genuine "generational unit"[20] which was characterised by specific characteristics (age, form of politicisation, place of activism, etc.) that were only shared by some future '68ers. Those who were slightly younger, and who were politicised in the context of the Vietnam War, or later, during May '68, did not have the same frames of political socialisation as their elders[21] – either in the family or in school. They thus formed different generational units.

However, was participation in May '68 simply a confirmation of the interviewees' prior characteristics, or did it have a lasting impact on them? And if that is the case, who does this participation affect and in what way? In order to answer these questions, we must shift our attention towards the forms of participation, and the specific modalities of the encounters between habitus and crisis.

Political socialisation and events

The role of events in the process of political socialisation has attracted little academic interest.[22] Where this relationship is taken into account,

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20   A generational unit "represents a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such", and is generated by shared participation in a given historical event and by adopting similar positions (Mannheim, 1972, p. 304).

21   Even just a few years apart, academic trajectories are sometimes incomparable. Those interviewees who were born at the end of the 1930s did not experience the "first democratisation of the school system", unlike those born at the beginning of the 1940s – to give just one example that will be discussed further below.

22   With the exception – for the case of France – of one article which remains essentially programmatic (Ihl, 2002). There is slightly more Anglo-Saxon literature, see notably Sears and Valentino (1997) and Tackett (1997).

associations between participation in political events and politicisation effects are made based on statistical data collected several decades after the event. Therefore, these correlations almost never allow us to determine whether activism is the effect or the cause of politicisation (or both), nor to understand by what processes participation in a political event impacts on politicisation. If a given event is liable to play a role in the political socialisation of its participants, its influence cannot be seen as mechanical or univocal. Rather, it occurs through the bias of militant practices, interactions, collective dynamics in situations of crisis, exposure to the media etc. This is why it is so important to return to the event itself and to what is happening in its short-term context. The fluid conjunctures specific to political crises (Dobry 1986) and the general strikes in May and June of 1968 put a (relative) hold on ordinary time and habitual social relations (Bourdieu, 1984b, p. 207-250). This in turn provoked uncertainty and a logic of action that could not be reduced to the previous predictable logics. The event seems to be extraordinary and Eric Fassin and Alban Bensa encourage us to see it as a 'break in intelligibility', in order to avoid the 'double pitfalls of reduction by context or by construction' (Fassin and Bensa, 2002, p. 8). Apprehending the dynamics of the encounters between habitus and crisis situations therefore requires us to take into account what happened prior to the crisis, conjointly with what occurs during the course of the events.

In order to do this, and so that we might account for the distinct forms of politicisation brought about by participation in the events of May-June '68, this book proposes a typology. This typology is constructed to articulate the different factors linked to trajectories prior to 1968 on one hand, with factors linked to short-term situations during the event on the other (such as biographical availability or the degree of exposure to the event). We will therefore demonstrate that an event such as this can bring about *socialisation by maintenance*, which maintains actors' previously established dispositions and convictions. It can also lead to *socialisation by reinforcement* of these convictions, by *raising political awareness,* or finally, by *conversion*. These different socialising effects of the event will be systematically considered in relation to the socio-political characteristics of the actors, as well as to the different forms of participation in May '68.

A sociology of post-'68 trajectories

How can we bring to light the specific – and durable – effects of participation in these events? The heart of this book is dedicated to this question. In order to provide a response, we developed statistical indicators of biographical

change. However, to avoid falling into the mechanistic trap of many Anglo-Saxon studies, we will pay particular attention, through the analysis of life histories, to the social processes which produce these effects. Just as in biology the belief in the notion of "spontaneous generations" has been long since rejected, this research argues against a mechanistic acceptance of "spontaneous political generations" seen as produced by an inaugural, foundational or causal event outside social, historical, and biographical time. Rather than multiplying statistical demonstrations to isolate the "specific effects of the event,"[23] qualitative analysis of post-'68 trajectories will be used to understand the mechanisms by which the event impacts on biographies.

What is particularly interesting about the corpus constructed for this study is the fact that it combines both those who continued as activists over the years, but also all the "former" activists, who gave up their activism, either immediately after May '68, during the 1970s, or in the decades that followed.

By including those who subsequently demobilised, we can therefore follow and compare what became of these '68ers, their futures, and account for their various responses to the twin constraints of social reintegration and loyalty to their past commitments.[24] We will be paying close attention to the individual and contextual logics of engagement (Siméant and Sawicki, 2009, p. 109) as well as the imbrication of different spheres of life. This will enable us to reproduce the constraints and possibilities (in terms of profession, affect, and maintaining self-integrity) that affect the ex-68ers interviewed here.

Finally, we will bring the different puzzle pieces together and connect what happened before, during, and after May '68, in order to construct a social space made up of the "micro-units of generation '68."[25] We will also question the influence of gender on the formation of political generations. In the final part of the book, our reflections will lead to an investigation into the ways in which the heritage of the '68ers has been transmitted to the next generation.

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23   Such analyses are fastidious and often disappointing, when, after pages and pages of statistical tables, they conclude that "the generation of citizens born between 1947 and 1960 (i.e. those who were 21 between 1968 and 1981) appear significantly more left-wing" (Favre, 1989, p. 307).

24   The work of Annie Collovald and Érik Neveu on the "new thriller" genre (Collovald and Neveu, 2001) sheds light on one of these responses.

25   This notion was constructed on the basis of Mannheim's concept of "generational unit", along with that of the activist "micro-cohort" (Whittier, 1997) to describe groups of similar trajectories.

History of the study

The task laid down at the beginning of the study was clear: I wanted to work on May '68 using solid, first-hand, empirical data. I did not want to limit this data to just political leaders, or students, or Parisians, and I wanted to construct it in such a way as it could be controlled and situated in social and political terms. The search for a fieldwork site and a sample population was much more complicated: how could I find former actors who had never spoken publicly about May '68? Given that there is no directory of "ex-68ers," how could I gain access to this population?

A specific and controllable corpus

Accessing potential participants by targeting one or several political organisations (and finding former activists through their archives) meant overlooking those who were not affiliated with any organisation – who made up the majority of those participating in the events of May '68. That approach would have also made it impossible to compare the effects of the events according to the registers of participation. In order to be able to study the transmission of dispositions for activism, I then considered entering the field via the "second generation." This idea consisted in constructing a population of "children of '68ers," who were activists in a political organisation or association at the time of the study (such as the Sud trade union, the activist organisation Attac or the Communist Revolutionary League, LCR). I would then be able to contact their parents. Although this research approach had the benefit of accessing a greater diversity of the parents' registers of involvement in May '68, it sacrificed the families (the majority) in which none of the children were activists at the time of the study.

It was by reformulating the object in generational terms, rather than in terms of the transmission of family memories of May '68, that the idea and opportunity to access the field through primary schools arose. Indeed, several people contacted during the exploratory phase of this research mentioned the experimental Vitruve school where – according to them – "generations of children of '68ers have gone to school." The Vitruve school (in the 20th district in Paris) still exists and when I went there I had a decisive encounter with Gégé, who has been a teacher there since 1976. Repeated and in-depth interviews with this former '68er, who converted his dispositions for protest into the realm of education, confirmed the relevance of this school for my study and the specificity of its recruitment in the 1970s and '80s. Gégé told me, "there were the local children, and those

who came from elsewhere, mostly children of '68ers."[26] Of course, I still needed to access the records of former students, an essential requirement for the methodical construction of a corpus of interviewees. After several unsuccessful attempts,[27] I was eventually able to access and photocopy all these records for the period between 1972 and 1980.

In order to avoid the trap of becoming overly centred on Paris, and to enlarge the spectrum of families in the study, I then sought to broaden the research to include a comparable school outside the capital. This second school therefore had to be a public, primary, alternative school, and likely to have enrolled children of '68ers during the 1970s and 1980s. It also had to still be operating. There were not that many candidates and the choice for the second field work site finally fell on the Ange-Guépin open school. This school was founded in a working-class neighbourhood in Nantes in 1973 and is associated with the Cooperative Institute for Modern Schooling (ICEM).[28] There was no difficulty obtaining access to the records of former students for this period, although these records were less detailed than those in Paris (see below).

Beyond the fieldwork opportunities, this particular approach was also justified through the originality of the materials it gave me access to. Firstly, choosing these schools was a way of getting around the inevitable self-proclaimed spokespeople of the events of May '68, of having access to anonymous figures, and a heterogeneous population of '68ers. This also meant that the study did not have to be based on pre-existing and poorly-controlled samples, or groups of individuals labelled '68ers. It would have indeed been perilous to try and deconstruct the '68er category with a population based on a historically constructed form of that category.

Moreover, this approach through the school was also a way of further specifying my research object. The study was no longer about '68ers in general, but rather about certain '68ers who were characterised by specific educational strategies. I abandoned my fantasy of a representative population and gained in return the possibility of generalising certain results because of the construction of the population. This construction was both coherent and methodical and it ultimately led to a final population of participants that was neither ego-centric, nor Paris-centric; nor was it based

26   Excerpt from the first interview conducted with Gégé, at Vitruve school, on 8 June 2004
27   Part of the records were archived in a secondary school that initially refused to allow me to access them.
28   This Institute covers the primary schools in which the teachers practice the pedagogy of Célestin Freinet.

on high-profile figures from these events, which meant the research could contribute original and controlled elements to a scientific study of May '68.

Finally, approaching the fieldwork through the second generation, and through institutions which themselves owed much to the political crisis of May '68,[29] was a way of selecting interviewees who had transformed their anti-institutional mood into educational practices during the 1970s and 1980s. I was operating on the – broadly confirmed – hypothesis that the decision to send their children to experimental schools was related to their participation in the events of May '68. Indeed, the school system was for some a favourite target for overall criticisms of social domination;[30] for others, it was a political weapon for social transformation. As a result, the school as a field site meant the selection of former activists characterised by significant biographical effects linked to their involvement in May '68.

Recruiting participants...

At the time, gaining access to the records of former students seemed to me a great victory, but it was just the beginning. I then had to find the families concerned and select those in which one parent – at least – had participated in the events of May '68. Two questionnaires (one for the parents, ex-'68ers, and one for their children, former students at my two schools) were ready to be sent out. I used a number of channels and tools to perform my detective work in contacting the families: word-of-mouth, alumni associations, private contacts of teachers who had kept in touch with families. But none could entirely replace the fastidious and time-consuming search through the telephone directory. Over a period of two years (2004-2006), I made more than three thousand telephone calls. Some were more pleasant than others; sometimes confronted with a curt reply that the person I was looking for had died, or the exasperated remark that I was not really planning on calling all the Mary Smiths in the phonebook to find the right one, was I?! More generally, they regularly took me for yet another commercial call selling double glazed windows... I was obliged to be quite obstinate in order to find the people I was looking for, particularly the women who had changed their names[31] (after marriage, or for the older generation, after divorce, which was quite common).

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29   The history of these two experimental schools is not reproduced in this book but is analysed in the preliminary chapter of the doctoral thesis (Pagis, 2009, p. 81-109).

30   Because of its role in childhood socialisation to social relations and attitudes towards authority, through the educational relationship between students and teachers.

31   At the Vitruve school the mother's maiden name was recorded in the archives, which was not the case at Ange-Guépin. This difference had an important impact on the rate of families

Initial contact was therefore made by telephone. I asked my respondents about their possible participation in the events of May '68, or about their parents' involvement. In order to capture people who were involved in the events in different ways, I chose to adopt a broad notion of involvement: the minimal requirements were having participated in demonstrations in support of the movement, or attended political meetings during the months of May and June 1968. In this way, I did not immediately exclude less audible or visible forms of participation (particularly common among women), and I did not impose an arbitrary definition of the category I set out to deconstruct. During this telephone call, I also asked my contacts to reply to an anonymous questionnaire to be sent to them by the post.

I then sent out 666 questionnaires, to all corners of France (as well as a few overseas), of which 350 were sent back completed.[32] Among them there were 182 "parent" questionnaires, and 168 "children" questionnaires. A number of telephone call-backs over this phase of the study allowed me to ascertain some of the reasons for the non-responses. All the conversations were transcribed in an electronic field notebook, which provided valuable qualitative data concerning attitudes towards the study (and the investigator) among all the individuals contacted.[33] The corpus was finally made up of 169 families, with a decidedly uneven distribution between the two schools Vitruve and Ange-Guépin.[34] This would have been problematic for a comparison between the two schools, but that was not the objective here. Instead, the respondents from Nantes, more working-class, were included to broaden and diversify the overall spectrum of the trajectories of the '68ers analysed here.

that were successfully located and contacted, and consequently contributed to the imbalance between the two field sites.

32   This corresponds to a response rate of 53%, which is quite high given the length of the questionnaire (approximately 250 questions). By comparison, Doug McAdam sent out 556 postal questionnaires and received 348 responses, of which 212 were from ex-participants of the Freedom Summer, and 118 were from no-shows (interviewees who ultimately decided not to participate in Freedom Summer) (McAdam, 1988, p. 8-10).

33   Excessive and/or incomprehensible reactions during the first contact could thus be explained afterwards, and integrated into the analysis of representations of May '68, or intergenerational relations (see below).

34   Indeed, of the 350 questionnaires received, 291 came from the Vitruve school. This imbalance is due to several factors: this school has roughly three times as many students per year than Ange-Guépin, and the proportion of non-sector students intentionally sent to these experimental schools is much higher at Vitruve (less than 20% of students at Ange-Guépin, but between 30-50% at Vitruve).

Alongside this questionnaire-based approach, I also conducted interviews within a number of the families. These families were selected in order to diversify as much as possible the parents' profiles of activism, social origin, age, types of post-'68 reconversions, the political futures of the children, and so forth. Between 2004 and 2008, I conducted 89 life history interviews (of which 51 were from former '68ers, and 38 from children of '68ers).[35] These interviews lasted between an hour and a half, and one whole day, and were recorded and re-transcribed for the most part. Wherever possible they were conducted at the interviewee's home in order to enrich their remarks with in situ observations on their relations to May '68, either in the mobilisation of personal documents and archives, in the content of their libraries, in the posters and decorations of their living spaces, or even in their bodily *hexis*.

This study is situated within a retrospective longitudinal approach, and its originality lies in the fact that it covers two family generations, and articulates the statistical analysis of the questionnaires with a comprehensive approach based on the life histories.

Articulating statistics and life histories

The genealogical approach taken here allows us to go back to a heterogeneous population of ex-'68ers, and include all those who disengaged at different times. By not studying only the "rest of the cohort" (Offerlé, 1987, p. 75), coexisting at a given time, this research can escape the main pitfall of synchronic cross-sections. However, it cannot escape the weight of questionnaires,[36] nor the sometimes-incomplete reconstructions of militant, professional and familial chronologies. Wherever possible I sought to complete the dates using other materials I had at my disposal (interviews, questionnaires by other family members, histories of militant organisations etc.). The statistical approach is therefore only one aspect of a processual analysis proposed over two generations in a family (Fillieule, 2001, p. 200). Sticking to the

35   The list of interviews that are quoted in the book can be found in the appendix. Although the questionnaires and interviews constitute the main part of the study apparatus, various additional documents were collected over the course of the study and used more specifically. These were primarily archives preserved in the two schools (press articles, photographs, pedagogical documents, students' journals, films etc.). Several books written by students and teachers from the Vitruve school also constitute valuable archival sources.

36   In order to be able to precisely analyse long cycles of involvement, as well as professional and familial trajectories, the questionnaires included more than 240 questions, and many of these were open-ended. The questionnaires were entered and processed with the programme SPAD. Only the logistic regressions were conducted using another programme (SPSS).

objectification of the positions successively occupied by the activists, would mean overlooking the subjective motivations, the way they constructed the meaning of their involvement, as well as the processes of identity (re)negotiations which accompanied and made the different biographical instances of activism possible. A comprehensive analysis of these trajectories thus helps to contextualise and enrich the statistical results by introducing the dynamic and temporal depth of the processes analysed. But this extremely rich qualitative material nevertheless poses other problems. Collecting accounts of practices and memories of the events of May-June '68 forty years after the event confronts the investigator with the limits of memory and the problem of biographical illusion (Bourdieu, 1986). Here, this was further reinforced by the interview situation and the research. Indeed, Doug McAdam has shown that intense activism during a political crisis is a rare opportunity to reconstruct one's biography into a "before" and an "after" (McAdam, 1992, p. 1231). Moreover, the high number of interviewees who have turned to psychoanalysis, and their clear propensity for self-reflection, make the analysis of their life histories extremely complex. Finally, beyond their personal aptitudes for speaking easily – and at some length! – some interviewees used the study to rehabilitate a non-official memory of May '68. Their comments were therefore marked by issues of interpretation about the nature of the events. Various methods are used over the course of the book to cope with, circumvent, or analyse this accumulation of interpretative layers, and to make controlled use of the life histories. Combining different points of view within a particular family proved to be particularly efficient. We were also able to reinforce the ethnographic approach with statistics (Weber, 1995) by confronting data from interviews with that obtained from the same people in the questionnaires – or from their (ex)partners, their children, or their parents,[37] or through comparison with statistical results obtained over the corpus as a whole. More generally, this book advocates the constant articulation of efforts for objectification (through statistical analysis) and efforts for comprehension (through analysis of life histories).

Finally, we must ward off against the inevitable question of the study corpus being compared to a "control group." Ideally this would have been constituted from a population that was perfectly comparable to our group on the eve of May '68, but which did not participate in the events. Such a corpus is quite simply impossible to establish (because it does not exist); however, the results obtained will be compared to contextual data from national studies. Above all, within our corpus, the sub-group of people most

37   Of course, all the participants were assured as to the anonymity of their participation.

active in May '68 will be regularly compared to the sub-group that was the least actively involved, in order to identify effects that are specific to intense activism for example. This is, in fact, one of the key benefits of not having imposed a restrictive definition of '68ers' at the outset of the study.

This book is constructed chronologically and composed of seven chapters. It moves from the origins of activism (Chapter 1), to the forms of participation in May '68 (Chapter 2), and the various biographical consequences of this participation (Chapters 3, 4 and 5). It then provides a contribution to the history of social trajectories of '68ers (Chapter 6) and analyses the family transmission of activism (Chapter 7).

1　The roots of participation in May '68

Where do "68ers" come from and how did their experiences prior to May '68 shape their activism? All the participants in this study were involved in one way or another in May '68; however, they were not all involved in the same way, or for the same reasons. This chapter sets out to explore the determinants of their participation in May '68, and to understand how their dispositions towards activism were formed in the years leading up to the events. It argues that the origins of this activism must be sought in the socialisation of these future militants (familial, educational, and religious), and that their politicisation has its roots in the structural transformations of the institutions that ensure social reproduction (such as the family, the school, the church etc.).

Based on a cross-analysis of questions asking respondents about the agents of their political socialisation and about the narratives of their youth, we observe four major matrices of involvement in May '68, which challenge some of the most common interpretations. Contrary to psychanalytic readings that see May '68 simply as young people rebelling against their parents, this study provides evidence of the importance of family transmission between generations (political for the first matrix, religious for the second). Among researchers, the dominant interpretation has long attributed May '68 to a crisis in opportunities for university graduates.[1] The structural depreciation of university degrees and the threat of downward social mobility were thus seen as being the foundation for the "collective dispositions for rebellion" (Bourdieu, 1984b). These dispositions would indeed occur more frequently among students from the upper classes enrolled in the disciplines that were the most insecure in terms of their professional outlook (sociology, psychology, education sciences, and humanities). In emphasizing the relative absence of this "downward mobility" profile among the participants, this study contributes to the empirical refutation of this "schema of downward social mobility."[2] In fact, it sheds light on a profile that is diametrically opposed to this, which associates upward mobility with political involvement in

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[1]   These different interpretations, hastily subsumed into a single schema of downward mobility were mobilised by researchers as different from each other as Raymond Boudon, Raymond Aron, Edgar Morin, Pierre Bourdieu, Antoine Prost or Bernard Lacroix (Gobille, 2003, p. 78 et seq).

[2]   The validity of this schema has already been questioned, both in terms of statistical relevance and in terms of the (non) perception of structural downward mobility at the end of the 1960s (Gruel, 2004, p. 23-66); but it has also been challenged in terms of the problematic links between discontentment and open protest (Gobille, 2003, p. 89-112).

May '68 – we will call this third matrix the "politicisation of first-generation intellectuals." Finally, the fourth matrix is specific to the students of the 1960s, in particular the women, for whom the anti-institutional mood was politicised through the events of May '68.

These four matrices were developed using a statistical approach which will be the first focus of this chapter. Yet it is through the analysis of key individual trajectories, representative of each one of them, that we are better able to understand the origins of these propensities for (political) activism. The chapter therefore moves on to look at the family origins of these transmissions, before finally also looking at the impact of the structural transformations of the school system and the conditions of women.

The matrices of participation in May '68

One of the open questions on the questionnaire proved particularly useful for providing an overview of the different forms of politicisation prior to 1968. It was worded like this: "Who are the people (name three) who have been very or quite important in the formation of your political choices (whether they are part of your family, your friends, your peer group, other adults or educators, political figures etc.)?"

The statistical analysis of the textual data associates the terms used by the participants, in reference to the agents of socialisation who marked their political development, with the characteristics of the participants using them.[3] It thus enables us to establish correlations between the various politically influential figures and the categories of the respondents referring to them. For example, men attribute more influence to well-known political figures, whilst women more often refer to parents or members of their family. Participants from left-wing families refer more frequently to their parents and grandparents in explaining the development of their political decisions, than those with right-wing parents. For the latter, it is teachers, fellow students, or partners who play a decisive role. Participants from working-class families tend to refer more to primary school teachers than those from middle and upper classes, who instead tend to refer more to political figures.

Multiple correspondence factor analysis was a valuable tool in taking the analysis further and identifying relatively homogenous sub-groups of respondents who experienced similar paths of politicisation. This method

3   The textual statistical analysis was conducted using the program SPAD.

allowed us to construct a concise representation of all the responses in a single space (the factorial plane) which connects the major agents of political socialisation to the sociological characteristics of the respondents who refer to them.[4]

The terms used by the participants to describe the people who influenced their political preferences are projected onto the factorial plane produced by the analysis (see Figure 1). In order to understand the meaning of their positions in a particular sector of this plane, we must first understand how the two axes structuring the space are constructed.

The horizontal axis distributes the respondents according to variables relating to *family socialisation*.[5] It therefore sets the future '68ers who inherited left-wing political traditions, whose parents participated in the Resistance (on the left side of the plane), against those who are not aware of a family political tradition, and whose parents were practicing Christians and "neither left-wing nor right-wing" (on the right of the plane).

The vertical axis is structured by variables relating to the *accumulated resources and experiences of activism*. In the upper quadrants, we see the respondents who were already activists before 1968, whilst the lower quadrants situate those who had no militant experiences before 1968 and who say they were less active participants.

It is difficult to interpret the terms used in isolation; their meaning lies in their relationship to each other, in the distance that separates them on the factorial plane, and in their proximity to the different categories of the active variables. Four clear sub-groups emerge from this plane (encircled in Figure 1). The constant exchange between the statistical results and the analysis of the interviews allows us to confirm that these four groups indeed correspond to the major matrices of participation in May '68. We will present each of them briefly here before moving on to look at them in more detail.

On the left of the plane, slightly above the horizontal axis, is a group of participants whose political consciousness was structured in the family sphere via the *family transmission of dispositions towards activism.* In this group, we find those whose parents were left-wing, non-practicing in

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4   The active variables included in the factor analysis are: sex, age, political orientation and religious affiliation of parents, social background, the existence of a political tradition in the family, the parents' participation in the Resistance, activism or not pre-1968, the degree of involvement in May '68, the status (student or employed) at the time of events, and the political position in 1968.

5   This axis contributes 12.9% to the total inertia of the cloud of points, and the vertical axis contributes 10.2%. Given the number of active categories included, the combined percentage of these two first axes is clearly satisfactory.

Figure 1   Influential figures in the political development of future '68ers
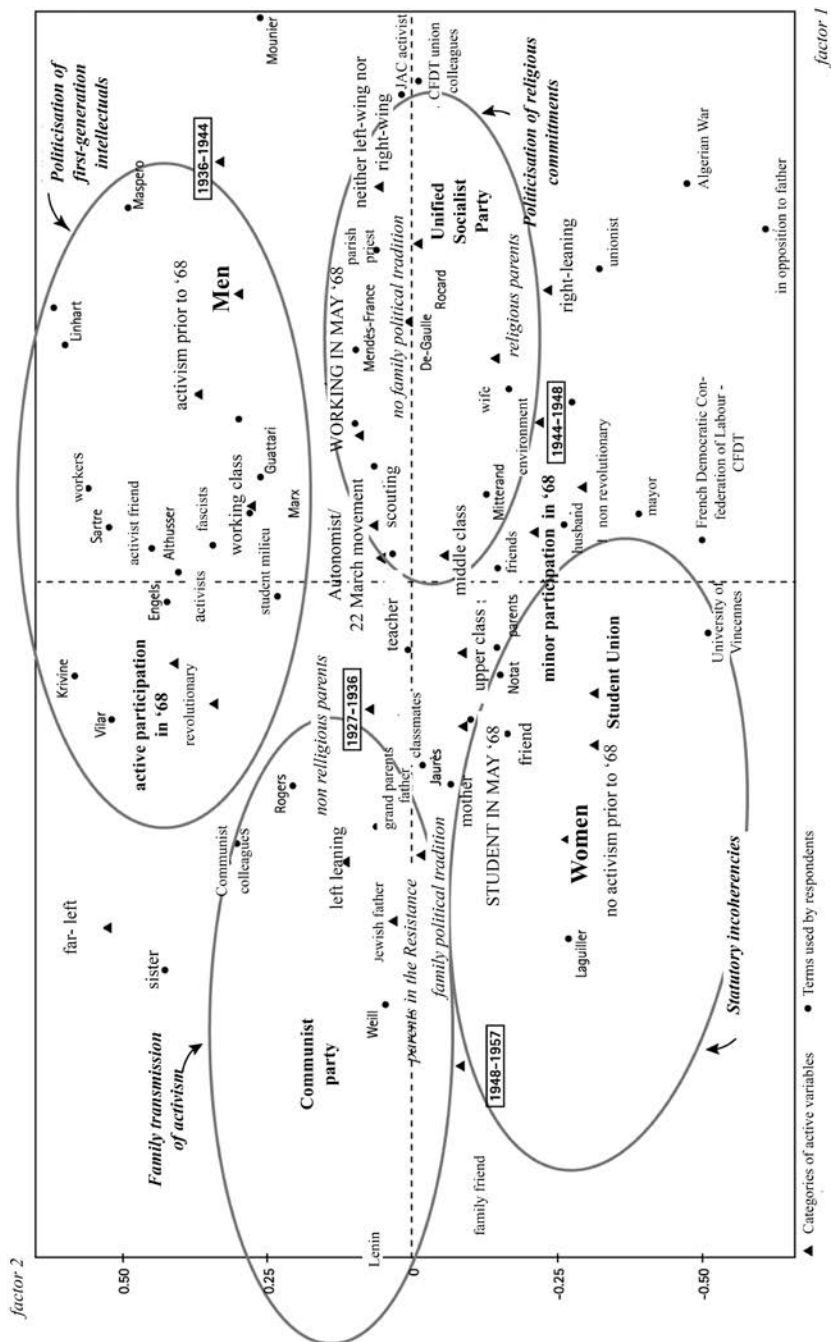
religious terms, and who in some cases participated in the Resistance during the Second World War. They have inherited a family political tradition, transmitted to them by their parents or their grandparents, the figures most frequently cited by this group (see the position of the words "father," "mother"). Later on in the chapter, we will look at the children of Jewish communist families separately from the other children of activists, because their family history plays a very specific role in this transmission.

On the opposite side, on the right-hand side of the plane, we can see a population characterised by religious education, parents who were either "right-wing" or "neither on the left or the right," and the lack of a political family heritage. In describing their political influences, these respondents do not refer to their parents, but rather to their "priest," their "environment" and their partners (see the terms "wife" and "husband"), or to political figures (see "Michel Rocard").[6] On this side of the plane it is often religious organisations (see "JAC[7] activist" on the far right of the figure) and unions (particularly the CFDT, the French Democratic Confederation of Labour) which play the same politicising role that the family plays in the first group of respondents. Later in the chapter we will distinguish working-class actors from upper-class actors within this matrix of the *politicisation of religious commitments,* based on the comparative analysis of certain representative trajectories.

A third sub-group is situated in the upper right quadrant and brings together those who were already activists before 1968. Most of these respondents are from working-class families, and they make references to well-known intellectuals involved in the events (Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Althusser), militant leaders (see "Alain Krivine," "Robert Linhart") or intellectual figureheads ("Friedrich Engels," "Karl Marx") in the formation of their political choices. They are often the first in their families to obtain their *baccalaureate* or "*bac*" (high school diploma). This *politicisation of first-generation intellectuals* is closely linked to their upward social mobility and to their ambivalent position in the social space regarding their class of origin. Three sub-profiles can be distinguished here, depending on the age of the respondent (and thus the date at which they began their university education) and the kind of activism they were involved in (extreme-left,

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6   Michel Rocard was a member of the French Socialist Party and served as Prime Minister under François Mitterrand between 1988 and 1991.

7   JAC stands for 'Jeunesse agricole catholique', a youth movement founded in 1929 by the Catholic Church to evangelize the rural parts of France and improve working conditions for young rural workers.

Communist Party, student unions). Finally, in the lower left quadrant of the factorial plane, we can see a more feminine sub-group. This group is younger and made up of respondents who had no militant experiences prior to 1968. Here it is primarily the peer group (see "friends," "friend") and the student context (see [University of] "Vincennes") which play a central role raising political awareness. These young adults are characterised by the *statutory incoherencies* (Chamboderon, 1985) matrix; they experience a profound disconnection between their condition (as women, as students) and the ways in which they continue to be (dis)regarded. The central example here is that of women who experience an increasingly untenable misalignment between the objective evolutions in their conditions (access to higher education, economic independence through the labour market and sexual independence) and the inertia in representations and mores.

In projecting all the respondents into a single two-dimensional space, factor analysis is particularly effective in revealing the heterogeneity of those who participated in May '68. It therefore throws into question the overly simplistic explanations of the determinants of this involvement, and revives a sociological reality that is much more complex than the various previous interpretations of the events had suggested. It nonetheless requires a complementary analysis of the biographical interviews, in order to reveal the processes that predisposed these actors to refuse the social order in which they grew up.

Politics and religion: a family affair

The first two matrices both show the importance of family transmission in primary socialisation. It is impossible to ascertain the exact proportion of interviewees concerned by the *family transmission of dispositions towards activism* given that the different matrices are not mutually exclusive.[8] It is important to specify however, that half of the interviewees identify their parents as left-wing, that 43% respond in the affirmative concerning the existence of a political tradition in their family, and one third are children of former Resistance members.

8   An individual can thus be characterised by several matrices (we will see that this is particularly true for the case of first-generation intellectuals whose first experiences of activism were religious)

Table 1   Parental political orientations

Your father is (or was)			Your mother is (or was)		
	Number	%/total		Number	%/total
Left-wing	91	51		95	53
Right-wing	60	34		49	27
Neither left nor right	28	15		33	18
Total	179	100		177	98

Having left-wing parents is not enough for children to (automatically) inherit dispositions for activism, but a quarter of the interviewees mention one of their parents or grandparents among those who were influential in the development of their political preferences. Many of these interviewees share a family history shaken by the Second World War – either because family members were deported for being Jewish, or because their parents participated in the Resistance (particularly in the Communist networks). Here, both family history and the feeling of belonging to persecuted minorities contributes to the early politicisation of these activists, often as early as secondary school: in the *Jeunesses communistes* (JC, Communist Youth), *Union des étudiants communistes* (Union of Communist Students, UEC) or anti-fascist committees.

In terms of the transmission of religious beliefs, 40% of interviewees were educated by parents who engage in regular religious practice, and almost the same percentage participated in Christian scout groups.[9] They often began their militant careers within religious youth groups such as the JAC (*Jeunesse agricole catholique*, Rural Catholic Youth), the JOC (*Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne*, the Young Christian Workers), or the MRJC (*Mouvement rural de jeunesse chrétienne*, Rural Christian Youth Movement) in the working classes, and the JEC (*Jeunesse étudiante chrétienne*, Young Christian Students), in the upper-middle classes. The over-representation of young activists socialised within religious communities raises the question of religious interests (Bourdieu, 1971) that might have motivated later political involvement. To move beyond the limits of the simple analogy between commitment to a cause and commitment to faith, between devotion and dedication, between messianism and revolutionary utopia, this analysis will look at the nature of the dispositions and the practices acquired during religious socialisation, that would be then imported into the political sphere.

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9   This is also true for many humanitarian workers (Siméant, 2009, p. 109).

Family transmission of dispositions towards activism

The over-representation of participants with activist parents from Jewish backgrounds in the corpus[10] raises the question of whether the feeling of belonging to Judaism constitutes a motivation for activism. Or, perhaps, on the contrary, the feeling of being Jewish is in fact discovered through early experiences of stigmatisation and humiliation. Simon's trajectory constitutes an interesting individual case to shed light on this first matrix.

Simon: heir to family history that is both "Jewish and Communist"
Simon was born in 1942 in Auvergne. His father, a Ukrainian Jew from a family of Rabbis, grew up in Poland and then in Germany, before arriving in France in 1925. Of his children, Simon was the only one who broke with Judaism and who married a "*goy*;" he was disowned by his parents. Simon's mother, the daughter of a notable in Volvic, studied architecture, was active in the Communist Party, and participated in the *Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires* (Revolutionary Artists and Writers Association, AEAR). In 1942, Simon's maternal grandmother was an atheist and a feminist and she hid several Jewish families in her house in Auvergne. In 1942 Simon's parents took refuge there too: "The family house was in the main street, and it was filled to the brim, with families living in the rooms; my parents lived in a bit at the very top, and there were also lots of Jews from central Europe; and they also housed quite a few members of the Communist Party who came through, including important leaders, there were weapons, I still have a revolver..."[11]

His father fell ill very young and could no longer work; his mother therefore had to provide for the family. After working as a primary school teacher during the war, she later became a professor of industrial design in Paris. From 1945 to 1949, they lived in artists' workshops around Alésia in Paris, with other Jewish Communist families. Simon was taught to read by his mother, and he spent most of his time with her or with his grandmother, with whom he spent all his holidays up until he was thirteen. These women, both Communists and feminists, thus influenced his early political socialisation. After 1949 they moved to Gentilly, where Simon grew up in a highly politicised Communist environment:

10   They represent at least 17% of the population interviewed (several respondents refused to answer this question).
11   The quotes in this section are all from an interview with Simon that was conducted on 18 August 2005, at his home.

> In Gentilly there was the lower school where I was, and there was the
> upper school where the rich went... I remember having a discussion
> at the canteen with a policeman's son at the time of the big workers'
> demonstrations, with the SNECMA[12] nearby, there were barricades in
> our street, there were workers' movements that were extremely violent.
> I think I was around eight years old... and our conversation was – who
> is the strongest? Of course, for him it was the cops, they have weapons
> etc. I remember that as if it were yesterday. After I'd put in everyone I
> could think of, I was running out of arguments and I remember having
> thought I'd won, in my mind at least, I'd found the right argument: yes,
> but there's China! He couldn't beat that! So, it's true that in the family, at
> school, it was politics all the time, all the time...

In seventh grade Simon joined a "Jewish group" set up by a friend. But, unlike
the latter, he says that he in fact suffered more from anti-Communism than
he did from anti-Semitism, particularly in senior secondary school:

> In 1956, I was at Louis-le-Grand:[13] it was the search to help the poor
> Hungarians, there was the sacking of the *Huma*[14] offices; I was a pariah,
> it was violent, there were two or three of us communist families that
> resisted, but we really felt surrounded and it was a shock! [...] My mother
> always said: if it turns bad we'll go to Israel, there was always that fear...
> When in fact, I think the most violent reactions were anti-Communist
> more than anti-Semitic. Gentilly was really the [Communist] stronghold,
> but whenever I went to the Latin Quarter, it was the opposite.

This extract shows how feelings of belonging to persecuted minorities – here
Jewish and Communist – are articulated and intertwined, and how the
transmission of family histories (along with objects, such as the revolver
Simon has kept) is behind this. In the interview, Simon talks at great length
about the history of his paternal family, which echoes that of the central
European Jews "liberated by the Communists in 1917," and he emphasizes
this dual identity – "not Jews, but Communist Jews."

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12   SNECMA was the national society for the study and construction of motors for aviation. At
the time, this manufacturer was experiencing a protest movement among its workers.
13   Louis-le-Grand is one of France's most prestigious secondary schools, situated in the Latin
Quater in Paris.
14   The Huma, short for *l'Humanité*, is the newspaper of the French Communist Party (PCF).

The humiliation and insults from his classmates gave rise to feelings of injustice, which would soon take on a political dimension in the context of the Algerian War:

> Political involvement, that was really with the Algerian War, and UNEF[15] as a very militant activist, and I sympathised with two or three groups including the *Groupe action résistance* (Resistance Action Group), and the *Front universitaire anti-fasciste* (Anti-fascist University Front), and in front of the *Lycée* Saint Louis, we were constantly fighting with the guys preparing the entrance exams for Saint-Cyr![16] And I had an English teacher whose name was Goldring, who was a militant Communist, a member of the Central Committee, who[se house] had been attacked… It's crazy how politicised we were, even in the classroom! Some people wrote "Ben Bella" on the blackboard, others "Victory to the OAS,"[17] and they fought it out…

Among all the interviewees born to Jewish Communist parents either during or shortly after the Second World War and who grew up in Paris, we observe this early politicisation that structures their identities as high school students. It is accompanied by stories of physical confrontations in the school setting, during the events of 1956 in Hungary and then during the Algerian War, as well as by intense political activity. Their engagement is part of a family history marked by the Resistance and often by militant Communism in their countries of origin. This is the case for Geneviève who became involved in the group *Lutte Ouvriere* (Workers' Struggle, LO):[18]

> the Trotskyist groups were full of Jews, to say the least! Me, my father was a Communist in Poland, and one of the reasons he left, apart from the lack of work and the anti-Semitism, was the repression of Communists, and me, I sort of had the impression I was carrying on his activism in a way. And I think that for my generation, activism was kind of a response to the collaboration, it was the need to show that France was more than

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15   French National Student Union.
16   Saint-Cyr is the most prestigious military academy in France.
17   The OAS, "Organisation de l'armée secrète" (the Secret Army Organisation) was a right-wing para-military organisation, fighting against Algerian independence during the Algerian War.
18   Born in 1944 in a Jewish Communist family who ran a small business in the Marais, Geneviève became an activist with Voix Ouvrière (Workers' Voice, the predecessor of LO) in 1960 during the Algerian War.

that... But of course, being Jewish probably contributed, even if we weren't aware of it then.

These parents, who were both Jews and Communists, transmitted an ethic of responsibility (Weber, 1963) to their children, through their family history. This contributed in the formation of a predisposition for action, to be a part of the course of history.[19] Simon thus explains that "it was not by chance" that, later, he named his party cell "Manouchian." He later added: "basically all my involvement was based on one central idea: *that* should never happen again, and *that*, that meant a new war, the camps, Nazism, all that, and the only way to avoid that, for me there wasn't any other, was to establish Communism everywhere."

These comments reveal the inextricability of Jewish origins and Communist aspirations in a socio-historical context that marked the primary socialisation of numerous '68ers. Returning to the social and migratory trajectories of the parents, to their practices, and their religious and political orientations, allows us to take into account the social heterogeneity of French Judaism (Spire, 1995). It also enables us to avoid falling into the trap of essentialism, unlike many attempts to explain the over-representation of activists with Jewish origins in left-wing factions – particularly explanations in terms of messianism, in which Communism is depicted as the messiah of "secular Jews" (Kriegel, 1977; Goldmann, 1978).

Children of Communists
Let us now focus on some of the key traits shared by the other interviewees who inherited a family political tradition. Born in the post-war period, for the most part they are children of French Communist Party (PCF) members, often the children of CGT (General Confederation of Labour) unionists. They grew up in an environment that was highly politicised, in which political discussions were part of the everyday routine and in which parental political opinions were openly displayed in the family sphere. Louis, born in 1947 to a train driver and a waitress, recounts this formative anecdote:

At the time of the referendum on French Algeria, there was a joke in my family. Every time General de Gaulle talked about "*auto-détermination*" [self-determination], my father would go "broom broom" [he makes the sound of a car, an *auto* in French]. So we all went "broom" [...] after seeing

19   There is a striking parallel here with humanitarian involvement and the figure Bernard Kouchner (Dauvin et Siméant, 2002, p. 49-50)

my father jeering at de Gaulle, well naturally I said to myself that he must
have had good reasons for not liking him.[20]

These memories are frequent in the interviews; children observe their
parents taking a stand in front of the radio or the television, and particularly
commenting on current affairs. These moments, which are ideal for the
internalisation of parental preferences, provide an early structure for the
formation of an individual's first political tastes. These take the form of
dichotomies: goodies against baddies, good against evil, voting yes or voting
no. Robert, the son of Communist activists, emphasized that, "at home, all
the referendums on the Algerian War, knowing whether to vote yes or no,
the putsch in Algiers on the TV, all that, I remember everything, my parents'
discussions in front of the set! We were immersed in it on a daily basis."[21]

The idea of political tastes is relevant here in a literal sense: children
begin by interiorising parental preferences in affective terms, and come to
understand, through everyday discussions, whether their parents "like" or
"dislike" a particular politician. Although these daily rituals participate in the
family transmission of political attitudes, they are not enough in themselves
to explain the formation of dispositions towards activism – Louis' sister for
example would not go on to become an activist. However, it was to Louis,
and Louis alone, that his father recounted his past experiences and stories:

> That film [*Un weekend à Zuydocoote*, 1964] was the opportunity for [my
> father] to tell me his story, what he'd seen... He told me about his captivity
> in Poland, the Russians who liberated him and his odyssey to return. [...] He
> told me he had been a bag carrier for the FLN,[22] I didn't understand at the
> time, but that's pretty impressive in terms of commitment! [...] And before
> that, during his military service, he punched a Colonel in the face and had to
> go before the war council and at the same time he became an anti-militarist,
> to the point where as a child I was never allowed guns or even tin soldiers!

Louis was thus the receptacle for a strong family memory of activism, and
the fact that his father chose him as the main heir for this transmission
participated in generating dispositions for activism. Indeed, the preferential

20   The quotations in this section are from an interview conducted with Louis on 8 February
2006 at his home in the area around Nantes.
21   Extract of an interview conducted on 22 March 2007 with Robert, born in 1947.
22   The "Front de Liberation Nationale", the Algerian National Liberation Front, was the main
organisation fighting for Algerian independence in the Algerian War.

transmission of militant memories to one child in particular, leads them into specific forms of identification, and situates them within a family legacy of militancy.[23]

The politicisation of religious commitments

The denominational foundation of anti-imperialism has been relatively well documented (Agrikoliansky, 2005), and anti-colonialism has been analysed as one of the sources of May '68 (Bertrand, 2008). However, no studies seem to have examined the processes by which dispositions for activism were requalified, from early religious commitments to political participation in May '68. More specifically, although the politicisation of Christian activists *within* the religious sphere has been the subject of research in the sociology of religions (Fouilloux, 1992; Rousseau, 1995; Donegani, 1977), we have less of an understanding of how dispositions interiorised in religious youth organisations were reconverted into the political sphere. Yet this has been an important contribution to the emergence of historically situated forms of activism – particularly anti-imperialist and far-left forms – during the 1960s in France.

The analysis of individual trajectories tracing the politicisation of religious commitments allows us to show how these different relationships to religion are structured, notably depending on social background. After providing a detailed profile of young Christians from rural working-class backgrounds, we will look at the profile of urban Christians from the upper-classes, socialised to virtuoso religiosity.[24]

Social mobility, Third-Worldism: the politicisation of rural Catholics
Christiane was born in 1941, as the youngest child in a working-class Catholic family. She is representative of the collective profile of rural, upwardly mobile young people from working-class backgrounds, born in the 1940s and educated in Catholic institutions.[25] Christiane's father worked at the SCNF train company, and was a CFTC unionist, and her mother was a housewife.

23   On this question of the transmission of family histories, see Billaud, Gollac, Oeser and Pagis (2015)
24   Max Weber makes an opposition between virtuoso religiosity and mass religiosity; between the "virtuoso" prophets (members of religious status groups who strive for perfect virtue in their religious practice, such as ascetics and monastic groups), those who have a "musical ear for religion" on one hand, and the "masses" of the faithful (followers of the Church) who are religiously unmusical (Weber, 1920).
25   See Pagis (2010) for a more detailed discussion of the generational and social differences within this profile.

Together they raised their six children in a rural town in Normandy. "I'm from a very Catholic family, really, socially, my father was a member of Catholic Workers Action (*Action Catholique Ouvrière*,[26] ACO), but my mother found it too political..."[27] Christiane was subject to the powerful inculcation of familial religious practices (Suaud, 1975, p. 15), which was reiterated through scouting. As she was a very good student, her teachers encouraged her to attend the *Lycée*.[28] At that time, for young people from rural working-class backgrounds, being able to continue their education meant boarding at a Catholic secondary school in a neighbouring town. These students were therefore doubly displaced – both geographically and socially. Surrounded by mostly upper-class and upper-middle-class adolescents, Christiane was confronted with the experience of social injustice throughout her studies and experienced the stigma of being from a family of workers: "I was always marked by my social origin, even in the *Lycée*, I felt a bit... from a poor background, well, all the time. It made me uneasy, sometimes I was ashamed of my parents, that they weren't dressed better, things like that."

Christiane became an active member of the JEC after a disappointing experience as a Scout (she had trouble with the hierarchy), and she remembers obtaining a veritable intellectual education thanks to the chaplains in this organisation. For Christiane, like for her future husband Jean[29] (the son of Catholic farmers involved in the JAC), the Catholic action movements provided a frame through which they could interpret their experiences of social shame in the light of injustice. It also gave them a "new ethic, making the need to commit and be an activist or a militant an aspect of religious practice" (Berlivet and Sawicki, 1994, p. 112). At the end of the 1950s, these organisations therefore provided new "salvation goods"[30] that responded to the aspirations of these young people, out of

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26   The ACO was an organisation that aimed to bring Christianity to the working classes, it was founded in 1950.

27   Christiane's comments quoted here are taken from an interview conducted at her home on 15 November 2005.

28   At the time, secondary school and in particular the *Lycée* were reserved for the elite, mostly drawn from the middle and upper classes. For more discussion about this, see Box 2.

29   Jean's own trajectory is presented later in the chapter.

30   For Max Weber, "salvation goods" (Heilsgüter, sometimes translated as "salvation benefits") are given to the faithful by religious officials (i.e. priests, those who "work" for the Church), and they can pertain to either this world or the next. "The salvation benefits of all the religions, whether primitive or cultivated, prophetic or non-prophetic, belong very much to this world." (Whimster, 2004, p. 66).

step with their families' conservative vision of their faith because of their upward social mobility.

If, for Christiane and her future husband, religious commitment was an accompaniment to their upward social mobility and indeed helped them to understand it, for others it quite simply made this mobility possible. Mathieu, for example, saw the Minor Seminary as way of continuing his studies up to the *baccalauréat*; a place of social salvation, given that his parents were not able to fund his secondary studies.[31]

Third-Worldism: a "bridge cause" between the religious sphere and the political sphere

The war in Algeria played a central role in changing the way these young activists saw the world. For Christiane, it was a catalyst in her politicisation; for Mathieu, who was then at the seminary, it was a source of indignation:

> For us [at the seminary], it was war, even though the term was not often used, so, as such, it was not acceptable [...] It's true that it was very strong, everything to do with helping those in need, the disadvantaged. Justice for oneself but also for others, so, sharing – which today I consider to be the realm of the social. So political, and so not just religious, as we had learnt when we were children[32]

The Third-Worldist cause constituted the main bridge by which religious activities could be requalified as political activities: sensitivity to otherness, instructions to "put oneself in someone else's shoes, far away,"[33] the importance of social commitments as a Christian requirement for self-realisation. These are all dispositions acquired within religious youth groups, which constituted the breeding-ground for anti-colonialism. Christiane remembers that, as an adolescent, during the first events, she said to herself, "if I was Algerian, I'd be for the FLN; and the same for Dien Bien Phu..."

Although they did not lose their faith during this period, the contradictions that the interviewees experienced between their anti-colonialism and the dissonant positions of their parents or the Church contributed to the

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31   Mathieu was born in 1944 to small-scale farmers in Vendée, both right-wing and practicing Catholics. He was the seventh of twelve children and the only child in his age group from his town to graduate from high school.

32   This is an extract from an interview conducted with Mathieu in his home on 7 February 2006.

33   Cécile Péchu adds that for these "Christocentric" Catholics, "foreigners" have a special privileged place among the "poor", with whom they must show solidarity. (Péchu, 2001, p. 81)

erosion of their primary belief systems. The inevitably political dimension of their stance against the Algerian War put them in a position of contestation regarding the institution.[34] However, we need to consider these individual tensions within an organisational context: the Catholic action movements did indeed become politicised with the Algerian War and took positions opposed to the religious hierarchy, which was weakened by the recruitment crisis it had been experiencing since the 1950s (Béraud, 2007). In the context of the preparations for the *aggiornamento* of the Church (Vatican II, 1962), they mobilised for a Third-Worldist position and for a politically active Catholicism.

Political radicalisation from follow-on effects
Christiane and her husband, the first high school graduates in each of their families, began their studies at the University of Caen in the middle of the movement against the Algerian War. It was in this context that their commitment to anti-colonialism and their awareness of social injustice came together and were progressively reformulated within a Marxist and internationalist interpretative framework. Jean explains it like this: "there was the movement against the Algerian War, which I was already involved in [...]. Then, after the Algerian War, there was the Vietnam War, Latin America, May '68... there was also Che Guevara then [...] They were events that followed on from each other and that meant we took positions: anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist."

   These Catholic students became radicalised through contact with young left-wing political activists from other social and political backgrounds. The humanist criticism of capitalism, which they had acquired via the personalism of Emmanuel Mounier, was progressively abandoned for a Marxist critique of capitalism. These follow-on effects were capable of provoking genuine conversions, associated with a decisive break from the primary belief system, as was the case for Christiane and Jean who became militant Trotskyists.[35]

   We must therefore consider the articulation of macro-sociological (the contexts of the war in Algeria and anti-colonialism), organisational (the Third-Worldist positions of the Catholic action movements in the early

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34   Hervé Serry observed a similar process a few years later during the Vietnam War (Serry, 2008, p. 51).
35   Christiane and Jean joined the JCR through their involvement against the Vietnam War. After having participated very actively in the events of May-June '68, they joined the LCR where they were activists throughout the 1970s.

1960s) and individual (social and geographic mobility) factors. Together, they all contributed to the quest for salvation goods being shifted from the religious sphere to the political one. Although Christiane's case represents an ideal type, the profiles brought together in this matrix vary according to age, sex, and social trajectory – all of which are factors that influence the catalyst points and the ratchet effects that are behind this conversion[36] (see Box 1 below).

Box 1   Michèle, from the JAC to Maoism, via Algeria

The case of Michèle reflects a slightly older profile among the interviewees; those who did not benefit from the democratisation of education.

Born in 1927 in Rouen, Michèle never knew her father. She was raised by her mother, who was a typist. Quite resistant of the social hierarchy, she pursued her education at the *Lycée* for Young Ladies in Rouen, where she was eventually expelled in Year 10. Because of the dramatic situation of Rouen at the beginning of the war, Michèle and her mother left for employment on a large farm in the countryside around Caux. Her mother died in 1944 and Michèle became, at age 16, the farm's "maid." She joined the JAC a few years later, encouraged by her employers who saw this as a place for meeting other young people in a super-vised environment. Michèle rapidly took on responsibilities at the departmental level and then the regional level, and became a member of the national team in 1952. This upward progression was part of the collective history of young rural Catholics who had suffered the traumatic consequences of the Second World War – through the loss of one of their parents (Berlivet et Sawicki, 1994). In religious activism, they found both a "second family" and a path for upward social mobility.

Between 1952 and 1957, Michèle was employed by the JAC at the national level to travel around France to "listen and understand the lives, the problems of young famers and farm workers."[37] The contact with social deprivation and in-justice, as well as the connections she made during these encounters, provoked increasingly strident contradictions between her grassroots actions and the clerical injunctions demanding these laymen "keep their distance from temporal concerns [in order to] keep to their apostolic missions" (Serry, 2008, p. 52). These

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36   For example, Mathieu's indignation regarding the Algerian War structured a left-wing political conscience, but did not lead to militant action (particularly because he was not con-nected with the student milieu). He questioned the traditional Church, broke with his path to the priesthood by leaving the Seminary, became involved in the MRJC, and then in the "Vie Nouvelle" (New Life) movement with his wife, but he did not break with Catholicism itself.

37   Extract from her questionnaire.

tensions fed a crisis of consent regarding the religious institution and a progres-
sive shift of her worldview from a religious register to a political one.

In 1957, Michèle returned to her studies (without having graduated from high
school), with the support of a teacher she met during her training at the JAC
(she left the national secretariat this same year). She was awarded the EHESS
Diploma in rural economics in 1961.[38] Her social mobility through religious activ-
ism led her to the Parisian university movement in the late-1950s, and through
her contact with them she became further politicised during the Algerian War.
Michèle was a member of a support network for the FLN and left for Algeria just
after independence, to participate in agrarian reform there with her husband.
They returned in 1966 and found in the Vietnam War a new cause in which to
invest their anti-imperialist dispositions. This is how they "became Maoists," in
Michèle's terms. In their neighbourhood Vietnam Committee, they met militants
from a Maoist group founded by Alain Badiou,[39] which they joined.

The combination of biographical factors (loss of parents, upward social mo-
bility via religious activism), organisational factors (working-class laymen leaders
distancing themselves from the Church) and contextual factors (the Algerian
War and then the Vietnam War and politicisation of Parisian intellectual circles
in the 1960s), is the foundation for the conversion of Michèle's religious commit-
ment into revolutionary Maoist activism.

*From virtuoso religiosity to Maoism: politicisation of upper-middle-class
Christians*
The trajectories of politicisation of young Christians from the bourgeoisie
are analysed here through the case of Jacques,[40] who was born in 1941 to a
Protestant bourgeois family from Nimes.

Jacques' father was a lawyer and a member of the *Conseil d'Etat* (French
Council of State)[41] in the early 1930s. His mother, from the bourgeoisie
in Lyon, which Jacques described as "classic conservative right-wing,"[42]
did not work. An only child, he received a Protestant religious education

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38   Michèle completed a doctoral thesis a few years later and became a researcher at the EHESS
(*Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*).
39   Alain Badiou is a prominent French philosopher, whose vision of Marxism was influenced
by Louis Althusser. After the events of 1968 he was one of the founding members of the Marxist-
Leninist group, UCFml (Union des communistes de France marxistes-léninistes).
40   This trajectory was chosen because it combines several aspects that are of interest here,
which are observed in more diffuse form in various other trajectories. Colette's trajectory will
also be mobilised as a point of contrast.
41   The French Council of State acts as legal advisor to the executive and supreme court for
administrative justice.
42   Jacques' comments come from an interview conducted with him on 18 August 2005.

(religious practice at Temple, Sunday school, scouts). He was taught at the Cours Hattemer,[43] according to a strategy of elitist schooling: "In Paris in the 1930s and 1940s the Cours Hattemer was the ENA of nursery school! [...] Rocard, Chirac went there, among others [...] I learnt to read very early, I started to devour books at the age of 4 years old, and at 7, I was reading like a child of 14."

Jacques has "no memory of tenderness from [his] parents," and as they did not solicit him often, he took refuge in his books and in the Protestant scouting movement. He was a brilliant student at *Lycée* Condorcet in Paris, and progressively distanced himself from his parents because of his father's history (his father collaborated with Pierre Laval[44] and was appointed Prefect at the end of the 1930s). Jacques was admitted to Sciences Po Paris in 1958, and was active in various Protestant youth groups before joining the "Fédé"[45] of Protestant students. He was then still hesitant about his professional direction: "I didn't know if I wanted to be a pastor or not... then I dropped it when I went to the UEC later. But let's say that after my *bac*, I was between Protestantism and politics, and I came to politics through Protestantism in a way."

Jacques had a highly intellectual relationship with religion, close to what Weber called a virtuoso religious practice. His investment in religion seemed to be part of a quest for identity, linked to the impossibility of identifying with or adhering to his father's vision of the world (his father having participated in the Vichy regime). This crisis of affiliation is more broadly characteristic of the collective history of a generation born during or just after the war which inherited a family history of collaboration. This unspeakable heritage was indeed a genuinely heavy burden and contributed to a widespread break in allegiance from parental authority (Gruel, 2004, p. 164-165). Jacques' comments also emphasize the competition between two forms of salvation goods in this crisis of affiliation – Protestantism and politics.

43   The Cours Hattemer, the Hattemer Academy, is a private school providing secular education between nursery school and the baccalaureat. It was founded in 1885 by the educator Rose Hattermer. It caters to the elite, hence his description of it as the "ENA" of nursery schools, in reference to the highly prestigious administrative school that trains a large part of France's political elite.
44   Pierre Laval was one of the principle actors in the implementation of the Vichy regime's policy of collaboration with Nazi Germany. He was the head of the Vichy government between 1942 and 1944.
45   French Federation of Christian students' associations.

Becoming a revolutionary: avant-gardism and the quest for identity
How did Jacques, who had considered becoming a pastor, convert to revolutionary activism? How did he go on to become one of the leaders of the Union of Communist Marxist-Leninist Youth (*Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes,* UJCml)*,* and the national organiser for the Rank-and-File Vietnam Committees (*Comités Vietnam de base,* CVB)?

   Anti-colonial struggles were decisive in changing these young Christians from "missionaries to activists,"[46] as we have already seen above. Jacques became politicised through his contact with student movements during the Algerian War:

> In my second year at Sciences Po, I lived in a residence for Protestant students, in a very left-wing area, so I got involved in protests against the war in Algeria and that was when I went to my first demonstration, my first time in police custody – we were staging a sit-in on the Champs Elysées. My real politicisation was the Algerian War.

For Colette, who was born in 1946 into an upper-class Catholic family in Marseille, it was also a Third-Worldist cause that led her to convert to Maoism, but because of her age, it was the Vietnam War (in 1966) rather than Algeria:

> It was the situation of the Vietnamese people that got us going [...] the result was [ultimately] political, but not originally. In the beginning, it was – we don't have the right, the small cannot be crushed by the large, and that's written in the Bible! [...] When you had Johnson who was reinforcing the B52s and you could see ten Vietnamese who were running away, who had nothing... It was that anti-imperialist awareness, rather than a matter of a [political] party or current.[47]

Jacques joined UNEF, then the UEC, where he was initially close to the heterodox Trotskyists, before eventually turning towards the future UJCml: "In the UEC, the discovery was Althusser: it was through an intellectual approach that I found myself at the UJCml, because I read Althusser. He was someone who influenced us a lot, and it was a whole, he was at the Ecole Normale Supérieure as well..."

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46   To paraphrase the title of Danièle Hervieu-Léger's book "*De la mission à la protestation*" (1973).
47   Colette's remarks are taken from two interviews conducted with her on 12 and 13 November 2005.

In the highly politicised Parisian intellectual sphere of the mid-1960s, the Church went through a genuine crisis of legitimacy (Pelletier, 2002, p. 21 onwards). As a result, it found itself out of step with the avant-garde intellectual world, in spite of the recent *aggiornamento.* This was the time that Claude Lévi-Strauss was publishing *La Pensée sauvage* (1962), Lacan was founding the Freudian school in Paris (1964), and Louis Althusser was publishing *Pour Marx*, and *Lire le Capital* (1965). Christian humanism, even in its post-Vatican II socially committed version, thus found itself devalued by the theoretical anti-humanism of the structuralists.

These strategies of affiliation must also be seen in light of the symbolic returns resulting from the "distinguished Marxism of Rue d'Ulm [the street of the prestigious *Ecole Normale Supérieure*]."[48] Colette joined the UJCml in a similar way – in her case it was the priest at her elite business school (*HEC*) who provoked her conversion. She explained this choice through her "comrades at *Normale Sup*" and by the fact that "we were real intellectuals, you know."

She was one of the first Maoist activists who left to become an *établi*[49] in a factory (in 1967). The tale that she tells of her political task as part of the *établi* movement is cast in a prophetic register, and the six years she spent as a proletarian activist can be described as a "missionary prophecy"[50] that she dedicated to "educating the masses" for revolution. "We had to improve mentalities [...] to moralise people, tell them that there was an ideal." Where Jacques emphasizes the political origins of the Maoist *établis*,[51] and sees them as quite opposed to "worker-priests", Colette's description of her miltant practices reveals the convergences between the two repertoires of action (Dressen, 2000).

Like the prophets proposing new and subversive salvation goods, this profile of interviewees emphasizes the innovative aspect of the activism they then practiced. Jacques, for example, says:

> We reinvented this type of mass, grassroots, activism in connection with
> Vietnam. We went to the public housing estates, door-to-door, we reinvented

48 As Gérard Mauger recognises in his social self-analysis, (Mauger, 2006, p. 184).

49 This movement saw young, often bourgeois, students stop their studies to take up work in factories ("*s'établir*" translates as "to establish oneself") in order to experience proletarian life and to help bring about the revolution (Dressen, 2000). Those who made this shift into factories were known as "*établis*". See Chapter 4 for more discussion about this movement.

50 In her commentary of Max Weber, Florence Weber describes this as a prophecy that "pushes the virtuosos to lead the masses to revolution, a radical transformation in the daily lives of everyone" (Weber, 2001, p. 76)

51 Jacques was one of the leaders of the UJCml at the time that the "établis" strategy was decided on. He sees it as being founded on Mao Zedong's instructions that intellectuals "get down off the horse" and go and investigate "among the masses".

agitprop […] and we, we had this rank-and-file Maoist thing. We reinvented the
fact of going to the metro exit, selling the *Vietnam Courier,* making huge signs
that we hung over the markets that the Communist Party (PCF) activists had
progressively abandoned. So, we reinvented a certain style of political action.

Spreading the word, enlightening the masses, proselytizing, converting
others; so many militant practices that do not seem quite so innovative
if we shift our gaze from the political domain to the religious domain. By
becoming involved in the UJCml, these activists managed to preserve a
virtuous (distinctive) relation with their engagement. In so doing, they
legitimised the practices they had acquired through religious activism, and
contributed to the depreciation of competitive political offers on the left,
and that of the PCF in particular.[52] This confirms the hypothesis put forward
by Claude Grignon that the appearance of left-wing anti-communism was
the result of the political emergence of agents whose *habitus* was formed
within religious organisations (Grignon, 1977, p. 30).

A simple overview of the trajectories analysed here would conclude as to
an initial involvement in religious groups, in keeping with the socialisation
received in the family environment, followed by a significant break due to a
shift into the political sphere. However, I hope to have shown that if we look at
these militant careers from a longitudinal perspective, religious commitments
in fact appear to be more of a transitional space, an antechamber. In other
words, they allowed these young Christians to progressively break away
from their family environments, whilst furthering their social mobility, to
ultimately become involved with atheist left-wing activists. Depending on
the perspectives we adopt and the life spheres we consider, these processes of
conversion may appear to be genuine breaks (in world view) or instead seem
to be continuities (in practices).[53] It is therefore important not to overestimate
the break ascribed to the trajectories of those who converted from religion to
activism. But nor must we assume that this conversion is based on a simple

52   The homology between the sects described by Weber and the extreme-left factions such
as the UJCml is heuristic here. The Church, in which the faithful experience a "mass" religion,
corresponds to involvement in the PCF in the political sphere.

53   The ethos of dedication and solidarity with those less fortunate continues until today
through literacy activities (Christiane is an activist with the militant housing group "DAL",
"Right to Housing" at the time of this study) and the participation in different refugee support
networks (Michèle is a member of the network Education without Borders, RESF in French).
Alternatively, participating in agrarian reform in Algeria (Michèle), or being involved in the
anthropology of development (Jacques lives in Africa for part of the year) are other ways of
converting anti-colonialist dispositions into the professional sphere.

transfer; to do so would underestimate the amount of remodelling required for internalised dispositions to be actualised in a new form of engagement.

The transformations of conditions for students and women

Whilst the two first matrices are linked to family transmissions of beliefs and dispositions for activism (political and religious), structural transformations – of both the school system and the condition of women – provide the foundation for the second two.

When upward social mobility makes activists

The various interpretations of May '68 agree on the importance of the transformations within the school system that preceded the events. Antoine Prost, for example, writes that the events of May '68 "find their source in those transformations that destabilised [...] the academic institution, after having made it massively unsuited to its public and its new functions" (Prost, 1981, p. 28). The population that we are studying here was thus exposed to the generalisation of secondary schooling – and later tertiary education. This took place between the Liberation and the 1960s, through an exponential increase in the number of students,[54] and provoked a number of reforms. The Berthoin reform (1959) made changes to a system that had not been altered since the Liberation; in particular it made schooling compulsory up until age 16. Christian Fouchet, the Gaullist Minister for Education from 1962 to 1967, during the Fourth Republic, then introduced two further fundamental reforms. In 1963, he created the first secondary colleges (called CES, *collèges d'enseignement secondaire*). His second reform, in 1966, targeted higher education, creating technical universities (IUTs, *instituts universitaires de technologie*) and reorganising studies in arts and sciences.

> **Box 2   Evolutions in the French school system**
> In the 1950s and 60s, most children attended primary school between age 6-11, at which point working-class students either went on to obtain the *Primary Studies Certificate* (*Certificat d'études primaires, CEP*) at age 13 or 14, or attended "com-

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54   This progression accelerated from the end of the 1950s: "in 1960-1961, there were 214 700 students, compared to 123 300 in 1945-1946. Then there was an explosion: 30 000 students more in 1961, 40 000 more in 1962, and as many again in 1963 and 1964. In five years, the university population had doubled." (Prost, 1981, p. 306).

plementary classes" for the most academic among them. Middle and upper-class students on the other hand attended the "*lycée*," which took students from age 11 up to the final exams or *baccalaureate*.

The hitherto impenetrable barrier between these two parallel school systems – primary for the working classes on one hand, and the *lycée* for more privileged students on the other – began to break down with the reforms of the early 1960s to generalise secondary education, through the establishment of the *Collège d'Enseignement Secondaire* (1963).

Secondary school was then (and still is) divided into two cycles, *college* (equivalent to middle school) and *lycée* (the three final years, equivalent to senior school). However, in the 1960s people often used the term *lycée* to refer to the whole secondary school system, by contrast with more vocational education or those who finished school after the CEP.

At the end of the *lycée* students have to pass the *baccalaureat* or "*bac*" exams to complete their qualifications. Whilst many working-class students went no further than the *CEP* exams, many privileged students continued on to higher education. The vast majority of these students went on to university, but a small elite attended preparatory classes called "*prepa*" (held at the *lycées*) which prepared students for the prestigious "*Grandes Ecoles*."

In addition, there was a special stream for trainee teachers, who were recruited at age 14 to study at the *Ecole Normale d'institeurs,* after completing the *collège*. During their studies, these students received a salary from the state in anticipation of their future role as teachers in public primary schools.

However, these evolutions in the school system gave rise to diverging interpretations as to the profiles of the students who participated in May '68. Surprisingly, the long-dominant[55] explanation was one based on downward social mobility, even though these academic transformations produced a multiplication of first-generation intellectuals (i.e. individuals who were the first in their families to receive higher education). Their experiences of resistance to the university system, just as they entered it, as well as their own position as outsiders, provided fertile soil for the growth of critical dispositions regarding both the university system and the social order more generally.[56] In order to further develop this matrix, we will begin by

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55   It would be 30 years before the reverse schema would be put forward by Louis Gruel, himself a first-generation intellectual (Gruel, 2004, p. 69-70).

56   On this point, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron wrote: "It is when the perfect attunement between the educational system and its chosen public begins to break down that the 'pre-established harmony', which upheld the system so perfectly so as to exclude all inquiry into its basis, is revealed" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970, trans. 1990, p. 99).

focusing on Jean's trajectory, before explaining why these "class migrants"[57] are particularly receptive to critical sociology. In particular, we will look at how the reception of *Les Héritiers* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964, published in English as *The Inheritors* 1979) participated in their politicisation.

Remaining faithful to one's origins through activism

Jean was born in 1939 in a small village in Lower Normandy, where his parents were farmers. Like many villagers, they rented their land from the village Baron, who was also the Mayor, and a practicing Catholic. Jean, who had been singled out by the town priest for his academic abilities, was encouraged to continue his studies. At age 11 he went to boarding school in a Catholic secondary college and then to the *lycée*; he was the first of his family to complete secondary schooling. This experience made him an outsider at a time when the "symbolic barrier that had been erected in order to maintain social order" (Pudal, 2008, p. 64), between the primary and the secondary system, was only just beginning to crumble. In the early 1950s, the children of peasants only made up 7% of students in sixth grade and, for Jean, the gaze of his more affluent classmates provoked shame and a feeling of social illegitimacy:

> At the *lycée* the others were mostly from petit bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie, so for the son of a peasant, it was pretty strange, sometimes I was ashamed … [*of what for example?*] Well the way of doing things, all that, being a bit awkward, like a peasant you know! Dress, yes, all that, the little signs… For example: my father took me [to school] in the cart, in 1953-1954 it was quite an identity marker to arrive in a cart… That's what makes its mark […] you become aware of class differences…[58]

Like Jean, these "class migrants" were exposed to contradictory injunctions: although their social mobility was the pride of their parents and family, it also bore with it the threat of rejecting their social origins.[59] Indeed academic acculturation and contact with other social circles leads to the – at least partial – internalisation of other people's judgments on oneself. Hence the feelings of identity dissonance, and of being in double bind, are at the root of

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57   I thank Paul Pasquali for his informed advice to use "class migrant" as the translation for the French term "transfuge de classe".

58   The comments quoted in this section are taken from an interview conducted with Jean, at his home on 24 January, 2006.

59   On this threat of rejection, see the novels by Annie Ernaux and the sociological reading proposed by Gérard Mauger (Mauger, 2004).

complex and ambivalent feelings of fascination and rejection regarding the bourgeois milieu. At *lycée*, Jean had not yet translated the social otherness of the "scholarship student" (Hoggart, 1957) into political terms.

As an excellent student, Jean was accepted into *hypokhâgne*[60] in Caen. At the end of the second year, he was received at the *Ecole Normale de Saint-Cloud*, which gave him access to the IPES.[61] He thus continued his university education, with a stipend, and enrolled in history and geography at the University of Caen in 1959. It was here that he became more political:

> I wasn't particularly left-wing when I was at Catholic secondary school... we had to do public speaking competitions against communism – no, really! [*he laughs*] So in that respect, I don't remember having had political ideas other than those of that sphere. But then, as a student, yeah, because there was the movement against the Algerian War, and I think I had a class consciousness really, and the two things became connected.

It was thus through the student movement and in the context of the struggle against the Algerian War, that his feelings of uneasiness about being the son of peasants, which up until then he had experienced as socially shameful, took on a political dimension. Moreover, the fact that he had himself had his conscription for the Algerian War deferred, was also in contradiction with the idea of accepting the world as it is. Jean became active in the fight against the Algerian War, through UNEF initially, and then within the group "*Socialisme ou barbarie*" (Socialism or barbarianism).

It is no easy task for these first-generation intellectuals to conceptualise their social position and their role. They do not have any models that can help structure their relationship with the social world and with the future, neither in their families, nor in the institutional past of the school system. Their political affiliation with the extreme-left provides them with a framework through which to read the feelings of incongruity and disparity that they experienced throughout their schooling, in terms of class struggle. Moreover, it provides them with a means of conciliating their parental mandate for social mobility, and their mandate of loyalty towards the working classes. The question of how to be faithful to oneself and to one's family therefore

60   First year preparatory classes for the "grandes écoles" (elite higher education institutions) in France.

61   Preparatory schools for secondary school teachers, "*Instituts de preparation aux enseignements de second degré*." These schools brought together student teachers, who were paid, generally for a period of 3 years, to prepare the teaching qualification exams. They were abolished in 1979.

runs through all studies on these *displaced* people: "the [class] traitor must restore justice to his father: whence the allegiance to the cause of the lower classes who pledge allegiance to the cause of the father [...] can be understood as attempts magically to neutralize the effects of the change in position and dispositions separating the individual from his father" (Bourdieu, 1993, trans. 1999 p. 510) These attempts to "reconcile the irreconcilable" (Pudal, 1989) are often the motivation of communist or far-left intellectuals.

Activist networks thus allow these young students to use their erudite dispositions to serve their class of origin, whilst still facilitating their acculturation into the student milieu (through the education, transmission of knowledge and sociability that it provides). As Jean says:

> When I arrived in Caen, I didn't understand much about politics, I have to admit [he laughs]! It was quite difficult actually... But I went to demonstrations, to meetings: there was a sort of shack near the Uni, it was the UNEF place, there was a bar, and all the lefties hung out there, all the students [...] there was the journal *Socialism or Barbarianism*, I read that, and there were meetings, discussions [...], there were lots of things I didn't know compared to someone who had been there since they were 14 or 15 years old, so it was little by little... an education in a way...

This training in activism, which conveyed rhetorical and discursive skills (Ethuin, 2003) thus supported their trajectories of upward social mobility.

In 1966, the context of the anti-Vietnam War movement led Jean and Christiane (see above) to become involved in the Communist Revolutionary Youth group (*Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire*, JCR). As a geography and history teacher, Jean was transferred to Troyes in 1967, and together he and Christiane founded the local branch of the JCR there. They were also among the main leaders of the May '68 movements in that town. Jean was also involved in the "Ecole émancipée"[62] movement, within the Federation for National Education (*Fédération de l'éducation nationale*, FEN), and became a union representative at the national level in the 1970s.

The Inheritors, *read by first-generation intellectuals*
Most of the class migrants interviewed here evoke the importance of Pierre Bourdieu's writings for their intellectual and political progression. Jean, for example, says:

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62   L'Ecole émancipée (the Emancipated School) is a union movement that promotes school reform for equality, and brings together several extreme-left activists.

Bourdieu, he's not just anyone. He had a big influence on me... he helped me a lot, for school particularly... *The Inheritors*, it was really a book that was very important for all the people who were connected to these stories, it was fundamental... he played such an important historical role in that respect, in terms of the critique of the bourgeois school system. Ultimately, he was the one who said the most intelligent things. [...] For the Maoists, the school was essentially a repressive apparatus that spread ideology: that was too much in contradiction with what the school system had given me for example [...] so I absolutely couldn't be a Maoist [*he laughs*]!

Trajectories of significant upward social mobility lead to this kind of affinity with Bourdieu's own trajectory, and more broadly with the sociology of *The Inheritors.* These affinities are explored by the writer Annie Ernaux, herself originally from the working class. In an interview about her approach to writing, Ernaux said "what I had to say – basically, the shift from the world of the oppressed to the world of the oppressors, via education – I had never seen it expressed in the way that I felt it. And one book allowed me, in a way, to bring myself up to speed. One book pushed me, as no so-called literary text had done before, to dare to confront this history. And that book was *The Inheritors* by Bourdieu and Passeron, which I discovered in the spring" (Ernaux, 2003, p. 87).

This social self-analysis is also present in the comments made by Jeanne, born in 1943 to a chauffeur and a cleaning lady. She was encouraged by her primary school teacher to go on to secondary school, even though "[her] destiny was to pass the primary school certificate and become a hairdresser or a dressmaker." She says, "I read *The Inheritors* when it came out [...] it was very important for me: [it had] a strong impact, strong personal resonance. It said, with supporting figures, tables and analysis, what I had felt – as a child and a teenager, in my family, my friends and my neighbourhood, or as a student teacher, during my teaching placements."[63]

Reading *The Inheritors* provided these first-generation intellectuals with a collective explanation of the dissonance they had experienced on a personal level, and more generally provided a scientific analysis for the social basis of their feelings and their frustrations. The revelation of the role of the education system in the reproduction of social and cultural

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63   Extract from an interview conducted with Jeanne, on 27 January 2006. Jeanne is the first and only high school graduate in her family, and she continued her studies at the Centre for the Training of College Teachers from 1961, whilst also active in the Antic-fascist University Front, and the PCF.

hierarchies was thus a kind of liberation. Aline, born in 1946, describes how her social mobility made her receptive to the politicising effects of this critical sociology of education:

> I had a lot of experience with the savagery of the system, in the way it selects and excludes, so ruthlessly. I felt like I was a survivor, for having had to defend my place [...] And afterwards, I tended to condemn the illusion of promotion through education, the exceptions who prove the rule [...] And I think that in the 1960s, Bourdieu and Passeron's books showed that people in the lower classes who succeed were, you know, exceptions and that they were put forward as kind of the watchdogs of the system [...]. *The Inheritors* was an important moment: they showed, in black and white, the myth of equal opportunities. These books were so beneficial because they provided an explanation for the difficulties that came from not having an intellectual family culture: it was important in feeding our political thought.[64]

These class migrants constituted a particularly receptive audience for this critical sociology of education, to the extent that, unlike the "excluded" and the "inheritors," they overcame the various obstacles linked to their social origins, and experienced the symbolic violence of acculturation to the school system.

Finally, the scientific project that aimed to unveil the implicit norms that structure the school system provoked numerous affinities with the militant project condemning the role of the school in social reproduction, and provided it with substantial symbolic weapons. The militant use of *The Inheritors* to feed the political debate therefore most likely contributed to its wide reception in the late 1960s, among the groups interviewed here (Masson, 2005).[65]

Upward social mobility and politicisation
To conclude this matrix, we can summarise the main biographical sequences that, in their succession, contributed to political awakening and the birth of dispositions towards extreme-left activism (see Figure 2 below).

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64   Aline is the daughter of an assistant accountant (with a primary school certificate) and a dressmaker who became a teacher in a vocational learning centre (vocational certificate). This extract comes from the first interview, conducted with her on 27 January 2005, at Vitruve school where she taught from 1969 until she retired.
65   On similar political reappropriations of Pierre Bourdieu's work, but in the 1990s-2000s see Pasquali (2007).

Through their unlikely social trajectories, these class migrants found themselves doubly displaced: both in relation to their class of origin, and their class of arrival. On one hand, they faced the threat of rejecting one's origins. One the other, this social shift exposed them to various experiences of stigma and humiliation, which led them to be particularly sensitive to questions of injustice. Moreover, they are all the more disposed to believe in the possibility of social change because their own trajectories "have shaken the foundations of the social order by weakening the borders between 'us' and 'them'" (Mauger, 2004, p. 197). Their trajectories serve as a kind of symbolic weapon for the revelation of a forbidden truth – that the social order is not immutable. In the second half of the 1960s, extreme-left activism allowed these young students to fight for their class of origin, whilst ensuring their integration into the student milieu. It thus offered a 'place' for these 'displaced' people, but also a response to the question of the (existential) meaning of this place, through militant rhetoric.

However, explaining the origin of these dispositions for rebellion does not enable us to account for the ways in which they were activated; ways which were also largely due to local contexts and conjunctures. Although Jean was among the very first cohorts to benefit from the generalisation of secondary education, the phenomenon had become widespread by the time Aline went to university. Student unionism thus provided her an opportunity for activism that did not exist ten years earlier, and she invested her dispositions for protest in it.[66] The opportunity for local political activism was also decisive for many. In south-west France, Jeanne joined the PCF in 1961, because in that area it was the most militant body in the anti-colonialism movement. By contrast, the PCF's position on the Algerian War was prohibitive for Jean who joined the group "*Socialisme et barbarie*" which was more locally adapted to his concerns. In other words, this shared matrix led to very distinctive forms of political participation that differ primarily according to age (i.e. the year of entry into university), but also gender (Lagrave, 2010). They also differ according to the kinds of activism undertaken (extreme-left Trotskyism, PCF and student unionism).

66   Aline went to the Sorbonne to study psychology in 1965, was a member of UNEF as well as of the Federation of Humanities Study Groups (*Fédération des groupes d'étude de lettres*, FGEL). She soon became the general secretary of FGEL and shared an office with Brice Lalonde (then president of the FGEL, who would later become an environmental activist and a presidential candidate for the Greens in 1981).

Figure 2   Activism and upward social mobility
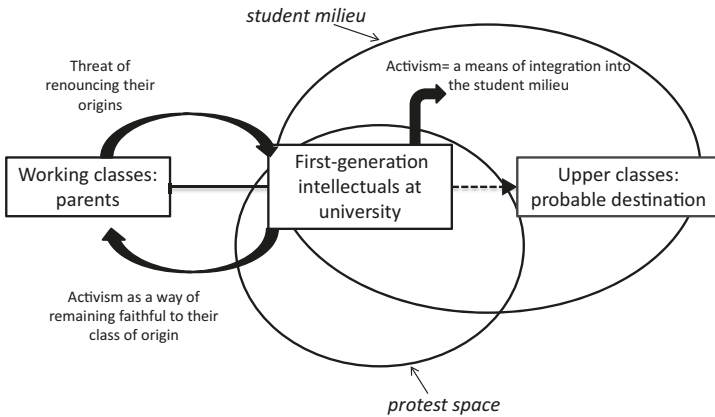
When personal crises resonate with political crises

The final matrix of participation in May '68 is specific to the youngest of the interviewees. These individuals experienced an increasingly large gulf between their personal aspirations and the constraints linked to the gender and generational relations that dominated before 1968, which they had difficulty accepting.

Alongside the transformations of student life, the condition of women underwent a profound evolution over the course of the 1960s in France. Access to higher education, as well as the rise in female employment gave women the means to access economic independence (Baudelot and Establet, 2006). On a legal level, legislative evolutions in sexuality – particularly the 1967 Neuwirth law authorising contraception – contributed to the development of sexual independence. These structural changes in turn had an impact on feminine roles. Whereas before 1968 these roles were limited to daughter, wife and mother, expected to be respectively chaste, faithful and submissive, access to sexual and economic independence completely changed things. However, representations of femininity – and masculinity – did not evolve at the same rate, which led to increasing incoherencies. More than half of the interviewees say that the condition of social mores prior to 1968 was a source of suffering for them,[67] yet this figure obscures a gender gap, because more women than

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67   The question was formulated as follows: "Did you suffer from the state of mores before 1968? If yes, give one specific example."

men responded positively to this question. Some of the specific examples given by the young adults in their questionnaires include: "major difficulties in sexual relations outside marriage;" "no easily accessible contraception;" "illegal abortions;" "fear of pregnancy." One respondent wrote, "I was chased by the concierge and threatened with eviction when a man came to visit me."

Similar discordances in the university sector led to tensions and a feeling of unease among students, which became heightened over the course of the 1960s (Prost, 1981, p. 311 onwards; Pudal, 2008). One of the first demonstrations of what would be later described as an anti-institutional mood was born of the conjunction of these gaps (in mores and in the school system). The movement in opposition to the internal regulations in university residences emerged due to student overcrowding and the challenge to the principle of single-sex dorms. This movement, which began in Antony, in the southern suburbs of Paris, as early as 1965, reached Nanterre in 1967 and became very popular due to the "Cohn-Bendit[68] episode." When the Minister for Youth Affairs, François Misoffe, came to Nanterre to inaugurate the new swimming pool, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, then a student in sociology, challenged him on the question of young people's sexual problems, not covered in the Minister's white paper. Less anecdotally, these discordances were responsible for many personal experiences of incoherence and tension between the condition of women and the university housing rules, or the position of young women as students and their status as legal minors. There was also an ongoing tension between the official offer of university education and housing, and the new radically larger and qualitatively different student population. These phenomena of hysteresis,[69] this "delay," contributed to a diffuse and increasing feeling of hypocrisy that was unbearable for some. Talking about her *lycée* in the mid-1960s[70] for example, Aline says:

> It was horrendous, that girls' school! It was the era of Brigitte Bardot with petticoats. There was a control at the school gate, and we couldn't have

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68   Daniel Cohn-Bendit was a student leader during May 1968 and vocal in demanding greater sexual freedom for students on university campuses, specifically allowing male students to access female dormitories. This attracted a lot of support from fellow students, nearly had him expelled from university and led to more protests in his defence. He was a key figure in the organisation of the 22 March movement at Nanterre. He is now a European politician for the Greens party.

69   In other words, "phenomena of discrepancy, delay, in representations anticipations and expectations, with regard to the actual state of "objective" structures" (Dobry, 1986, p. 244).

70   We mentioned Aline's case above regarding the matrix of first-generation intellectuals. Once again, we see here that the different matrices are not mutually exclusive.

more than one petticoat or they could take one off us! If a student arrived with makeup on, they sent her to wash her face, in the basin, we weren't allowed heels over four centimetres, we had to wear the school smock with your name embroidered in red, things like that! The school rules began with "a student at Sophie-Germain is a well brought up young girl, she should not stand out, either in her conduct, or in her comportment...!" I remember a girl in my class who had a book confiscated, it was far from porn... And the principal came into the class to explain that the book was so filthy that an unmarried female supervisor, who was on the disciplinary council, had not been allowed to read it! And she said that this girl, who had been our class representative, couldn't be the representative anymore [...] Well, there was a whole system to make us toe the line [...]. It was things like that, which had already started to make me... even though I was really quite shy.

Aline's trajectory is typical of the generational ensemble made up of the *first baby boomers*,[71] born after the war. She was brought up in the "illusion that the baddies were all Germans and a few rare French people, but all the others were Resistants," by parents who wanted to "turn the page" of the war (her father refused to discuss it when he returned from captivity). She has the feeling of having grown up in a post-war period founded on numerous illusions – which became a source of future disillusions:

Anyway, they lied to us about the war all through our childhood [...] and in the 1960s [...] now we can see that the system was a sham, officially maintained, and that those who really fought were in fact a tiny minority! [...] We opened our eyes and we realised that we had grown up in a kind of euphoric haze but behind it all, there were so many false pretences.

This discourse is typical of the first generation to not live through a war; baby boomers who grew up in a "sort of protective bubble, in historical weightlessness, and far from the strong swells of the 1950s." The "disconnection with the reality in which the public authorities had confined them" (Sirinelli, 2008, p. 117) fuelled their indignation.

The experience of injustice in both gender and generational relations provided rich fertile ground for the development of anti-institutional

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71   The baby boomers are normally defined as the ensemble of cohorts born in the decade following the Second World War. However, this category is not as homogenous as is sometimes implied; the term notably obscures the social disparities between baby boomers.

sensibilities and for the later emergence of feminist movements. The close analysis of two cases, both representative of this matrix of *statutory incoherencies*, will shed further light on this.

Breakdown in allegiances with parental, academic and religious authority
Maëlle was born in 1948 in a left-wing family of white-collar employees. After the Second World War, her father, who had made his career in the army, was redeployed into a civil service position at the port of Nantes, and her mother, the daughter of shipyard workers in Lorient, was employed in an office. As their eighth and last child, Maëlle received a "very authoritarian" and pious upbringing, and attended religious education classes at the public school for young girls, where she was enrolled from her first year at primary school. Whilst still quite young, Maëlle developed an oppositional disposition that challenged her parents, the school (she was held back a grade several times), and religion: "I ran away a few times... Religion, I dropped it when I was a teenager, well, probably out of opposition and provocation, Mass didn't interest me anymore and faith neither. I dropped out at that point... in relation to my parents who were very authoritarian at the time, both of them..."[72]

Mathilde was born in 1946 in Bordeaux into a family of artisans. Her father was an electrician, born in Vendee, a royalist and a practicing Catholic; her mother worked at home, raising their four daughters, "[my] mother was more than a practicing Catholic, [she was] a bigot... she managed to discourage and disgust her four children; we all had an overdose of religion."[73] She also emphasizes the lack of freedom that she suffered from as child, and her rejection of religious morals a few years later when she was at a religious boarding school: "my mother had the nasty habit of sending us long letters on morality, you know – four to six pages, it was awful! [...] At one point, we'd just look at the envelope and say, it's that again, and off it goes in the bin!" Like Aline, Mathilde stresses the hypocrisy of the moral order in the mid-1960s:

> in my high school, there were post-secondary classes, and there was a girl whose boyfriend used to wait for her, and they kissed, and the headmistress sanctioned her, saying "Mademoiselle, that was a conjugal kiss!" You have to imagine the mood! We called it the "ideology of Aunt Yvonne,"

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72   Maëlle's comments are taken from the interview conducted in Nantes on 7 February 2006.
73   Mathilde's comments are taken from the interview conducted at her home on 26 January 2004.

after Yvonne de Gaulle who had had a female announcer sacked because
she showed her knees: there was the most unbearable prudishness!

The two young women, both resistant to parental authority, used different
means to try and break free; Mathilde by an early marriage, and Maëlle by
a series of runaway attempts.

Mathilde

I got married, before I went to
university, to the first man I'd
ever kissed. It seems unbelievable
now, I hadn't even slept with him,
I did afterwards, that's how taboo
it was in my family! It was also a
means of breaking away...

Maëlle

My brother came to England to get
me. I have to say I was really really
rebellious at the time, but against
my parents, not against society.
My parents were older, I was the
last child... I had the impression
that they didn't understand any-
thing, about my adolescence, or
what was happening in life!

Having parents that were markedly older than those of her classmates
contributed to Maëlle's feeling of not being understood. For Mathilde,
freed from parental authority by marriage, the mismatch between her
new condition as a student (in Bordeaux, then in Paris from 1967) and her
role as a young wife was increasingly large: "I felt like there was something
wrong with Frank, something off... so when we left for Paris, university
for me, it made the gap between my relationship and my student life even
bigger [...]. I had more and more difficulty, between my commitment to
Frank and my commitment to my new milieu, where I was beginning to
meet people on the left."

The increasing disconnection between Mathilde's status as a student and
the way she continued to be discredited by her parents, her husband and
her parents-in-law (who pushed her to become a mother very young) rein-
forced her feeling of unease. Maëlle on the other hand, rebelling against the
academic order, felt isolated in her family sphere where nobody shared her
aspirations. According to the historian Jean-François Sirinelli, the baby boom
generation is more generally characterised by "reciprocal misunderstandings
between age groups," which "historically banal, became more heightened
here" (Sirinelli, 2008, p. 114). In the cases of Mathilde and Maëlle, however,
these misunderstandings led them to break their allegiance to the authority
of their parents or the school system. This breakdown initially led to feelings
of guilt (Mathilde would wait several years before filing for divorce).

The role of crises in politicisation

The identity crises of these two young women, who both had intimate experiences with various statutory incoherencies, would soon resonate with the political crisis of May '68. This provided them with collective and political frameworks through which to interpret what they had previously understood and experienced on a personal level:

Mathilde	Maëlle
Those events revealed something that I had felt for several years but which I kept quiet, that I wouldn't have been able to express in fact [...] because it was revolutions everywhere, internally: you have to see what French society was like just before... You can't imagine the earthquake it was for young women from good families, like me! (she laughs) [...] I can say that I was born in 1968... intellectually, I woke up from a sort of slumber in which I was nothing more than my education, my constraints, all the guilt that had been put in my head... Maybe I'm magnifying it too, but for me, it's, it would stay the most important event in my life [...] it is life, you know, that's where it started...	In 1968, I was 20 years old, I was still living with my parents, I had repeated one or two years of school and anyway, there was no question of leaving home before 21 in those days! I was already opposed to my parents, but let's say that in May '68 I found a more general opposition in fact. It gave me a reason to rebel, but in a more grandiose way because it wasn't just in the family sphere. I could rebel against all parental figures (she laughs), from de Gaulle, who represented the father of the nation, or the bosses – it was all authority. Oh, it was marvellous!... It was a bit like transcending my teenage rebellion; it was the right time for me [...] it was the perfect moment.

At that time, the age of legal majority (21 years old) was one of most striking statutory incoherencies for these young adults. More generally, these extracts emphasize the crucial importance of age – within a few years – in this matrix of participation based on the conjuncture between crises of allegiance to authority relations, and a political crisis like May '68. Bernard Pudal's description of the main characters in Georges Perec's novel *Le*s *Choses*[74] – who are "looking for a way out of the crisis," and who were born "too early" to be concerned by this matrix – provides an enlightening illustration of

74   Translated into English as "Things: A story of the Sixties", 1965.

this: "if they had been students a few years later [...] their anxious search could have been fulfilled in these left-wing positions" (Pudal, 2011, p. 228).

Born "at the right time," Mathilde moved towards anarchist far-left student movements in the months that followed May '68 at the Sorbonne, where she was studying literature. Now a young mother, she divorced shortly afterwards, and with others she founded the alternative crèche at Censier.[75] In the years that followed she became actively involved in the feminist movement.[76] For her part, Maëlle enrolled in history at the University of Rennes, at the beginning of May '68, but she dropped out to become a primary school teacher – inspired by Freinet – "because if we want to change society, we have to start with the education of young children." She thus converted her disposition for rebellion into a critique of the school system and became a unionist with the *Ecole Emancipée*.[77]

The *statutory incoherencies* matrix thus concerns this generational ensemble that was already in conflict with the different forms of authority on the eve of May '68. The events of May-June brought a political charge to their diffuse individual feelings of rebellion and gave them the right to express themselves, as well as providing various collective frameworks for interpreting the crises they had previously experienced. It is in this respect that we can talk about an "awakening of political consciousness,"[78] due to an effect of conjuncture in the alignment of multiple personal crises with the events of May '68. Indeed, this critical moment provoked the questioning of everything that was habitually taken for granted, and the gender and generational relations did not escape this profound challenge. Indeed, it was predominantly raised by the youngest sub-group of the corpus – who were students in 1968 and who are mostly women – (situated in the lower left quadrant on the factorial plane, see Figure 1 above). These young female

75   This crèche and others like it were known as "crèches sauvages" (wild crèches). These crèches were often run by groups of activist parents according to alternative models of education, and countercultural values (free, co-educational care, new pedagogies, involvement of parents, anti-authoritarian etc.).

76   In May 1968, Mathilde was pregnant and her daughter Corinne was born in the months that followed. The remainder of her trajectory, representative of the utopian communities of the 1970s is discussed in Chapter 5.

77   Later Maëlle would become a storyteller, manage a social centre, work as a tour guide and also breed donkeys.

78   For Bourdieu, the "prise de conscience", translated into English as awakening of consciousness, is "the progressive discovery of what class habitus encloses in practice, the appropriation of oneself by oneself, the recovery, through coherent explanation, of everything that, unconscious and uncontrolled, is exposed to a deviation of meaning and mystification" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79-80)

activists then turned their criticism towards the various forms of authority relations, which had been politically recast in terms of domination, and thus participated in the redefinition of women's roles and the situation of students in the early 1970s.

Conclusion

This exploration of the social, political, religious, academic or generational roots of May '68 thus contributes to invalidating the idea that there is a single "generation '68." The four principle matrices revealed here produce distinct generational ensembles, depending on the contexts in which militant action was first undertaken.

Table 2   From the genesis of dispositions for protest to their activation

The formation of dispositions for protest	Political events triggering activism
Family transmission of dispositions for activism	Algerian War
Politicisation of religious commitments	Anti-imperialism (Vietnam War, Latin American struggles, etc.)
Politicisation of first-generation intellectuals	May '68
Statutory incoherencies	

However, we can try to account for the primary determinants of participation in May '68 by developing a higher order matrix. This would subscribe to the idea of a progressive erosion of consent in the context of "sectorial crises of authority relations" (Damamme, Gobille, Matonti, and Pudal, 2008). Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s these crises affected the main institutions responsible for ensuring social order (family, school, the church etc.). The structural evolutions of French society in the 1960s (generalisation of higher education, evolution of the situation of young people, access to sexual and economic independence for women, *aggiornamento* in the church) indeed led to a modification in the recruitment of a certain number of institutions which were obliged to provide access to populations for which they were neither suited nor prepared. This has been discussed at length for the school system, but the disruptions in the Church in the 1950s and 60s is not unrelated to the evolution of social recruitment in religious youth groups (Serry, 2008; Pelletier, 2002). The army was also affected and experienced

historic discredit linked – among other things – to its role in the Second World War, Petainism, and colonial wars – particularly in Vietnam. This led to growing dissatisfaction among certain young people with regard to military service (Gruel, 2004; Bertrand 2008). The list of these sectorial legitimacy crises (crises in psychiatric institutions, youth institutions etc.) could go on and on. However, what needs to be remembered is the recurrence of a certain profile of actors, with unlikely trajectories, who found themselves in the position of outsiders, which gave them a critical perspective on the institutions to which they belonged. Thrown into social roles to which they were not fully suited, these young people often occupied what Bourdieu called "dominated dominant" positions (first-generation intellectuals, young women from higher classes, leaders of religious youth groups etc.). As outsiders, they played an important role in spreading beliefs and representations that challenged the legitimacy of the political regime, the social order, the family order and the religious order, in the years leading up to the crisis. We now turn to the question of where and when their individual and collective trajectories crossed, and how this contributed to the spread of the crisis in May and June of 1968.

2 Shaping the event: Socialisation effects and registers of participation

Karl Mannheim's definition of generational units as being formed by their members' *shared* exposure to the *same* events (Mannheim, 1972 [1928]) raises more questions than it answers. Is it really possible to say that the various participants in the events of May-June 1968 participated in the *same* event? What could a lower-class factory worker on strike have to exchange with a young student from a bourgeois background, motivated by breaking away from her family? Would they even have come into physical contact during the events? Archival films and photos show thousands of activists marching hand in hand down the streets of the Latin Quarter, sitting on benches in the universities or demonstrating in support of factory sit-ins. But was their convergence perhaps based on a misunderstanding? Did they really experience the deconstruction of social barriers, as some claim? Can the forms of destabilisation that resulted from their participation be limited to what occurred during the events themselves? More generally, does an analysis based on generation run the risk of obscuring the numerous ways in which the event was shaped by participants, and how they were shaped by it in turn?

In contrast to certain approaches that associate a foundational event with the formation of one – or two – political generation(s), this chapter aims to analyse the multiple socialising effects of May '68. In order to do this, we will focus here on what played out during the events. Yet an event does not exist "in an (interpretative) void" (Fassin and Bensa, 2002, p. 8); it partly resides in pre-existing interests and expectations. How can we then avoid the twin pitfalls of analysing participation in May '68 either on the basis of only the *long term* – trajectories prior to the event which neglect *contextual* variables – or on the *short term* of the event and its interactions – to the detriment of dispositions acquired in *primary* socialisation?

This study allows us to shed light on the articulation between primary political socialisation and event socialisation,[1] to re-examine the question of the "generations of '68." This chapter therefore begins by exploring the diversity of

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[1]   The notion of "primary socialisation", which generally refers to what is acquired during childhood in the family sphere, has been criticised for its vagueness (Darmon, 2006). It will nevertheless be used extensively here, as a synonym for the socialisation that occurred prior to May '68, in order to distinguish it from "secondary socialisation" (chronologically speaking, i.e. that came afterwards) through the political event.

representations and forms of participations in the events of May '68. It reveals the role played by sociological variables such as age, sex, social background, occupation (as a student or worker) and activist experience in structuring expectations and aspirations regarding the power of young people, the evolution of sexual norms, changes in working conditions, and the overthrow of the social order. The analysis then moves on to establish a typology of socialising effects linked to participation in the events of May-June '68. Depending on the extent to which individuals were exposed to the event and the militant resources they had previously accumulated, May '68 could provide various forms of political socialisation based on *maintenance, reinforcement, awareness raising,* or the *conversion* of prior political dispositions and convictions.

May '68: the same event for everyone?

Different reactions to the study reveal different representations of the events

What were the participants in May '68 actually protesting about? What cause(s) were they defending? Some were trying to bring about profound change in France's political and social structure, others were focused on forcing the evolution of social mores, still others sought the transformation of the school system. A simple frequency table using the results of the questionnaire reveals the heterogeneity of the participants' expectations and interests regarding the events of May-June '68. It is worth noting that more than half the interviewees say they did not have clearly structured demands prior to their participation. However, although the aspiration to political change was widely shared (by 84% of them), other motivations were quite varied, and include:

– "The old world was unbearable; it was simply no longer possible. May '68 was not a choice for me, it was self-evident."
– "Wanting to take off 'the lid' that had been forced down on young people and so many human beings, to blow it off; in other words, participating in the emancipation of so many in our society."
– "Opening up a vision of the world that was different from the straight-jacket of French bourgeois society."
– "Changing the world for my children, and my children for the world."
– "Starting a revolution – changing the system!"
– "Combating American imperialism (Vietnam)."
– "Improving the situation of women."

The diversity of motivations for involvement in May '68 is unsurprisingly associated with a strong heterogeneity of representations of the events themselves (see Table 3). Indeed, although most of the interviewees agreed that they experienced a "historic moment," there were many of them that did not identify with the categories proposed in the questionnaire.

Table 3   The diversity of representations of May '68

During the events, did you feel like you were:	% of participants
Participating in fleeting and unimportant events	5
Living through a "historic moment"	76
Enjoying "the revolution," but not really believing in it	10
Staging a revolution	9
Other, examples: "Changing human ignorance" "helping make society better" "achieving personal freedom" "Staging a revolution (without inverted commas, enjoying it and believing in it)" "changing history is too strong, but a justified revolt" "doing something natural" "partying" "changing student/teacher relations"	10

How can we explain the diversity of these representations? The conflicts over the interpretation of the events began immediately after the crisis, and they never really ended, but were resuscitated with each ten-year anniversary. Previous commentators have all sought to define what these events *really* represented, to explain them with a single unifying concept: for Trebisch (2000) it was "alienation;" for de Certeau (1968) it was "speaking out;" for Gilcher-Holthey (2000) it was "the New Left;" for Lindenberg (1998) it was "the situationist breach;" for Gobille (2008) it was the "anti-authoritarian critique;" for Mauger (2009b) it was the "generic frameworks of Marxism," etc.

Rather than seeking to find *the* meaning of the events of May-June '68, or to explain who the '68ers *really* are, we can instead say that they constitute a "collective person," partly based on cohesion through vagueness (Boltanski, 1982, trans. 1987 p. 279). We can also try to associate these conflicting definitions with the characteristics of the groups that endorse them. Indeed, these symbolic struggles surrounding the nature of May '68 are clearly visible in the interviewees' reactions to the study, and particularly in the open

comments at the end of the questionnaire. Analysing these comments, and through them the interviewees' reactions to the study and the researcher, reveal the fault lines and power relations which underlie these issues of definition.

The "students' May" versus "workers' May"
Many interviewees begin by expressing the feeling that they do not fully correspond to the profile expected in the study:

– "Your questionnaire is more directed at students than workers (of the time). I finished military service in 1969 and my activism began after that (CGT union delegate, activist with the Proletarian Left (GP), the first editorial team at *Liberation*, currently member of Attac)." (René born in 1947, working-class background, layout artist).

– "Perhaps it's intentional, but most of the questions are for people who were students during May '68. Lots of people were already working, and also participated in the general assemblies, on the street etc." (Chantal, born in 1941 to working-class catholic parents, retired schoolteacher).

– "In 1968, I was 31 years old and had quite a lot of experience, both political and professional, and I also believed that writing is worth nothing without experience. Maybe that is why I don't really see myself in some of the questions about the effects of May '68 on my trajectory afterwards. In my case, the important things happened beforehand." (Guy, 1937, university professor).

These remarks reflect my own representations of May '68, influenced by the literature on the subject. The questionnaire was constructed to correspond to the widest possible range of participants (studying or working in May '68), but there are fewer questions relating to professional activities in May '68 than there are questions about studying. Yet, in fact, in the population of interviewees, 46% were students and 54% were workers at the time, and their occupation proved to be a decisive factor in terms of their relationship to the events. These comments also reveal a feeling of having been left out of the "official" history of May '68. They also confirm that there were several generations participating in the events, and show just how difficult it is to construct a single questionnaire aimed at people born between the end of the 1930s and the end of the 1950s. Although just a few years apart, the salient biographical issues and feelings of generational belonging are sometimes very different.

May '68: a political revolution or an opportunity for personal emancipation?

Beyond questions of age or occupation, a second series of comments concerned the participants' expectations of May '68, and the nature and meaning they gave to the events. Here, a divide emerged between those who defended a political definition of the events, and those who considered it more as a moment of personal emancipation. The comments selected below thus reveal the *continuum* of claims, and the disagreements on the meaning of the term "political" itself:

– "I think that the role of the workers' movement in 1968 was gradually obscured, and if the unions and the left-wing parties had made fewer compromises in the Grenelle Agreements,[2] the movement could have become a revolution" (Marlène, born in 1942, daughter of workers, member of the PCF in 1968, postal worker).

– "Having been activists before, and especially union activists, meant that we were able to outline our demands, whereas some young dreamers just wanted to overthrow everything but without a political analysis of the field" (Pierre, born in 1943, activist with the PCF and the CGT in 1968).

– "No one can claim the 'ideas' of May '68 for themselves; in other words, no organisation can claim to have sparked the strikes. However, one group (in my humble opinion) did really unleash the events, and they were the '*enragés*' (enraged) at Nanterre" (René, born in 1941, son of small businessmen, teacher in a vocational school).

– "May '68, individually, it was a rite of passage, into adulthood. More generally, I see 1968 as a political episode (far from the Parisian images that are just reduced to jubilation and violence) which affected young people *and* adults (at Uni, we were thinking *with* our teachers, but not all of them!) which had effects on society, mores, even for those who didn't participate" (Annie, born in 1947, daughter of teachers, research engineer at the EHESS).

– "A questionnaire often seems to have an idea behind it. The sense of what is 'political' in this one seems to be quite restrictive. Politics is everywhere, it is diffuse: it is in all conversations, words to songs etc." (Danièle, born in 1947, daughter of an artist and a teacher, sociology student in 1968).

2   The Grenelle Agreements were negotiated during the crisis of 1968 between the major trade unions and the Pompidou government and led to a rise in minimum wages and average real wages.

–   "Political discourse grabbed onto May '68 to make it something political.
    But May '68 was something else in fact, something which was never
    spoken, which can't be spoken. Everyone found their own personal
    story in it, their own remedies, and their way of living etc." (Françoise,
    born in 1946, daughter of a bank worker and a hotel employee, working
    as a secretary in 1968).

The different representations of May '68 thus appear to be closely linked
to the types of group-interest invested in the crisis, which is in keeping
with the hypothesis that "it is typically by rebelling against the rules
and the authorities associated with their everyday activities that people
protest" (Piven and Cloward, 1977, p. 21). This is also confirmed by the
statistical analysis of the answers to the open-ended question: "For you,
what message did May '68 convey?" One pole corresponds to respondents
who were activists before May '68, who had significant militant resources
and whose demands were related to the overthrow of the political system.
Opposite them, there is a younger population, with a higher proportion
of female respondents, mostly students, from more privileged social
backgrounds. They see the crisis through a less politicised vision of social
relations. This latter group, therefore, do not talk about "social relations
of domination," but rather about "human relations;"[3] they are focused on
"life changes" and the "power of young people," rather than on "staging
a revolution."
    Unsurprisingly, demands for greater power for young people can be linked
with the youngest population in the corpus; demands for the evolution of
sex and gender norms can be linked to the female respondents; calls to
change working conditions can be linked to respondents in the workplace;
and calls for the reversal of the political order can be associated with those
who were already extreme-left activists before the events. Understanding
this therefore enables us to escape from the struggle for the monopoly on
the legitimate definition of events, by linking these different interpretations
to the different groups that mobilise them.

Refusals to be "boxed in"
A final series of remarks, sometimes expressed quite aggressively, sought
to delegitimise the very principle of the questionnaire itself, arguing that it
was inappropriate for a study of May '68. There are many examples of this,
frequently mobilising the same rhetorical devices: the act of putting '68ers

3   The terms in inverted commas are direct quotes from the interviewees.

"into boxes" was considered proof that I had failed to understand the very foundations of May '68.

> Hi Julie, I received your questionnaire about 1968. You have misunderstood May '68 and what we are if you think that we can be catalogued and analysed statistically; [...] I only made one choice, to be myself, to be free and autonomous; I don't see myself as a spectator or an object, neither of 1968 nor of contemporary society, but as an actor, a subject. I won't fill out an anonymous questionnaire, but if you want to, I'm happy to answer you directly, face-to-face, and tell you about myself. (Email received 6 April 2005).

Sylvain and his partner Claire also refused to fill out the questionnaire – unlike their son – and each sent me a letter justifying their refusal. Sylvain's was handwritten, he wrote: "*I have never stopped fighting against putting things in boxes. Probably something to credit to the lasting impact of May '68 – not feeling captive. Best wishes anyway, Paris, 22 January, 2006.*" Claire's letter was typed:

> You must have spent a lot of time constructing this questionnaire so that people fit into these multiple-choice boxes, but this methodology is so reductive, so mechanical, that it leaves no room for individualities, eccentricities. I do not see myself anywhere in your questionnaire. However, just so that your contact with me is not completely fruitless, I'll give you a summary of my "Heritage of May '68." It's up to you to make it fit in your boxes. As far as I'm concerned May '68 was more a pretext for opposing my parents than a political position. My political consciousness only came later, and it never left me. I've voted socialist all my life, and now I'm beginning to vote Green. I was never an activist after 1968, and I have never been an employee. I have a degree, and I have never used it. I was a reporter-photographer for twenty years and now I am an illustrator. We have never had a television, and I have no mobile phone, no bank card. But I do have several computers for my work. I'm not a big consumer, I've never had a loan. That's a very quick round up.

Many of these initial refusals in fact led to long and in-depth interviews. As much as they had objected to the statistical objectification, the interviews became the opportunity for these participants to contribute to the symbolic struggles for the definition of May '68. I cannot resist presenting a final

example, which after a difficult start, turned out to be revealing in terms of what is at stake in the memory and the construction of a "Generation '68." Simone, an artist, born in 1946, began by discrediting my approach in a way that was particularly virulent, sending me an email in which she flatly refused to respond. I wrote back to try and understand her reasons for not wanting to participate in the study, and she sent me the following critical remarks in an attached file:

> I received your questionnaire [...] I spent four hours trying to respond to your problem [...] why didn't I succeed? 1) I am not a member of the "Generation '68."[4] 2) I was born in 1936. I am a member of the Second World War generation (1939-1945): childhood + mourning to be dealt with + school in the country ... (combination of silence and lies). Next, I am also part of the Algerian War generation (1958-1963): young adult + political lies to be dealt with. Our generation experienced a lot of death at that time. [...] 4. I became involved in making political posters at "the People's Workshop at the School for Fine Arts" in 1968. [...] 5c. Your questions are not neutral: explain what you mean by "'68ers," "revolutionary," "order." [...] this false neutrality bothers me, and constitutes a deontological problem that I am not inclined to resolve for you. [...] 5e. And finally, my primary motivation for disagreeing: ethics. Can you send a closed questionnaire to a living witness of a period that took place more than 30 years ago? I don't think so. It in fact represents a lack of respect, that all people with experience are entitled to. A lack of respect also concerning what is called "history." Conclusion: I have serious reserves about your evaluation of this questionnaire. That is why I am not sending it back to you. That does not stop me being sympathetic to you, the proof is the four hours I have spent here for you – and I stress – not for me. I do allow you to use this letter, of which I am sending a copy to my daughter.[5]

Over the course of our exchanges her tone changed; she asked to meet me. She eventually told her daughter, after I had interviewed her at length about her experiences, that I was "finally doing a real study on May '68."[6] Although the questionnaire had not seemed appropriate, rendering my research null and void, the interview meeting restored credibility to my study – or rather to its representation of May '68.

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4   Simone underlined this in her text.
5   Document sent by email on 17 October 2005.
6   A remark reported by Sarah, Simone's daughter, during our first interview.

Faced with this emotional and intellectual overinvestment in the study, I was not always able to analyse reactions on the spot. Hence the importance of recording them in field notebooks; which, in hindsight, also reveal the conflicts in interpretation that my approach could not avoid.

We have seen that age, sex, social background, occupation in May '68 and prior militant experience accumulated in the lead up to the events, to shape different representations of this period. However, the forms of participation in May '68 and the sites of action were also decisive for this, without being entirely determined by the previous variables.

A statistical analysis of the forms of participation in May '68?

How can we provide a statistical account for the registers of participation in the events of May-June 1968, and (re)construct the social space of the '68ers' involvement? Should we opt for a classification based on the intensity of participation in May '68? Or rather on the types of demands? Or the repertoires of action mobilised? Or on political affiliations?[7] Without entering into the details of the statistics used, I will focus directly on the results of a factorial analysis of the forms of participation in May '68.

Sex, age, and occupation – high school student, university student or employee – as well as social origin, constitute an initial ensemble of variables that are decisive for the forms and sites of participation in May '68. In the factorial space obtained by the analysis, one pole groups together the eldest men in the corpus, from working-class backgrounds, who were already employed and close to the French Communist party (PCF) in May '68 and who for the most part participated in factory occupations. At the opposite pole, are the women and the youngest members of the corpus, from the upper-middle and upper classes, who were students in 1968 who mostly participated in the occupation of universities and were close to UNEF (student unionism) and worker's self-management movements.

In overall terms, the women interviewed said they participated less actively in the events than their male counterparts. However, the forms of participation chosen by women were above all less institutionalised, more on the fringes of (or outside) the main union, activist, or partisan organisations. This gendered division of militant action should be seen in light of the influence of gender in primary political socialisation. In the corpus, women were half as likely to be active in militant spheres

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7   For a detailed presentation of this factorial analysis and the classification conducted afterwards, which are not provided here, see Pagis (2011).

before May '68[8] and had fewer activist resources to confront the events. This material confirms the results established elsewhere concerning the *gender of militantism* (Fillieule and Roux, 2009). Feelings of legitimacy and competence in public speaking, as well as responsibilities in activist organisations are primarily associated with men from upper-class backgrounds in the corpus, even when they had limited experience in activism.

Age also has a crucial influence, even to the year, on a participant's biographical availability for the events. These results confirm the existence of "impressionable" years (Sears and Valentino, 1997, p. 47), corresponding to greater exposure to the event, through forms of intense participation that exclude all other social practices. We are thus faced with forms of participation taking place in multiple sites – university sit-ins, daily demonstrations, movement in factories etc. But this period of youth is more or less impressionable depending on an individual's social origin and parents' political orientation. During these events, some of those who grew up in right-wing families, where politics was not discussed, discovered the very existence of the left-wing and of unions. These people mainly remained spectators (see below), not having the codes necessary to decipher the stakes nor invest actively in the events. The young political "heirs" from left-wing families, on the other hand, had no trouble navigating and positioning themselves in relation to the different actors present. This mastery of the situation was accompanied by more active forms of participation, within organisations on the far-left in particular.

Finally, having been an activist before 1968 (or not) constitutes the most decisive variable in determining the repertoires of contention and their intensity.[9] By 1968, interviewees who had been activists since the Algerian War, or the Vietnam War had strong experience organising, mobilising networks and analysing political situations, which meant they were able to take on roles as local leaders and organisers from the beginning of the events. They spoke publicly, organised action committees, wrote leaflets and posters, delegated tasks to activists, particularly to those who were less experienced. Jacques, who had been an organiser for the Rank-and-File Vietnam Committee (CVB) since 1967 explained that, "When May '68 was

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8   Indeed, activism was a predominantly male sphere at the time more generally.

9   This variable is not independent of the previous variables, but a logistic regression (which allows us to operate "all other things being equal") confirms the primary influence of past activism on the intensity of participation in the events (Pagis 2009, p. 328).

born, and here I'm still talking a bit like an ex-UJCml, you know, we were by far in the *best position* in the movement, it was incredible! We had the techniques for stirring up the masses [...] we were the ones, in a way, who set up barricades, in defending Nanterre; we were the first ones to organise committees on the barricades; we were totally involved, almost assimilated, we were at the heart of the movement."[10]

Those without prior activist experience were less politicised and although they identified with some of the demands, they did not necessarily have the resources to formulate them, nor the experience of collective movements to guide them. For them, the influence of meetings and situations which they got caught up in *during* the events, became (even) more decisive for their forms of participation.

Here we touch on one of the main limitations of the statistical approach. Indeed, although it provides answers to questions like "How did actors shape these events?" it only partially reveals the inverse causality involved – how did the event shape the actors? Factorial analysis does not allow us to dissociate the weight of the different variables. In other words, it does not help us understand the direction of certain causalities. Do people become revolutionaries because they participate actively in a political crisis, or do they participate actively because of their previous extreme-left activism?

Moreover, similar registers of participation can have markedly different biographical effects, when May '68 does not have the same place in a militant trajectory. On the factorial plane, younger interviewees, who are children of activists and who were involved in far-left organisations during the events are close to seasoned activists ten years older than them. Where May '68 was a catalyst for the political activism of the former, it simply confirmed (or reinforced) the commitment of the latter. Hence the need to situate the events of May-June '68 within trajectories of politicisation, whilst remaining aware of the interactions that occurred during those two months, which statistical analysis scarcely takes into account.

How did the event influence the participants?

Conceptualising the complex articulation between primary socialisation and event socialisation means paying close attention to the encounters between specific aspirations (types of interests, affects) formed *before* May '68 on one hand, and the provision of activist frames in the conjuncture of

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10   Jacques' trajectory is analysed in Chapter 1.

Figure 3   The four socialising effects of the event

Degree of exposure to the event
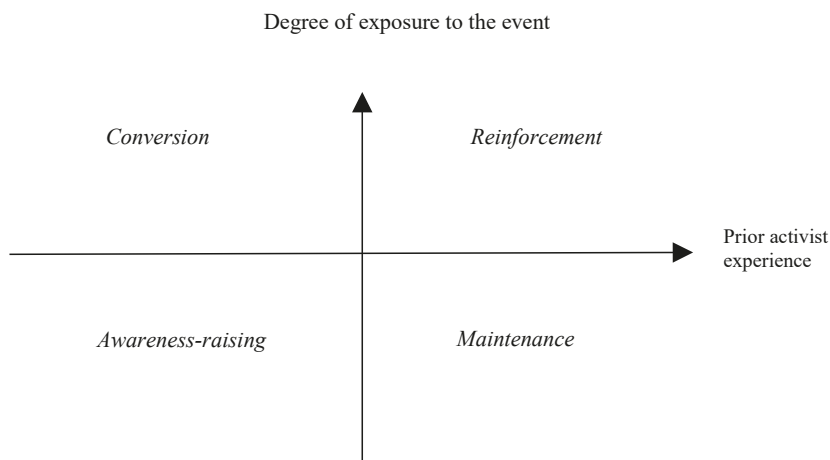
political crisis on the other. The typology of political socialisation result-
ing from participation in May '68 presented below (see Figure 3) does
exactly that, being founded on the articulation of different temporalities
of involvement.

   The long term of the trajectories prior to May '68 is presented on the
x-axis through the volume of accumulated activist resources (an indicator
that synthesizes the influence of the main variables relating to primary
socialisation). The second dimension, linked to the short term of the political
crisis, is represented on the y-axis. If participation in a political event can
produce politicisation effects, it is indeed "through direct contact with a
collective dynamic (protest mobilisation, electoral participation, militant
action), through exposure to the flows of media information covering it, and
through the intermediary of interpersonal relations which are conveyed
through the perception of these actions (family discussions, remarks in
the workplace...)" (Ihl, 2002, p. 138). Hence this notion of exposure to the
event, to account for the variables linked to situations and interactions that
occurred at the time.

This typology results from confronting the statistical results with the
analysis of the interviewees' narratives of their participation in the events,
and from a desire to move beyond the limits of these two methods. This
theoretical conceptualisation also draws on existing studies in socialisa-
tion (in particular Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970, p. 59-60; Darmon, 2006,

p. 113-118), on the processes of conversion, and the biographical consequences of activism, and on generations themselves.

Socialisation by reinforcement and socialisation by maintenance

Individuals who had extensive activist experience prior to May '68 are situated on the right-hand side of Figure 3 above. Among them, those who were particularly intensely involved had their convictions and dispositions for activism reinforced by their exposure to the event. This was the case for Paul, who went to work in a factory (as part of the *établi*[11] movement) shortly after May '68. The biographical consequences of participation were less significant for those who had already been activists for a long time, and who were in fact less involved in the events for various conjunctural reasons (lower left quadrant). Their exposure to the events confirmed their worldview and the justification of their militant practices, which is evoked by the idea of socialisation by *maintenance* (of their previous dispositions for activism). This was the case for the oldest interviewees in the corpus, who had been activists since the Algerian War, and who were closer to 30 than to 20 years old in May '68. In a sense, they were no longer "young people," as they had already founded a family, finished their studies and had been working for several years. The trajectory of Agnes will help us understand this second aspect[12] of the dialectic between primary socialisation and event socialisation.

From student activist to établi*: a case of socialisation by reinforcement*
Paul was born in 1947. His father was an engineer and his mother an employee; they were both communists, former Resistance members, and atheists. He enrolled in a history degree at the University of Grenoble in 1964, joined the communist UEC the following year, and rapidly rose to become one of its local leaders. Louis Althusser and his books had a strong impact on Paul, and led him to move towards the heterodox positions of the Maoist UJCml. From 1966, he was also active within UNEF, before becoming one

11   See note 86 in Chapter 1 for a presentation of this specific activist movement, which consisted in young bourgeois students leaving their studies to work in factories. See also Chapter 4 for a detailed presentation of the interviewees who participated.
12   Paul and Agnès have been chosen as case studies here because their experiences are representative of these two kinds of effects of event socialisation. However, we should consider that there is a continuum between their experiences which are characterised by greater or lesser degrees of exposure to events.

of the local student union leaders at the time when the events of May '68 were taking off. He says:

> 1968, it started with parliamentarism strangely enough! From 3 May, we got together with the former majority of UNEF along the lines of the FGEL, let's say quite close to what the University Action Movement (MAU) would become, i.e. the movement of March 22, but not at Nanterre, right... And between the PC dissidents and those on the FGEL line, we were very much in favour of the movement, so we wrote collective leaflets and managed to get the Stalinists into a minority position and the general assembly at Grenoble [UNEF] became the basis of the movement. So being part of those inter-union contacts from the beginning gave UNEF a key role [...] One of the first things we did was a pamphlet directed at factories in Grenoble, to explain the student movement and call for connections with the workers.[13]

It was quite difficult to have Paul talk about his everyday experiences as an activist,[14] because he primarily expressed himself in the name of the organisations he was a member of. This specific framework of enunciation, as well as his propensity to analyse political situations in terms of power relations between collective actors are the result of a form of political skill acquired over the course of his activist history:

> At the beginning, the objective was to have UNEF serve the movement, you know, and then I wore my UNEF hat: we organised anti-oppression demonstrations, the main problem was how to not arrive too quickly at the Town Hall, given that it's across the street from the History Department! And well, in Grenoble there are no cobblestones, so we took the building sites in the city into account when we were planning the path of the demonstration, so we could collect material to defend ourselves, but ultimately, we also knew that if we could come up against the security forces, that'd be great.

Paul's comments shed light on the way the organisers used repression to provoke indignation and channel it towards the collective cause (Traïni,

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13   The extracts cited in this part are taken from an interview conducted with Paul on 4 July 2008.
14   It was only after repeated asking that Paul explained to me that he had entrusted his daughter to a friend's parents for a month, in order to be able to dedicate himself full-time to his activism, with his wife.

2009). However, it would be an exaggeration to see these local political leaders as Machiavellian or to speak of an exploitation of events, given that, like all the actors in the political crisis, they were confronted with a situation that was beyond them but which they helped to make happen. Thus, when I asked Paul to come back to the details of his militant activities at the beginning of May '68, his response emphasized the tactical and cognitive uncertainty of fluid conjunctures, as well as the weakening of his ability to anticipate probable coups (Dobry, 1986, p. 150). "How can I put it? It all went so fast: between the anti-repression demos, that we organised at the beginning, then the anti-authoritarian explosion, then the general strikes, we had trouble keeping up, we had to take it as it came…"

His familiarity with the student milieu in Grenoble, as well as his experiences in student unionism, rapidly made Paul a go-between for students and workers, after the strikes were extended.

> After May 13, I put on my 'ml hat'[UJCml] […] and our participation was to support the general strike. [*But what were you doing, in concrete terms?*] Well, it was by [organising] 'door groups': we followed the strike in different factories, Lustucru, Neyrpic, that was an electro-mechanical factory, we had groups that went into each factory [*And you, which factory did you go into?*] Me, I went to help my friends on the door groups but more on a logistic level, writing leaflets, mimeos … [*So where were you physically?*] In the Unis, then between the school of Fine Arts and the UNEF offices.

If we were to map his militant activities (Mathieu, 2008), this map would be marked by the plurality of sites of action and even more by his movement between these sites. Yet his register of participation, based on a multitude of locations, symbolizes the conjunction of the students' movement and the workers' movement, to which Paul aspired and contributed by putting his activist experience at the disposal of the most radical groups of workers.[15] Indeed, it was an experience of the breakdown of social barriers that led Paul to recount the only personal narrative of our interview:

> A delegation of the masses from a striking factory, led by a CFDT engineer, with a leaning towards workers' self-management, came to the History Department building to see the students and they asked us to come to their village! So we went and it was pretty incredible, it looked like a kind of mythology from 1936 or 1917: we arrived in the

15   That is to say the workers who did not satisfy the positions of the PCF and the CGT Unions.

> village and everyone was there to welcome the students! They asked us
> for instructions, you know?! And I remember saying something along
> the lines of the "Front Populaire,"[16] with everyone all excited, yelling
> and clapping [...] It's hard to describe the experience – euphoric, yes,
> completely euphoric ... After more than a week of a general strike you
> really take the insurrectional aspect seriously... How can I put it... you
> know very quickly that things will never be like before. You know that
> you're making the May revolution a bit like the French Revolution [...]
> and there, in front of these village workers, our words were like *magic*...
> so as kids, it was fascinating!

This experience is euphoric because of its transgressive and performative
nature – Paul talks of the effects of "magic words" – and because of the
discovery of charismatic authority.[17] It remains essential in establishing
how the political event influenced Paul. Indeed, his intensive exposure to
the political crisis was the result of his past as an activist, but the practical
experience of the events and in particular the endorsement of his positions
by many of the assembled workers contributed to his radicalisation.[18] Paul
gave up his studies shortly after and went on to work in a factory as an *établi*,
"to continue, to find May '68 again."[19]

Political socialisation by maintenance: the case of militant employees
"In my case, what is important happened before [1968];" Guy, born in 1937
and a university professor in 1968, concisely sums up the second aspect of
the articulation of socialisations we are exploring here. He re-situates the
events of May-June 1968 within a biographical phase that is no longer that
of youth, but rather that of young adults, employees, breadwinners, heads of
households. These people had been activists since the early 1960s and May
'68 did not have a profound impact on their practices. The case of Agnes,
two years older than Paul, allows us to show that the fact of being employed
in 1968, linked to differences in age, gender and social origin, resulted in
less biographical availability for the event.

16   Here he is referring to the widespread strikes of May-June 1936, at the beginning of the
Front Populaire radical left-wing coalition government. These strikes led to the introduction
of several major labour reforms such as holiday pay and the 40-hour working week.
17   Following the Weberian definition of charisma reworked by others (Bourdieu, 1971; Ka-
linowski, 2005), I define charisma as conjunctural symbolic capital.
18   On the importance of the "crowd" in the process of radicalisation in situations of crisis, see
Tackett (2006).
19   The rest of his trajectory is analysed in Chapter 3

A working-class orphan alongside Félix Guattari at La Borde
Agnès was born in 1945 in Paris, to parents who were Polish Jews, both Communist sympathisers, who had immigrated to France in the early 1930s. Her father died when she was two years old, and both Agnès and her elder sister were raised by their mother, a tailor who worked at home and who "spoke French with an accent so thick you could cut it with a knife."[20] Agnes went to public school and spent her Thursdays at the local secular Jewish youth club, run by Communist sympathisers. Her mother was not familiar with the school system, so that when she finished primary school she went into "complementary classes" rather than into secondary school.

Communist and Jewish activism were the backdrop of Agnès' childhood. She remembers selling *Jeunes Filles de France*,[21] with her sister, on the street corners of the 20th arrondissement in Paris. As a good student, she was encouraged to go on to secondary school a few years later. It seemed self-evident to her, given her family history, to participate in all the demonstrations against the Algerian War in the early 1960s. "When I was 15, I went to the demonstrations in the early 60s against the Algerian War. I went to the demo in Charonne, not the one where people died but the one where we protested against the violence... I remember my mother and her friends, who we went with because, I, I was very susceptible to all that, I followed, and you know, it was normal for me!"

Agnès met her future husband, André, in 1962, during a holiday camp organised by Work and Tourism (Pattieu, 2009) a group close to the PCF, and she became a supervisor there over the years that followed. But the young couple was side-lined within the organisation in 1965 because of their critical remarks on the political situation in Hungary, and they joined the Left Opposition (OG), an organisation founded by Félix Guattari around anti-psychiatry. Agnès spent all her holidays at the clinic La Borde (between 1965-1967) and at the same time completed two years of qualifying studies at the university. She became a primary school teacher in 1966 and joined the National Primary School Teachers Union (SNI). Her husband André was an industrial illustrator at the time.

Their militant activities constituted a genuine political and intellectual education for these two young working-class activists, through their encounters with students and intellectuals. André remembers "At the time

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20   The extracts quoted in this section come from two interviews, conducted with Agnes and André, at their home, on 31 January 20007, and 28 March 2007.
21   Agnès was probably a member of the Union of the Young Girls of France (Union des jeunes filles de France, UFF) a communist youth group active against the Algerian War.

we knew nothing [in 1965, he was 24 years old]: they taught us everything!
[…] Félix was like God the father!" Agnès adds:

> They taught us so many things, we could hardly keep up! The lectures, it
> was crazy! But we clearly overtook them on a cultural level. They were
> lacking something in that respect, but still they were really very intel-
> lectual! […] the others in La Borde went to Lacan's seminars of course […]
> We vaguely tried to read it, but it was really beyond us: we really weren't
> up to it, they were all university students, or doctors […] no, I went to
> Dolto's seminar that was reserved for teachers, they'd come with kids'
> drawings that she'd put on the projector and she'd give advice… her word
> was Gospel, we drank in her words!

André and Agnès were also involved in the Chanas commune in the
Cevennes region of France, also founded by Félix Guattari (in 1967). They
spent all their holidays there, discovered the intellectual milieu around
anti-psychiatry and developed lasting friendships, which were however,
based on a clear division of labour. Agnès and André discussed this in my
interview with them.

> Agnès: "Chanas was just extraordinary, it was just teeming [with life]! We
> just talked all the time, even when we were by the water…"
> André: "Yes but us, we did a lot of cooking…"
> Agnès: "Yeah but so many discussions too…"
> André: "Yeah but the whole period, for us, how can I put it, it was extraor-
> dinary! I especially remember the mixture of people who came past!
> And the discussions, they were so brilliant, for sure… […] they were quite
> instructive for us, I have to admit […]
> [*Discussions about what? Politics?*]
> André: "Yeah politics when the groups came, but we mostly participated
> in the organisation, because those guys they talked about politics but
> they couldn't cook a kilo of pasta! And we took the kids out a lot, into the
> valleys in the Hérault […] I remember one year where we hosted a holiday
> camp in the commune, and we had to do a lot of the logistics, we went
> shopping at the market, getting up at 4 am, running to the supermarkets
> (he laughs). You have to imagine what it was like!"

The sexual division of labour was also combined with a social division
of labour among the activists in the commune. André and Agnès were
responsible for logistics, cooking and childcare whilst the "intellectuals of

the OG" were changing the world. But around these unevenly distributed everyday tasks, the community provided a space for the coexistence of diverse registers of activism. It brought together individuals with very different abilities and political resources, who found multiple occasions for political education. Like the factory sit-ins, this was a space for militancy with a relatively low-cost entry, which played a very important role in formation and politicisation, particularly for those with fewer experiences of activism (Penissat, 2005).

Conceived in the Chanas commune, André and Agnès' daughter was born in Paris in April 1968, which did not prevent Agnès participating in the events in May. However, her gender, her working-class background, and her role as an employee and as a young mother all influenced the forms that her participation would take, and the degree of her exposure to the events. We can see this in the way she describes her involvement:

> From the 1ˢᵗ of May we were in the streets! My parents-in-law were completely beside themselves, in fact they came to mind her when we were in the street.
> [*And who were you in the street with? Who were you close to politically?*]
> Well to the people who were in the street... no, actually, no group really... let's say we were mixed [...] I went to the union general assemblies anyway... André was more interested in the political evolution... but we were with the guys from the OG, because when we ran away from the demos we met up with them, at night... we looked after each other's children [...] We were almost all in the demos, and on the barricades as well (*she laughs*)! But well, having a daughter, it makes you more careful, we participated, we threw stones, but as soon as we had to run, we ran... we had meeting points, we had loads of friends who lived in the Latin Quarter. At Félix's house or Mannoni's²² [...] in that group...
> [*And can you describe what your days were like, in concrete terms?*]
> Well there was a whole part that was preparation, and afterwards a part that was action (*she laughs*)... We often protested with friends who were in an Action Committee on Rue Montorgueil. We talked for hours about what had happened the day before, we listened to the radio, we prepared things to avoid the tear gas... We essentially prepared our strategies (*she laughs*)! And we went to the demos and listened to Dany [Daniel

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22   Maud Mannoni (1923-1998) was a student of Jacques Lacan and a French psychoanalyst close to anti-psychiatry.

Cohn-Bendit]: he was so charismatic that guy! He was so cocky – it was the opposite of doublespeak, it was amazing to listen to!"
[*And did you consider yourself a revolutionary?*]
Well yes, completely! We thought we were staging a revolution, yes! It was more the general ambiance, an impression of euphoria... that anything was possible, we were changing the world! Our biggest concern was getting the workers involved, we had lots of friends who were active in the factories, not me because of my daughter, that slowed me down...
[...] [*And your political models, were they more Marx, Trotsky, Mao*?] I don't know really... because, in fact, we just followed along... But André, I think he was closer, he was more interested, more political... It was a lot of intellectualism, and I was already in the practical, I was a teacher. For me they were too far removed from the field [...] I was an activist as a teacher, so it was very different from the students, and what I read, it was more to do with pedagogy [...] and I'm not really a fast talker, I have ideas, and convictions, but expressing them, it's not easy. That's what I was lacking in terms of the university aspect really... So, I didn't take on responsibilities, nor even later, because I thought I'd be ridiculous, I'm naïve, so I'd just be eaten alive.

Gender and social class influence both the forms of participation and the way they are narrated. Unlike Paul, Agnès emphasizes and details the practical aspects of her participation in the events, delegating the theoretical and political aspects to her husband first, but also and especially to the "OG intellectuals." The feeling of political incompetence, which is very common among the female interviewees, is reinforced here by her working-class background. Agnès' role as an employee and a mother also meant that she was less available for the event in biographical terms. Unlike Paul, she had already left that biographical phase characterised by the indecisiveness of youth. Her impressionable years were behind her and her responsibility for her new-born baby had a direct effect on the intensity of her participation, which she stresses at several points in the extract above. Although, for Paul, the experience of May-June '68 and in particular the socially improbable encounters he had during the short term of crisis led to his radicalisation, Agnès' experience was less destabilising given that she was mainly in contact with friends and militant networks she frequented before the events.

For Agnès, the events of May '68 thus constituted a form of *socialisation by maintenance* of her militant dispositions and convictions. She continued her union activities within the SNI in later years.

Socialisation by awareness-raising and by conversion

The youngest interviewees, who did not have much (or any) militant experience before May '68 encountered the events at a moment where indecision (social, familial and political) made them more sensitive to what would take place during the crisis period. For those among them who were the most active (the upper left quadrant of Figure 3 above), the experience of May '68 was the source of significant biographical change and a form of *socialisation by conversion*. These major biographical turning points took various forms, from going to work in a factory as part of the *établi* movement, to family, conjugal and/or professional breakdowns as a result of involvement in feminist movements or in "left-wing counterculture" (Mauger, 1999). Once again, the borders are difficult to define, from what point – and on what basis – can we talk about conversion of *habitus*? Rather than establishing an arbitrary threshold, we ought to envisage a continuum of situations characterised by biographical changes of increasing importance. At one end would be situations in which the events provoke a socialisation by *awareness raising* and at the other would be situations where the event provokes radical change, or *conversion.*

Socialisation by awareness raising
Given that sex, social origin and parents' political opinions shape the modalities of political awakening, we will look at two different configurations separately here. We will begin with Alain and Paulette who come from right-wing working-class backgrounds, and then look at the case of Marie, who is from a more privileged left-wing background.

May '68 or the discovery of unions
Alain was born in 1947 in Nantes. His father, who set out as an apprentice sailor, experienced strong upward mobility within the Nantes Tugboat Company – he ended up president of the company at the end of his career. His mother, the daughter of an SNCF mechanic, dedicated herself to raising her three children. They were both practicing Catholics, voted right, and did not discuss politics in the family sphere. After finishing primary school in 1962 Alain completed a vocational certificate in patisserie, and by 1968 he was a skilled worker at the biscuit factory in Nantes.

> I was making the dough, we were making sponge fingers, and chocolate biscuits that sold very well at the time, for the United States, for Europe

[...] So May '68 it was a bit of fun, a bit of a laugh you know? We went on strike and we occupied the factory, we followed the movement!
[*Do you remember when the strike began? How the occupation was decided?*] No, we followed. There were several other factories that had gone on strike, and so we stopped everything and we organised the sit-in, day and night, in the factory... As we had stopped working we ate together, we talked a lot together, that's for sure, and afterwards it just wasn't the same... but well, me, I have to say that I got married on 1 June so..."
[*And were you a union member?*]
Oh, no, no. I was just starting out, you know. I was 21, I was a skilled worker... I wasn't politicised at all you know, my father was right-wing, but I wasn't really interested. But I thought that what the unions were proposing was good, those who were organising the movements, I thought that we needed that, but I didn't participate in the political meetings or union meetings, no.
[*And can you describe to me what you were doing during the day?*]
We were organised on eight-hour shifts, so that the factory was occupied all the time, because we were at 45 hours work per week... So we organised shifts, we cleaned our machines, we maintained them a bit... We played cards, right (*he laughs*) Because we didn't go to the meetings we had to keep ourselves occupied, yeah... (*he laughs*)... others played draughts, or chess, we brought along things to pass the time, we talked (*he laughs*), it was nice![23]

Alain remembers the factory sit-in as joyous collective experience – shared meals, long discussions, and a few collective barbecues. But he admits he is unable to describe the workers' demands, the organisation of militant activities within the factory, the names of the unions organising the occupation or even the duration of the strike. His experience of May '68 is limited to the factory, situated ten kilometres out of Nantes, and although he went on strike and was present during the occupation, he did not attend any demonstrations during the events, particularly out of fear of confrontations. Alain joined the CFDT union at the end of the strike, as did many of his colleagues:

A lot of us joined the union after the movement, it made us realise, the demands, the work of the union..." [*do you mean you were politicised by participating in the occupation?*] Oh well yes, let's say that it was really an

23   Alain's comments in this section are taken from a telephone interview conducted with him on 9 March 2008, concerning his participation in the events.

experience and that well, my father was right-wing and me afterwards I was left, and I've always been left-wing ever since [...] That played a role, and also, I was young [...] But it's true that the consciousness of being a worker, that came from there a bit, I think.

Once again, we see here the importance of a repertoire of action with low entry costs, on a single site, among actors with heterogenous political skills. Through on-site encounters between activists and young non-unionized workers, and through the participation in collective tasks and discussions, the occupation helped provide intensive political training for the least politicised among them.

Alain was thus one of these non-union members who supported the movement, not from a distance like those whom Nicolas Hatzfeld called the "wait-and-seers,"[24] but through a "silent physical presence" and the principle of delegation.[25] Despite being so numerous, these non-unionized workers are largely missing from the major studies on May '68, and the memorial events afterwards (Gobille 1997, p. 96). Yet they made an important contribution to the spread of the crisis and the extension of the strike from mid-May onwards. These somewhat unorthodox forms of participation also had remarkable effects in terms of political awakening. If some participants, like Alain, discovered the existence of the unions, others quite simply discovered the existence of the left.

Paulette: "in 1968, I discovered that the left existed"
Paulette was born in 1946 in the Finistère, the outermost point of Brittany, and is the fifth of seven children. Her mother, from a Catholic farming family in the region, married a farmer's son, one of nine children, who had a high school diploma and who had joined the army. Paulette received an extremely strict religious education and attended a Catholic school. Her father raised his children with the rod, after having disowned his eldest daughter for falling pregnant whilst still unmarried. She says:

I was raised according to good and evil. Evil was incarnated by our eldest sister who our father forbade us to ever see again, and who I never did

24   Hatzfeld called these people "attentistes" from the French "to wait". He has put the number of workers who were absent from their posts at the Sochaux factory during the events of May '68, at roughly 20000 out of the total 24000 employees (Hatzfeld, 1985).
25   For Xavier Vigna, the majority of the striking workers entrust the direction and organisation of the May-June '68 movement to an active minority (Vigna, 2007).

see again... We had no freedom, he gave us orders and yelled "execute,"
so you see... He basically made our lives a misery [*she begins to cry, her
father died recently*] I have to say that some of his children didn't see him
anymore, considered him just as a genitor, nothing more [...] He was the
one who chose our professions... for all his children.[26]

After she obtained her vocational certificate in dressmaking, Paulette
enrolled in a training programme to be an early childhood assistant in
Nantes, where her father had been transferred. She was then 18 years old,
and completed a year of training at the hospital, under the supervision of
the nuns. She began work two years later:

> I discovered everything at age 18, because everything was taboo, sexual-
> ity... I knew myself, but I didn't know anything about anatomy [...] in my
> family, politics, it was self-evident. There was de Gaulle, he was President,
> I was born after the war, my father was in the Resistance, everything my
> father said, it was... like, that was it. The Mayor of the village where I was
> born was the owner of the chateau, right-wing... and up until everything
> exploded in 1968 I didn't even know that there could be anything else...
> There wasn't even the word "right," there was just de Gaulle, that's all. De
> Gaulle was a soldier, my father was a soldier, he was the one who managed
> everything, it didn't even occur to me to ask the question!

Her entry into professional life was marked by experience alongside "the
atrocious sisters at the hospital," the first tensions between the racist dis-
course of a military father who participated in the Algerian War, and her
own professional experience with the children of Algerian immigrants. All
this combined to shake her unquestioning allegiance to religion, and more
generally to the vision of the world that she had inherited from her father.
This progressive detachment began shortly after 1968, but in Paulette's
memory it is crystallized around the events of May-June that year.

> It was with 1968 that I discovered, well politics, you know.
> [*And how did you experience the events yourself?*]
> With a certain apprehension because in the hospital in Nantes, I went
> around on a moped, so I needed a lot of fuel and we couldn't buy any
> petrol, there was nothing, nothing more! I can still see the enormous

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26   The extracts quoted here are from an interview conducted at the home of the interviewee
in Nantes, on 2 February, 2006.

lines of cars waiting, my father who controlled the house... I had a father who walked around in uniform, huh!
[*Were you living with your parents in 1968?*]
Well yes, I left when I was 25, with my sister who was 28 [...] so I discovered 1968 when I was at the hospital, everything was controlled by the unions... That scared me a bit, the unions felt very very strong, and there, I *discovered that there was something other than what our father had told us...*but it didn't go much further than that, he stopped us going out, going to demonstrations... It was afterwards that I saw more of colleagues who were in the union, that I discovered Communism, all of that was taboo. We didn't say Communists, we said the reds. When my parents talked about the reds, it was almost as though they were locked up during the elections [so they could not vote], it was a sin... in our education, Communism was the devil!

Can we say that Paulette *participated* in the events of May-June '68 in Nantes? Or was she more of a frightened spectator? She did however have discussions with colleagues who were union members at the CFDT, who gave her a frame through which to analyse the personal misalignments that she had experienced up until. "It's true that in their discourse there were indeed lots of convergences with injustices, inequalities that I had felt myself, or seen in my work." Several of these activists became her friends and it was through this friendship network of unionists that she met her future husband, Lucien, the following year. In 1968 Lucien was a Communist sympathiser who had participated in an occupation of the supermarket where he was a skilled worker.

Paulette's experience, which would have been left out of the corpus had I retained a more restrictive definition of what constitutes a '68er, in fact elucidates a paradoxical result – the socialising effect of the event can be substantial even in cases of very low exposure. Although Paulette was little more than a spectator in 1968, the events revealed to her the existence of the left and she rallied to it in the months that followed. This political persuasion has proved durable, and driven her away from the rest of her family. She married Lucien in the early 1970s; he was then a community worker, a unionist, an anti-nuclear activist and an atheist. With him, she discovered the counterculture and progressively broke away from the social frames, values and worldviews she had interiorised through her family background. This qualitative approach provides a key perspective on the amount of time it takes for an event to have an impact, and enables us to avoid falling prey to the illusion of a purely mechanical effect. Indeed,

politicisation occurred here through the relationships that arose after May '68, rather than through the events themselves, but it was indeed the events that sparked these relationships.

May '68, a "way of opposing my parents" (Marie)
If the forms of politicisation brought about by the events among the young first-time activists are socially differentiated, this is because the period of "youth" lasts longer in the middle and upper classes. In the working classes, by contrast, an 18-year-old is no longer in a phase of social indetermination. Alain and Paulette, who are only a few years older, were already working in 1968, but Marie was still a high school student at the *lycée*.

Marie was born in Toulouse, in 1951, and is the youngest of three children. Her parents were both senior teachers and unionists close to the PSU, as well as practicing Catholics. Whilst the two elder children were brilliant students, Marie was considered "not bright enough for university"[27] and her parents enrolled her in a technical *lycée* when she left high school. She was in final year in a co-ed *lycée* in 1968. Her account of the events begins, surprisingly, by the involvement of other members of her family.

> The most striking thing for me in 1968 was that all my family members participated: my older brother at university, my sister too, my parents in their high schools, they were on strike and supporting the students, me in final year and even my grandmother who lived downstairs, who spoke out in support of the demonstrations on the way back from Mass! So, in the evenings everyone spoke about their day... all the while knowing that *inside* the family there was no revolution!

This family configuration was considered perverse by Marie who was consequently unable to use the events to oppose the traditional, guilt-inducing educational morals she was raised with – unlike Paulette or Maëlle (see Chapter 1). Her participation in the events was primarily limited to her school, where she took part in general assemblies and the daytime occupation.

> What interested me in 1968, was realising that the students who had been labelled dunces turned out to be leaders, able to express themselves, to make demands, to organise the occupation, whereas the good students took a backseat. [*and you, what kind of student were you?*] I was more of

27   The quotations here come from a telephone interview conducted on 15 March 2008.

a good student in the technical high school, but at home I was terrible! [*and did you feel close to certain political groups?*] No, not at all, I didn't have any political memberships, it was just about living the events where I was and changing things where I was, we weren't revolutionaries, no! But I was young, yeah… No, we had general assemblies, with the teachers, but it was all very well-behaved. We demanded the right to have student delegates, and I was in fact elected (she laughs)!

Marie joined in a few demonstrations in Toulouse, and from her balcony she watched the clashes between "fascists and lefties, keeping score." But in her memory, May '68 is above all marked by her first romantic relationship:

For me, 1968, it's more than a question of ambiance, it was something new, something uplifting. It's impossible to dissociate it from my first love affair, at the same time, with a boy in my class. They resonated with each other, it was exhilarating, it's hard to describe, the two were so interconnected: my romantic and sexual relationship and the May '68 movement, it was a whole! And that was my way of opposing my parents… [*Had you already had a sexual relationship before the events?*] No, I have to say that I was very closely watched under normal circumstances, and well, then there was much less surveillance in terms of the hours we kept, and that allowed us to find times when we could slip out without being caught. […] 1968 was also the first time when I went to cafés alone […] So 1968 bore with it so much enthusiasm, pleasure…

Marie's comments emphasize the weakening of social constraints in connection with the crisis, which made it possible to have emancipatory experiences, previously considered transgressive – going to a café, having sexual relations. More generally, we can hypothesise that the practice of (peacefully) transgressing multiple social norms (in word play, misappropriating meanings, inverting the dominant gaze, socially improbable encounters etc.) participates in the de-sacralisation of target institutions. It also seems likely that the emotions experienced during these symbolic transgressions – and in particular the experience of breaking down social barriers – are linked to what Bourdieu called the de-fatalizing of the social world (where what was previously pre-ordained and unquestioned was thrown radically into question). These experiences provided additional proof that everything that was ordinarily taken for granted, was neither natural, nor unalterable. It is in this respect that they contributed to the politicisation of these first-time activists, particularly drawing on the political stakes of

personal everyday life. In the events of May '68, Marie therefore found the legitimation of the demands that she could not voice in her family sphere. Her desire for emancipation – familial and sexual – and her rejection of her parents' academic elitism, were individual aspirations that found frames of political interpretation in May '68 and the years that followed.[28]

Here, we can also evoke the example of Louis, who participated in the occupation of his *lycée* (in Nantes) in May '68. His comments describe this kind of political awakening linked to unusual encounters and exchanges:

> The freedom of speech, yes, that was very powerful! And it was realising a whole lot of things which meant that suddenly, so many people had things to say, including about their own lives... Which meant that all of a sudden, we understood that we lived in a world, a milieu, a society that was overwhelmingly oppressive, with so many taboos, so many things forbidden... And in fact we'd all experienced them individually, I'd say, every day, and then well – why is it like that? So speaking out at that time, it was a collective analysis of all that, where I'm sure people understood by listening, and even by speaking about it, there are people, who said things, that came to them spontaneously as they spoke, and yet they'd never thought about it before...[29]

These comments correspond to what Pierre Bourdieu calls the schema of politicisation specific to political crises,[30] as well as the dialectic between political crises and personal crises – those breaks in allegiances from the different forms of (parental, patriarchal, academic) authority.

Becoming a professional activist in the wake of May '68

The final form of secondary socialisation provoked by participation in the events concerns interviewees who also had little (or no) militant experience prior to the events, but who were more actively involved than those in the

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28   Shortly afterwards, Marie became involved in the feminist movement, and converted her dispositions for challenging the family institution into the professional sphere, becoming a marriage counsellor in the 1970s.

29   Louis' trajectory is evoked in Chapter 1, in the section concerning the matrix of familial transmission of dispositions for activism, and also in Chapter 4.

30   Bourdieu wrote "functioning like a kind of collective ritual of divorce from ordinary routines and attachments [...] [the crisis] leads to countless simultaneous conversions which mutually reinforce and support each other; it transforms the view which agents have of the symbolism of social relations, and especially hierarchies, highlighting the otherwise strongly repressed political dimension of the most ordinary symbolic practices" (Bourdieu, 1984b, p. 250, trans. 1988 p. 193).

previous group. These interviewees experienced a *socialisation by conversion*, as we will see with Gérard, who was born in 1948 in Toulouse.

Gérard's father was a refugee from the Spanish Civil War who became an engineer in France. His mother came from a provincial bourgeois family and both participated in the protestant networks of the Resistance. Left-wing and close to the PSU during the Algerian War, his parents did not often talk about politics in the family sphere, and they gave their children an education that was "deeply marked by Protestantism; intellectual, austere and authoritarian."[31] The third of six children, Gérard was a very good student. The "leftist virus entered the family" through his eldest sister Mireille, who was in the same class as Daniel Bensaïd[32] at high school; she became a member of the JCR from 1967. Although he was not actually an activist himself, as he was still at high school, Gérard nevertheless found himself frequenting certain groups associated with the JCR. He told me that it was thus "quite natural" that he joined the JCR himself, a few months before May '68. He was then in preparatory class at the *Lycée Fermat*, where he launched a sit-in during the events.

> After the creation of the March 22 movement, we felt the need to do the same thing in Toulouse, and so there was the movement of 25 April (*he laughs*), less famous! [...] we decided to occupy the school... well, I was the catalyst really, initially, because through my sister, I was at the JCR and so on. But very quickly there was a core group ... the fact that we were in post-secondary classes gave us authority and possibilities for action... I was asked to go and negotiate with the school principal (*he laughs*) – he was really moved when he gave me the keys to the school! [...] and so we organised the occupation of the *lycée* day and night, with surveillance teams, guard teams, at night ... and in the daytime, sometimes we'd go and join in the demonstrations or the coordination between high school and university students, or even between high school students, university students and workers, here or there...
> [*Did you go to the factories?*]
> No, I didn't do that, there was a beginning but... I think it was more driven by the student action committees, who were more experienced, who

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31   The extracts quoted here come from an interview conducted at Gérard's home on 3 March 2006.

32   Daniel Bensaïd was then an activist who had broken away from the Communist Youth movement; he would go on to become one of the founders of the Trotskyist group JCR and of the 22 March movement in 1968.

perhaps already had a vision… I was still pretty young after all… whereas, you know, Daniel Bensaïd, his friends, all them, they were already full of lectures, and they already had their political training that they'd received in the JC, and me, well, not me, I was still a bit fresh, a bit green…

This interview extract emphasizes just how much the forms of participation in May '68 were dependent on age: Gérard was a student in *prepa* (and thus psychically still at the *lycée*), as was his sister, just one year his elder. He remembers feeling guilty the one time that he did not return to his parents' house to sleep, even though he was 19 years old. However, May '68 was "a tipping point" for Gérard, who encountered the events when he was in the midst of the indecision of youth.

1968, I experienced it as a very happy time, very fulfilling, a real break, liberating and especially, what marked me the most, was that all of a sudden, I said to myself, *finally I'm going to give meaning to my life.* Because before that, I really had the impression of being carried along… I did what people told me, get your *Bac* first, then go to the *prepa*, right, then afterwards that will open doors for you […] and after, I arrived in Paris, I didn't want to be an engineer, I was practically free all the time, in any case I wanted to be, I didn't have much political baggage, but that was the case for a lot of young activists arriving at the League [the Communist Revolutionary League (LCR) a Trotskyist group] … so, yeah, I was available and there was only one idea at the time, to throw ourselves into preparing this revolution that was coming…

Despite missing classes for months because of his full-time activism, Gérard was still accepted to the prestigious *Ecole Centrale* and he began in September 1968. But activism at the LCR now filled his days: he was elected to the party leadership of the still very new organisation in 1969, responsible for "international work," before becoming a permanent party official from 1972. He remained there for more than ten years.

Gérard's experience is emblematic of a *political socialisation by conversion* that the political crisis provoked among young interviewees from left-wing families, and the children of activists. These interviewees invested fully in May '68 and converted to extreme-left activism in the years that followed. If May '68 "gave meaning" to their lives, it was because the crisis provided political responses to the existential questions that engrossed them (Who am I? What am I doing?) during this uncertain period in their lives. However, it was also because they had ultimately inherited dispositions for activism,

that were simply waiting to be set in motion; they were the right people, in the right place, at the right time. The biographical shifts that resulted from their participation were therefore substantial, but the foundations of these conversions are similar to the *awareness-raising* analysed above. In both cases these are forms of socialisation that transform their *habitus* – to various degrees.

Improbable encounters, emotions, and politicisation

It would not be possible to conclude this chapter without discussing the omnipresence of unlikely encounters and the emotions they raised, in the interviewees' accounts of May '68. Far from being a simple secondary advantage of activism, for many respondents these emotions constitute a key source of the event's politicisation effects (Traïni, 2009).

Politicisation and deregulation of the emotional economy
The emotional conventions that govern affective reactions are not exempt from the fundamental challenging of the status quo which typically occurs during a political crisis.[33] The result is a conjuncture that weakens affective self-control and liberates previously contained emotions because of the relaxation of habitual injunctions to "keep in line," or "stay in one's place"[34] (control of bodily *hexis*, accent, language etc.). Moreover, the suspense of routine social interactions, amplified by the generalisation of the strike, during the month of May 1968 made it possible to transgress the symbolic barriers habitually erected between social actors. These experiences of transgression led to various feelings of exaltation that can be associated with the revelation and then weakening of these barriers. One interviewee thus emphasizes the importance of "communication between people due to the fact that all the usual social landmarks were thrown into question," an experience that for her led to "the feeling that anything was possible."

More generally, feelings of collective euphoria, of celebration, happiness, madness or solidarity are constantly evoked in the interviewees' narratives of the events of May '68. Michel Dobry accounts for these "moments of madness" or this "creative effervescence" through the process of de-objectifying social relations (Dobry, 1986, p. 155), but without engaging in the empirical

33   Indeed Norbert Elias reminds us that emotional conventions are related to a "social system of norms and values". (Elias, 1974, trans. 1983)
34   Here I am relying on the Bourdieusian analysis of Erving Goffmann's notion of "sense of place" (Bourdieu 1974, p 266).

explanation of what produces these impressions. Yet moments of celebration, like critical conjunctures, exist outside everyday time; they are characterised by the fact that they break with routine, with ordinary time. Genevieve[35] puts it like this:

> How can I describe 1968? Constant partying yes... if only because of the total time differences. When we demonstrated in the evening and went to the Sorbonne at night, and afterwards, I don't know where, there is also the whole aspect of physical fatigue that comes into play too. It's an impression of celebration and an impression of freedom because people were really talking in the streets, and walking because there were almost no cars [...] People weren't shut up in their heads like you see today outside or in the metro, there was this feeling like *pheeew,* you can breathe, you're free again. A bit like *L'An 01*, "Let's stop everything! Let's think about it! We'll have a blast!," that's it! [...] At once this feeling of freedom, solidarity between ourselves, being powerful, the power of the street: that's an incredible feeling (she laughs) ...

The minute bodily adjustments that are performed every day in playing one's social role, the semi-conscious compromises to fulfil expectations, "the silent resignations that make consent," the *sense of limits*; the crisis period made these continual and imperceptible processes unjustified and arbitrary, and they "became suddenly unbearable" (Jasper, 2001, p. 146). This relative suspension of usual constraints of self-control produced a feeling of liberation and celebration in the sense that, temporarily, "everything was permitted." In other words, that which ordinarily went unsaid was spoken, that which had been deemed impossible was done, and that which had been considered unthinkable was thought. This is how Nicole discovered the force of the collective, one evening in May '68:

> We also occupied a building on Rue Trévise, a Fine Arts building, I remember, once, I was very proud, we'd slept there, we'd protected the site from attacks by extreme-right groups... And I found myself taking on responsibilities, doing things that I would never have imagined, me, the well-behaved bourgeois girl, who was generally at the back

35   Geneviève was born in 1944 in a working-class Jewish Communist family, in the Marais, in Paris. She became an activist in 1960 in the context of the Algerian War, within the Trotskyist organisation 'Voix Ouvrière' (Workers' Voice – the predecessor of the 'Lutte Ouvrière' (Workers'Stuggle) organisation)

during the demos... Then I stepped up, and we moved forward against them [the Occident[36] activists] and they fell back! [...] that feeling of having gone beyond myself, and having discovered in the little things that what I thought was impossible wasn't necessarily! [...] I realised that I had been living in the dark [...] and there, the petit-bourgeois, well-behaved, little girl, well, woke up! That was the beginning of my emancipation.

Nicole's comments emphasize the importance of the body and the emotions provoked during these micro-experiences of symbolic transgression during which the opening of the field of possibilities is experienced physically.[37] The context of crisis thus played a central role in the genesis of this feeling of "being able to act," to have control over one's, other peoples' lives, and even over history. Watching "the fachos beat a hasty retreat" (for other interviewees it is forcing the police to withdraw), is thus one of the various experiences involved in "de-fatalizing" the world, which are essential in acquiring dispositions for activism.

Celebration and political crisis thus come together to provide a framework for the deregulation of the emotional economy. We can consider that this is how emotions that are ordinarily reserved for the family sphere – brotherhood and solidarity in particular – come to be shared with comrades, even strangers, as so many interviewees have reported.

The suspension of ordinary time also enables the multiplication of face-to-face interactions, as well as unusual meetings and behaviour. Gérard says:

There is something striking; it's that at one point, there's a shift. You don't know why, but you're in the metro and you feel interested in the people around you, like, you see them! And it's not just because you're at a demo, where there's lots of people, because sluggish demos I've been to loads, but there, all of a sudden, people smile easily, talk to each other, and the ambiance is warm and happy. Yes, that was something that was very very striking! [...] it was the idea that society could be so much more, let's say, fraternal, more gentle in the relations between people, less, like, stuck in sterile everyday life.

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36   *Occident* was a French far-right activist group at the time.
37   Emmanuel Soutrenon writes "the 'liberated' behaviour of the demonstrators is a way for them to experience a feeling of freedom in relation to those usual bodily norms" (Soutrenon, 1998, p. 52).

The role of charismatic figures

Finally, the narratives of the events are sprinkled with memories of "unique," "improbable," "fascinating" encounters with "charismatic" activists. Often the interviewees attribute their political awakening, their "emancipation," or their "liberation," to these encounters. As Nicole says,

> At the Black and the Red,[38] there was this activist whom I admired very much, Christian Lagant, who committed suicide afterwards. I admired him as much as my grandfather, he was so pure, like true anarchists can be, a religion of anarchy... I don't know how to describe those moments, I have to say that at the time I was completely fascinated by everything (*she laughs*) but I completely identified with his discourse, I even discovered myself in a way, like I'd been woken up...

This meeting did indeed change Nicole's trajectory: she became an activist in an anarchist group shortly after the events, and continued to participate in various utopian communes during the 1970s. The "magic" attributed to these encounters, able to catalyse conversions to activism, must be seen in light of the convert's impression of meeting someone who is able to express what they themselves have been feeling up until then, but which they have been unable to – or have not dared to – express. This helps us to understand the use of religious vocabulary linked to revelation in the interviews. But who are these charismatic figures, these "prophets" (in the Weberian sense), able to overturn a life course? Where do they come from? How can we account for their charismatic authority and their role in the dialectic between personal and collective crises?

Through their extraordinary nature, and their challenges to the established order, these moments of crisis are highly favourable to the emergence of prophetic figures who propose (political) heretical *salvation goods* (Bourdieu, 1971, p. 16). The charismatic authority attributed to these "prophets" is based on the encounter between a subversive political offer and a system of expectations – multiple and heterogenous – from actors who will identify (for different sometimes equivocal reasons) with the discourses put forward. This ability to formulate expectation is attributed by several interviewees to Daniel Cohn-Bendit. This is the case for Stephanie[39] who was a medical student in May '68 and who dropped out in the wake

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38   An anarchist organisation.
39   Stéphanie was born in 1948 in Paris, in a family of right-wing shopkeepers (florists).

of the events to be an activist for a far-left organisation, where she stayed for several years. She says:

> it was incredible, that man's charisma. We went to listen to him at the Sorbonne and every time, we had the impression that he said exactly what we were feeling, but with the right words, as though he went even further than what we would have liked to have said. You have to imagine the euphoria that provoked, the happiness, how can I put it… that feeling of being understood, of being on the same wavelength, this connection that made the atmosphere so unique…

These charismatic figures used a political register to express the need to not accept the world as self-evident, and they proposed forms of action, reflection and justification. In so doing they provided a framework that made it possible to politically and collectively conceptualise situations of imperfect adaptation with one's social role (see Chapter 1). Finally, the physical encounter and the emotions that it provokes are essential, to the extent that these prophetic figures embody – both in their corporality and in face-to-face interaction – the open realm of possibilities. Isabelle Kalinowski thus talks about "prophecies fulfilled" and emphasizes the necessity of an "individual physical meeting" for the "revolutionary 'intellectual' revelation to take place" (Kalinowski, 2005, p. 134). In the dialectic between identity crisis and collective crisis, the prophet thus draws his or her authority from setting an example, the proof that they provide – through body, voice, and practice – of the existence of alternatives. They therefore contribute to channelling affect, transforming personal aspirations to "change one's life" through incitement to act in the name of a cause.

Conclusion

The illusory and futile nature of any attempt to reveal *the* (true) nature of the events of May '68 has repeatedly been made clear over the course of this chapter. Indeed, these events responded to social and political expectations that were as diverse as the myriad groups of actors that participated in them. Moreover, the different participants were not exposed to the event, nor destabilised by it, to the same extent. In deconstructing this now mythologized "generation 68," statistical analysis enabled us to reveal the wide range of forms of participation in the events and to connect them to

variables relating to trajectories prior to the event (age, sex, social origin, primary political socialisation, activist experience etc.).

This type of factor analysis does have one major drawback however. It does not allow us to dissociate the long term of the life course, from the short term of the event. The use of life histories, as part of a comprehensive sociological approach, has shed light on a previously obscured dimension – the practices and interactions that occurred during the events. Only the articulation of these two dimensions enables us to understand both how the actors shape the event, and how the event impacts on them in return. In other words, '68ers are not exceptional in this respect – they are neither simple products nor simple actors of their history. They shape their militant activities and are shaped by them in turn.

What is exceptional, however, is that the conjuncture of the crisis and the weakening of social regulation finally contributed to making things possible that would ordinarily have not been. Improbable encounters and transgressive practices, although primarily symbolic, provoke the feeling (which may prove lasting) of finally having control over one's life and those of others. The present and the future are no longer the simple continuation of the past, everything is – temporarily – rendered possible. This helps us to understand the interviewees' stories of "surpassing" themselves, being surprised, after the event, by what they were able to do or say at the time; it is in this respect that an event can be said to *shift people and places*. We must now turn our attention to understanding the modalities of these shifts and analysing their determinants.

3   The long-term consequences of May '68

> After having the feeling that everything had opened up, and that anything was possible, you can't accept that the door can just close again, you can't go back to how it was before, so you stick your foot in the door, to stop it closing.
>
> *Pierre, born in 1947, son of blue-collar Communists*

By June 1968 the collective euphoria had waned, the political crisis was over and the social barriers had been resurrected. But what had become of the activists? To what extent had the events of May-June destabilised those who participated, from the interested bystanders, to the revolutionaries who fought to ensure that nothing would ever be the same again? How did these participants attempt to bring about the promised utopia? Were their visions of the world and of themselves marked by the events? In the wake of the events, the '68ers interviewed here were faced with difficulties linked to their need to find a place in a society they had hoped to see crumble, their search for a social role not among those they had previously decried, and their desire to preserve their personal and political integrity without becoming permanently marginalised.

From the end of the 1970s in the United States, various studies attempted to respond to the question of what had become of the student protestors,[1] as the social movements of the 60s were in sharp decline and these "former" activists were now mostly working and old enough to start families. These are primarily quantitative studies which converge on the persistence of political behaviour specific to the study population of former activists, compared to the non-activist population. They found "former activists to be more likely than nonactivists to define themselves as politically radical, espouse more leftist political attitudes [...] and remain active in movement politics" (McAdam, 1988, p. 213). However, with just a few exceptions (McAdam 1988; Whalen and Flacks, 1989), these studies have difficulty proposing a sophisticated sociological interpretation of these biographical consequences. Remaining at a very general level, they are unable to attribute them to either the social characteristics of the former activists, nor to forms of participation in a political event. In other words, they fail to identify intragenerational differences.

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[1]   For an overview of the literature on the biographical consequences of activism see Fillieule (2005, p. 31-39), and for the United States see Mc Adam (1999).

This chapter continues the reflection on the formation of generations and questions the long-term biographical consequences of May '68. Did the events really re-deal the cards of social destiny? Or were future paths merely the reflection of prior divergences? In order to disentangle generation effects from cohort effects and life cycle effects (Kessler and Masson, 1985, p. 285-321), we will compare the political, personal and familial trajectories of these interviewees. Which of them continued with activism, and in which political organisations were they active? How did those who had presented themselves as revolutionaries negotiate their "exit" from these roles, at a time when involvement in the extreme left was seen in a very negative light? How did they manage to reconcile the end of their youth (understood as a period of "professional and conjugal uncertainty," Mauger, 1995, p. 35), and the maintenance of time-consuming activist activities? What became of their activism as they aged (Willemez, 2004)? How were they able to convert (or not) their dispositions for activism into other spheres of social life, particularly personal or professional? At what cost? Political disengagement may have very different costs depending on the "degree of social legitimacy of the defection and the existence of possible alternatives" (Fillieule, 2005, p. 20), and depending on evolutions in professional and family life. It is therefore necessary to conjointly consider the effects of activism on different life spheres, to shed light on their possible complementarities or antagonisms.

This chapter takes a statistical approach in order to provide elements of response to these questions and reveal the collective profiles of former '68ers. The diversity of '68ers' trajectories after the events will be firstly statistically objectified by the construction of a social space of the biographical consequences (political, professional and personal) of participation in May '68. The second part of the chapter will be dedicated to demonstrating the existence of *specific* effects of participation in the events, on the destinies of '68ers.

The social space of '68ers' destinies

The political event as a trigger for activism

Only 44% of interviewees[2] had experiences of activism before May '68, yet 70% of them said they continued their activism in the years that followed.

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2   Remembering that the corpus is made up of 182 interviewees.

Figure 4   Intensity of participation and continuation of activism

■ Continued activism after 1968   ■ Stopped activism after 1968
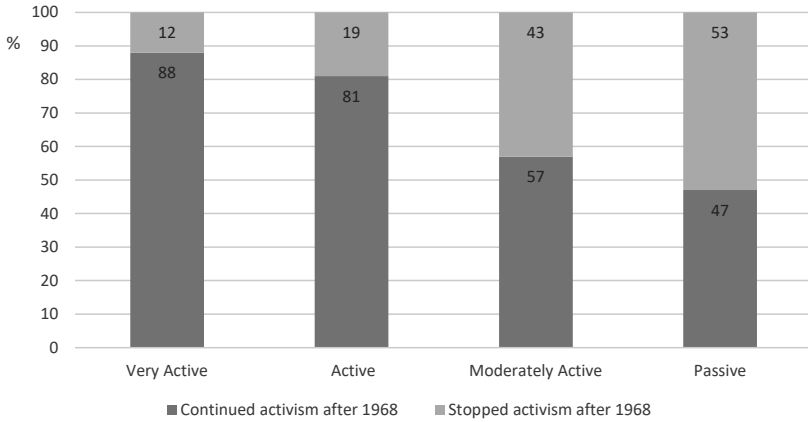
This difference is an initial, rudimentary way of underlining the role of the events as a catalyst for activism.

However, these figures mask certain differences between respondents – depending on their prior experiences of activism in particular. 83% of those who were activists before May '68 continued as activists afterwards, compared to just 54% of those who had no experience of activism before the events. Another difference lies in the intensity of participation in the events[3] (see Figure 4 below).

Although they may appear obvious, these results obscure a dual reality. Indeed, for first-time activists the intensity of participation in the events is very closely correlated to the probability of continuing their activism in the months and years that followed, whereas this is much less the case for the other activists (see Figure 5).

Although this seems self-evident, it is very important to bear in mind in order to avoid interpretations relying on overly mechanistic generalisations on the socialising effects of the events. In other words, it is impossible to

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3   I constructed a variable to measure intensity of involvement based on the questions dealing with frequency of participation: in demonstrations, in general assemblies during May '68, as well as in a dozen other activities (political meetings, billposting, confrontations with police, occupation of universities, factories etc.). A number of points are attributed to each category of the questions, in order to obtain a numeric variable, which is then recoded into four new levels.

Figure 5   The influence of prior politicisation on the continuation of activism
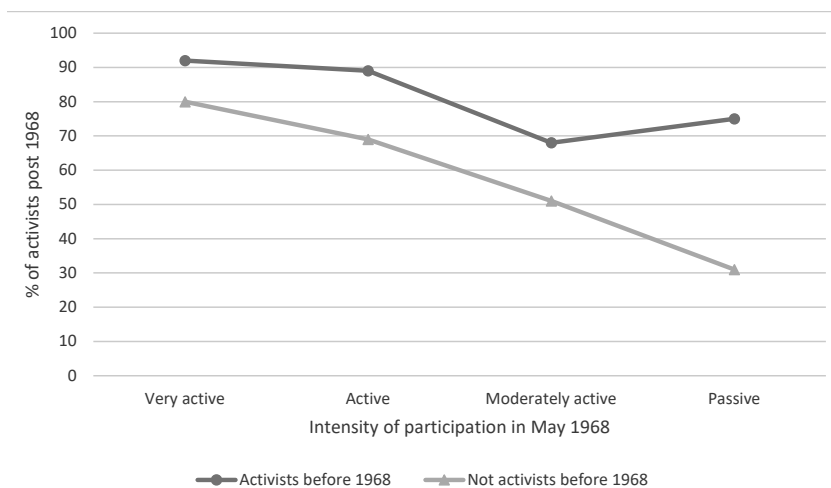
understand what activism produces without also simultaneously studying what produces activism.

Trajectories inflected by participation in May '68

Did those who had never participated in activism before May '68 go on to launch new battles in the years that followed?[4] Or did they join pre-existing organisations? What did their elder comrades, some with nearly ten years of activist experience, go on to do? In order to characterise the forms of activism pursued in the period between 1968 and 1974, the responses to the open-ended question on militant activities after May '68 were recoded (see Box 3).

> **Box 3   Coding types of activism after May '68**
>
> Among those who continued with activism after the events of May-June 1968, there are five levels of responses that correspond to the main militant activities:
>
> – "Far-left" concerns activists involved in anarchist, Trotskyist, and Maoist organisations (levels regrouped because their small sample size rendered quantitative analysis impossible).

4   Doug McAdam for example shows that the former activists in the Freedom Summer participated in the emergence of the student movements of the 1970s, the fight against the Vietnam War, and feminist movements.

- "Unionism" concerns interviewees whose primary militant activity was involvement in a union, either the CFDT or the CGT (both levels are once again combined for statistical reasons).
- "Feminism" concerns women whose primary militant activity was dedicated to feminism (MLF, MLAC, etc.). A separate variable brings together "feminist sympathisers" more broadly.
- "Non-institutionalised activists" combines all interviewees who cite numerous militant activities between 1968-
- 1974 but without affiliation to a particular organisation (participation in feminist and anti-nuclear demonstrations, participation in the demonstrations in Larzac or those in support of the workers at the Lip factory,[5] etc.).
- "Left-wing party activism" is made up of activists from the PCF and PSU who, although they do not share the same ideology, were activists in left-wing political parties.

Confining the study of the effects of participation in May-June 1968 to the political sphere would mean forgetting the way politics is embedded in familial and personal environments. Yet these are privileged sites for the reconversion of dispositions for protest (Tissot, Gaubert and Lechien, 2006), particularly at a time when the cost of activism in far-left organisations was increasing due to the progressive devaluing of these organisations. In order to address the need for social re-positioning, which became increasingly apparent during the 1970s, whilst still remaining faithful to previous engagements, former activists deployed different strategies of "symbolic manipulation of the future" (Boltanski, Bourdieu and de Saint-Martin, 1973). These strategies aim to extend the opening in the realm of possibilities into the professional sphere.

In response to the question of whether May '68 had had an impact on their professional trajectories,[6] 42% of interviewees responded in the affirmative, 20% said it had a "slight impact, and 28% responded in the negative.[7] An
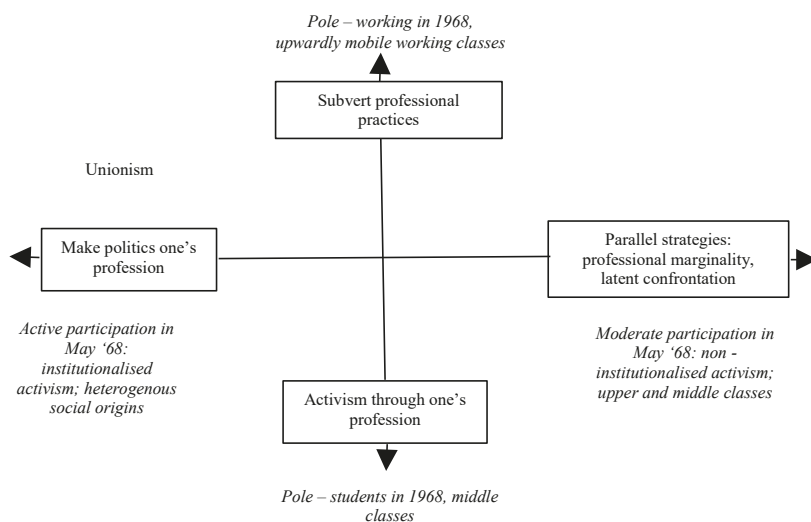
5   The occupation of the Lip watch factory between 1973-1974 was an important event in the history of French industrial action. At its height, it mobilised tens of thousands of people around France.

6   The question was formulated as follows: "Did the events of 1968 have an impact on your professional trajectory? 1. Yes; 2. A slight impact; 3. No. If yes, what did this impact consist of?"

7   Age and social origin are the two main variables correlated with a negative answer (statistically significant). The older interviewees in the corpus and those from the working classes said they experienced fewer professional effects. This can be explained by the social conditions of professional conversion – the more advanced one is in one's career, the greater the cost of

initial tabulation of their responses to the open-ended question ("If so, what did this impact consist of?") allows us to list the different effects of activism on the professional sphere: from dissatisfaction with one's work, to dropping out of school to become a full-time activist, but also things like reinventing or redefining professions suited to protest aspirations, returning to full-time study or the critical renewal of certain professions (through unionism in particular). The statistical analysis of this textual data, allows us to identify four main forms by which dispositions for protest can be reconverted into the professional sphere (summarised in Figure 6 below):

Figure 6   Reconversions of dispositions for protest into the professional sphere

Pole – working in 1968, upwardly mobile working classes

Subvert professional practices

Unionism

Make politics one's profession

Active participation in May '68: institutionalised activism; heterogenous social origins

Parallel strategies: professional marginality, latent confrontation

Moderate participation in May '68: non - institutionalised activism; upper and middle classes

Activism through one's profession

Pole – students in 1968, middle classes

The four main kinds of professional effects of activism will be outlined once the social space of the destinies of these '68ers has been constructed. Factorial analysis was used to do this (see Figure 7 below). The first variables integrated relate to what happened prior to the events, as well as during the events themselves: sex, age, social origin, occupation in May '68 (student/ worker), prior experiences of activism (or not), and intensity of participation in the events. A second group of variables reflects the main biographical consequences of activism revealed previously:

a career change. Moreover, the possession of symbolic instruments – such as diplomas and qualifications – allowing one greater mastery over the redefinition of one's professional trajectory, is dependent on social factors.

–   The types of activism for the period between 1968-1974,[8] the participation
    in feminist movements, the fight against the extension of the military
    base in Larzac (as markers of *political effects*);
–   The shift (none, slight, or major) in professional trajectories (as a marker
    of *professional effects*);[9]
–   The experience of living in communes, use of psychoanalysis, declared
    impact of May '68 on conjugal relationships, on bodily *hexis*, and on
    everyday life (as markers of *personal effects*).

In addition, a number of illustrative variables were also added:[10] having
gone "back-to-the-land;" having been an *établi*;[11] having been in an "open"
relationship (see "sexual liberation"); current activism; vote in the first round
of 2002 presidential elections; feeling of generational belonging;[12] and the
period in which the interviewees see their political ideas as having stabilised.

The factorial plane can be read as the social space of the futures of the '68ers
interviewed, structured around two axes[13] (see Figure 7). Two groups are
clearly opposed to each other on the x-axis. On the left of the axis we have a
population that is predominantly older, male, working-class, who were work-
ing in 1968, and who were activists in institutional political organisations
after the events. On the right-hand side we see a younger, female population,
who were students in 1968 and who joined less institutionalised forms of
activism after 1968. The y-axis distinguishes the interviewees according
to their experience of activism. At the top of the plane are those who were
not militant before 1968, who were not very involved in the events, and
who did not continue with activism afterwards. At the bottom are those
who had experience in activism prior to 1968 and who took an active role
in the events.

8   The interviewees are divided between the six following levels: "no activism" (33%), "unionism"
(17%), "extreme-left" (16%), "feminism" (7%) "non-institutional activism" (18%), "PC/PSU" (9%).
9   These refer to subjective perceptions of the effects of May '68 on professional trajectories,
which is a real limit to this indicator. However, it seemed preferable to include this professional
dimension in the statistical analysis than not, even if the indicator is imperfect.
10   In order to distinguish them from the active variables, the illustrative variables are underlined
in the figure. They do not contribute to the structure of the factorial plane.
11   See note 86, Chapter 1 for a detailed presentation of this movement in which young bourgeois
students went to work in factories.
12   Coded from the question "Do you feel like you belong to "a generation '68?"
13   The first axis represents 14% of the total inertia of the point cloud and the second 12.5%.
Because the number of active levels is high, the cumulated percentage of the two first axes is
quite sufficient.

Figure 7   The social space of '68ers' destinies
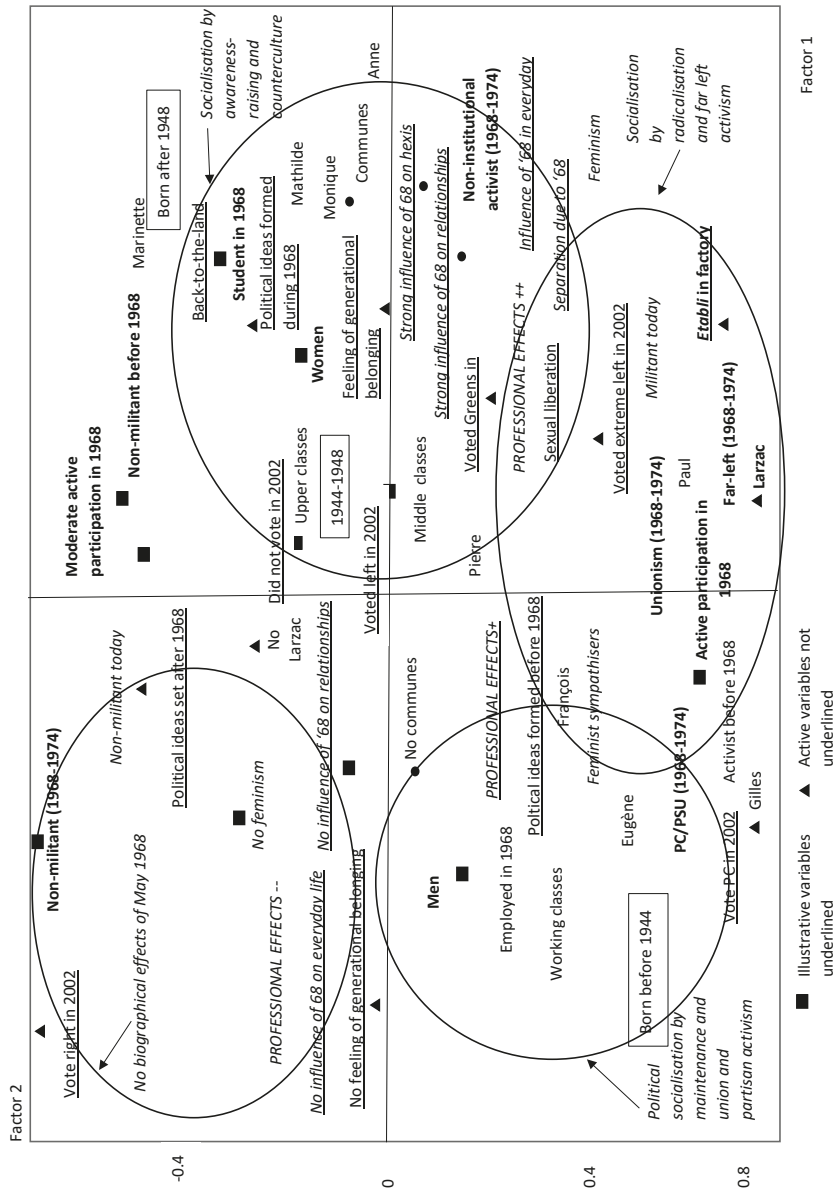
We can then distinguish several sub-groups among the interviewees, whose positions are spatially close and characterised by similar biographical consequences of activism. The first group, in the upper left quadrant is characterised by a lack of clear effects from their participation in May '68. This lack of effects must be seen in light of the main characteristics of this group: a relative lack of militant resources, only moderate involvement in May '68, being older and employed – rather than students – at the time. This population in fact functions as a kind of control group: the very weak exposure to the event corresponds to the relative absence of biographical consequences and the lack of a feeling of generational belonging.[14]

A second collective profile (on the lower left of the plane) covers a predominantly male population, from working-class backgrounds, characterised by the professional impacts of May '68 (see "Professional effects +"), the lack of personal effects, as well as a certain confirmation and durability of previous militant activities. Older than the other interviewees, those in this group became activists well before 1968, and as a result, their political interpretation of the world was already established before then (see "Political ideas set before 1968") and was unlikely to be radically transformed by the events. They continued to be active within institutionalised political organisations (see "PCU/PSU 1968-1974") after May '68. For these interviewees, the events contributed to their *political socialisation by maintenance* of their prior dispositions for activism, similar to what we saw with Agnès (see Chapter 2). On a professional level, they had already been in the workforce for a number of years, but they undertook a critical redefinition of their professions in light of the events. In particular, this sub-group includes teachers from working-class backgrounds who relate the transformations they experienced in their ways of teaching. More broadly, the importation of dispositions for protest into the professional sphere led to the subversion of professional relations (rejection of arbitrary authority, refusal of hierarchy, collective leadership, workers' self-management etc.).

A third sub-group, in the lower right-hand quadrant, on the contrary experienced significant political consequences (activism in far-left organisations, becoming *établis*, and participation in the demonstrations in the Larzac etc.), as well as profound professional and personal effects. Here we find interviewees of both sexes, who were aged between 20 and 24 during the events. In 1968, they were mostly students and participated actively in the

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14   For this group, enrolling one's children in an experimental school is not linked to participation in May '68 but to the school district (often the parents were not aware of the experimental nature of the school).

events, before becoming the incarnation of political leftism (Mauger, 1999) in the 1970s. For this group, the events played a role of *political socialisation by radicalisation* (for actors who were already politicised on the far left), or even *socialisation by conversion* for first-time activists. The substantial political effects were also accompanied by private and professional effects, due to the biographical availability of the population concerned. Younger than the previous groups, predominantly students and from a more privileged social background, this group was more exposed to the event that the previous one. For members of this group, the professional impact of May '68 takes the form of collective criticism of the relations of production, and they either became union activists or made activism their profession. Thus, Gérard, who we discussed in the previous chapter, became a paid party organiser with the Trotskyist LCR immediately after the events, and remained there for more than fifteen years. Others changed careers, moving into the social sector or into sociocultural events, or journalism, or research in the social sciences. By working alongside dominated groups (young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, delinquents, disabled people, people with mental illness etc.) their professions became a means for activism. The investment of these interviewees from the middle classes in professional areas that were relatively undetermined, where relations between titles and positions were still not clearly codified, enabled them to reconcile their parental mandates for upward social mobility and loyalty to activism. François' response regarding the impact of May '68 on his professional trajectory – "define my job, my profession: revolution through popular education" – reflects these strategies of inventing new social positions (Bourdieu, 1978), which are adapted both to competences and to political aspirations. One's profession becomes a tool for activism: you work (in the professional sense) to change the world.[15]

   The final sub-group, situated on the right of the factorial plane is charac-terised by the predominance of professional and private effects, combined with non-institutional activism (see "non-institutionalised activism" 1968-1974) and participation in feminist movements. This population is primarily female, made up of the youngest members of the corpus, who were university or high school students in 1968, from middle and upper-class backgrounds. Like the previous group, they found themselves in situations of social, professional, and romantic indetermination in May '68. However, unlike the former group, these interviewees had had no experience of activism prior
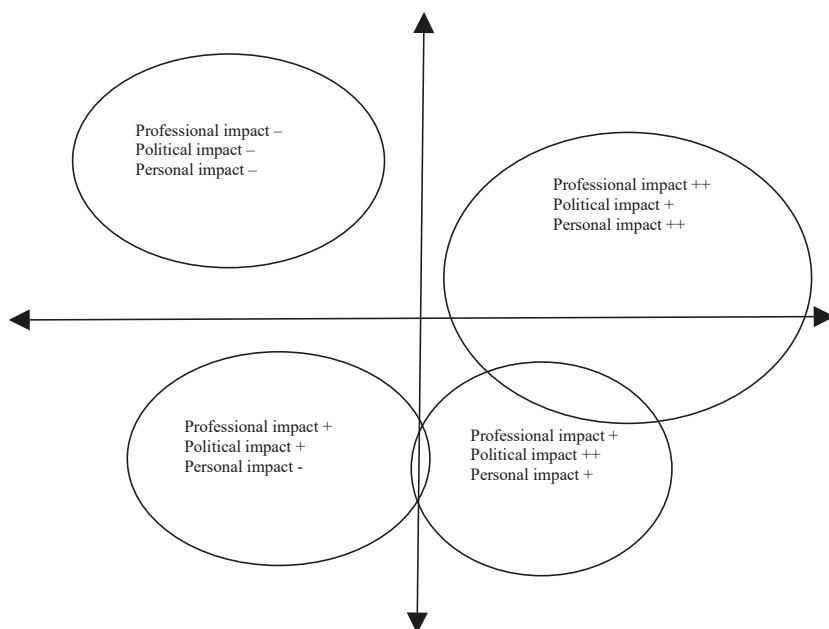
15   This collective profile is presented in detail in the next chapter, where François' trajectory is analysed

to May '68, and as a result the events provoked a *socialisation by political awakening*. Having no affinities with existing political organisations (or less than the other interviewees) and therefore fewer political resources to fight against the return to ordinary social structures, they sought to perpetuate the broadening of possibilities experienced during May and June '68 by other means. In the 1970s, they participated in the politicisation of causes outside the political sphere (particularly concerning the family, the condition of women, the environment, or the school). Mathilde[16] (situated on the right side of the plane) thus really became involved in the protest space in 1969 through the alternative crèches and more generally through the different forms of politicisation of the private sphere. As an "anti-authoritarian activist" she fought family and school institutions, lived in different communes in the 1970s, refused to be a salaried worker (even though she had a degree in journalism), was a member of the pro-contraceptive pro-abortion movement MLAC, and was active against nuclear armament. These are typical examples of the countercultural leftism of this population. Unlike the previous group, interviewees situated at this pole do not bring activism into their working practices, in order to transform the modes of production. Instead, they (individually) refuse to be employees, through various alternative approaches and exit strategies (Bennani Chraïbi and Fillieule, 2003, p. 71). These took the form of professional breaks, and trajectories of social marginalism. The belief in being free to "choose one's life"[17] can be understood in light of their social origin in the upper classes, and the resources that enable one to break away from a future that is all laid out. Professional breaks and transgressive individual trajectories are the primary tools of "activism" here, in the hope of spreading the model by setting the example (changing *one's own* world, in order to better "change *the* world").

As we can see, factorial analysis allows us to visually and concisely account for the different political, professional and personal effects resulting from participation in the events of May-June '68, and to connect them to the social conditions that made them possible. Some of these effects are complementary. On the factorial plane, we can see that feminism, strong professional impact, countercultural activism in the 1970s and the green vote in 2002 are all situated in close proximity to each other, which means they

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16   The case of Mathilde, who was born in 1948, to catholic royalist artisans, schooled in a catholic boarding school, and in opposition with her family, is developed in Chapter 1 as part of the matrix of statutory incoherencies. It will be once again discussed in Chapter 5 dedicated to this sub-group and the utopian communities that are characteristic of.

17   A term that they use to describe the professional impact of May '68.

Figure 8   Summary of different types of consequences from participation in May '68

Professional impact –
Political impact –
Personal impact –

Professional impact ++
Political impact +
Personal impact ++

Professional impact +
Political impact +
Personal impact -

Professional impact +
Political impact ++
Personal impact +

are associated with each other for the interviewees who are found in this part of the plane. Inversely, the factorial analysis shows that other effects are mutually exclusive, through their distance on the plane. For example, those who engage in the critical renewal of their everyday lives differ from those who are union activists in their workplaces. Schematically, we can summarise the factorial analysis as follows:

Moreover, there is a clear correlation, between each sub-group, their current voting preferences and their contemporary militant practices. The sub-group situated in the lower left-hand quadrant thus generally voted Communist (PC) in the 2002 presidential elections (see "vote PC in 2002"). The group in the lower right-hand quadrant is still actively militant today (see "Militant today") and votes for the extreme left. The group on the right-hand side of the x-axis votes Green. These results contribute to the reflection on how political generations are constructed, and suggest the persistence of distinct generational units, even forty years later.

Yet can we consider that these effects are specific to participation in the events of May '68? In other words, did the event cause the participants' trajectories to deviate from their otherwise probable destinies? Factorial

analysis does not allow us to reason in terms of "all other things being equal," nor to dissociate the factors linked to the trajectories prior to May '68 from those linked to the event. In order to identify the long-term effects specifically linked to participation in the events, let us now analyse the political behaviour of the interviews, forty years later.

Generational impact forty years later

Comparing political destinies

From a classical perspective[18] we can compare the destinies of former activists with those of their peers who did not participate. At the time of the study, between 2004 and 2006, 36% of interviewees said they were "very" interested in politics today, and this figure increases to 80% if we add those who said they were "quite" interested. As an indicator for the general population, in 2002 10% of French citizens said they were "very" interested in politics, and 32% said they were "quite interested."[19] Moreover, half of the interviewees said they still participate in militant activities, a level that is comparable to McAdam's results for the former activists in the Freedom Summer (McAdam, 1988, p. 354). In addition, at the time of the interviews, 25% of these interviewees here were members of a political organisation or non-profit organisations; 60% said they demonstrate "often" or "from time to time" in defence of public services, against racism, or against war;[20] 18% were members of a local association in their town; 10% had run as political candidates or had had electoral responsibilities in their town, and 82% voted in all elections.[21] They were also members of multiple associations (often simultaneously), 30% were members of cultural associations, and 32% were members of humanitarian associations.

Nearly forty years after 1968, the people interviewed here stand out in terms of their opinions – whether in terms of anti-economic liberalism,[22] or

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18   Most Anglo-Saxon publications on the biographical consequences of participation "test" the persistence of characteristics associated with participation in a foundational event.

19   According to the French Electoral Panel study (PEF) 2002, Cevipof-Minister of the Interior.

20   Whereas, in the PEF study by Cevipof mentioned above, 81% of French citizens say they "never" participated in a demonstration during the last two years.

21   Compared to 45% of the general population according to the PEF study.

22   83% of respondents disagree with the idea of privatising public companies, compared to 51% for the general population, according to the PEF study.

the acceptance of cultural differences,[23] the rejection of security policies, or "cultural liberalism."[24] At this stage, it is impossible to talk of generation effects. But these elements do confirm the main results of the Anglo-Saxon studies on the persistence of politically left-wing representations and practices of former activists.

On a professional level, the effects of May '68 activism identified above have long-term material consequences. Among the effects quoted by the interviewees are: "hard times and no retirement;"[25] "I never saved, so I have trouble paying for my children to go overseas;" "seventeen years without a pay rise;" "1969, I refused to sit the state teaching certificate, to be a teacher, on political grounds. 1975, I was teacher in a private school by necessity and not by choice" etc. The trajectories of the '68ers analysed here reveal various situations of downward social mobility, as possible consequences of participation in the events of May-June 1968.

These results thus contest – both on a political and a professional level – the widespread representations of a universally opportunistic, upwardly mobile generation, which swapped the ideals of youth for the principles of the stock market, and who are assumed to have ended up in executive positions in the areas of advertising, media or politics.

Pursuing the identification of the specific impacts of participation in May '68, will require finer intragenerational distinctions, comparing for example the collective destinies of two sub-groups characterised by different kinds of involvement in May '68. The most reasonable solution here consists of comparing collective destinies according to the intensity of participation in May '68, based on a variable with two levels: "active participation in May '68" and "moderate participation in May '68," which cover 42% and 58% of the interviewees respectively. Do these specific past experiences provoke specific long-term effects?

The answer is yes. Compared to their less active counterparts, the sub-group that was the most active in May '68 is situated significantly more to the left of the political scale, brings together more members of political organisations, more respondents who are members of several organisations, and many who were still activists at the time of the study.[26] Beyond their

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23   13% of respondents "strongly" or "quite strongly" agree with the statement that "there are too many immigrants in France", compared to 60% for the 2002 PEF Cevipof study.

24   56% of interviewees are favourable or quite favourable to the authorisation of the consumption of marijuana, compared to 22% in the PEF study.

25   These quotations are from responses to the open-ended question on the professional impacts of participation in May '68.

26   75% of the most active participants in May '68 are situated on the extreme left of the political scale today (compared to 58% of the others); 61% are still activists today (compared to 39%).

distinctive political practices, these two generational groups can also be distinguished by a certain number of self-representations in terms of group affiliation, such as claiming to be more Marxist today (among the former "active" participants), or defining oneself as belonging to "generation '68."[27] These markers of political collective identity[28] shed light on the subjective aspect of the generation *for itself*. They remind us that "as much as an event, it is one's place and one's reconstruction in the memory of an age group that possibly constructs a political generation" (Sirinelli, 1989, p 73).

Activists today: a generation effect?

In his study of the participants (and non-participants) in the Freedom Summer (FS) in Mississippi in 1964, Doug McAdam shows that the significant variables accounting for participation (age, sex, level of involvement before the FS and number of memberships in organisations before the FS) are no longer significant in accounting for the degree of activism in the period after the FS (1964-1975). The fact of having participated or not (in the FS) then becomes the most significant variable (McAdam, 1989, p. 751), along with the links maintained with other participants, the type of employment and the family situation. He concludes that "the summer served as an instance of alternation in the lives of the volunteers and was largely responsible for the shape of their subsequent activist histories."[29]

I have proceeded in a similar way by performing two logistic regressions, dealing with activism in May '68 and activism today respectively. Prior to May '68, the only two variables that are significantly correlated to the intensity of participation in the events are prior militant experience and parents' political opinions.[30] In order to test for a possible effect – specific to the event itself – on the futures of the '68ers (a hypothesis verified in McAdam's study), a second logistic regression was performed for the condition of being (or not) an activist today (see Table 4 below). To the previous

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27 47% of the most active participants say they are "Marxists" today, compared to 17% of the others. The feeling of belonging to a "generation '68" is shared by 75% of the most active, compared to 64% for the less active participants.

28 For Nancy Whittier, actors immerged in a social movement internalised a new definition of themselves (Whittier, 1996, p. 762).

29 The term alternation describes identity changes produced by participation in Freedom Summer, that are less radical than those observed during a real conversion (McAdam 1989, p. 751).

30 The logistic regression includes the following variables: age, sex, social origin, parents' political orientation, the existence of a family political tradition, having parents who were Resistance members, activist experience, and occupation in 1968.

variables, we added the intensity of participation in the events of May '68 and the form of activism endorsed during the period between 1968-1974. Two possibilities can be envisaged at this stage: (1) either the explicative variables for the intensity of participation continue to be the most predictive of current activist practices, in which case we cannot conclude that there is a generational effect, or (2) their statistical significance disappears in favour of later biographical elements, which would demonstrate the existence of specific effects due to the event. The results of Table 4 confirm this second hypothesis.

Table 4   The decisive factors for current activism (logistic regression)

Dependent Variable = being an activist (or not) today	b Coefficients	S.E.
Sex: female	-0.235	0.400
Family political tradition	-0.029	0.387
Parents in the Resistance	-0.655*	0.379
Social background:		
– Working classes		
– Upper classes	0.178	0.497
– Middle classes	0.229	0.489
Activist experience pre-'68	-.0275	0.409
Age:		
– Born 1948-1957		
– Born 1944-1948	-0.206	0.538
– Born pre-1944	-0.514	0.489
– Students in 1968	-0.145	0.436
Parents' political orientation		
– Not politicised or different opinions		
– Left-wing parents	-.924*	0.537
– Right-wing parents	-0.549	0.584
Active participation in May '68	-1.190*	0.659
Activism 1968-1974		
– Non-militant	**	
– Unionism (1968-1974)	-2.164	0.550
– Extreme-left (1968-1974)	-0.616	0.571
– Feminism (1968-1974)	-1.237	0.796
– Non-institutional activism (1968-1974)	-1.171**	0.509
– PC/PSU (1968-1974)	-2.875**	0.891
Constant	2.434	0.832

a: 0 = current activism; 1 = non-activist
N = 179; * p<0.1; ** p<0.01

Box 4   Interpreting the logistic regression

A logistic model allows us to measure the effect of an individual characteristic on a behavioural variable, all other things being held constant. Here we are explaining the propensity for an individual to be an activist rather than a non-activist at the time of the study (the dependent variable).

The last line of the table (constant) is a measure of the average propensity of reference individuals (identified by the reference levels, in our case: male, no family political tradition, parents not involved in the resistance, born between 1948-1957 etc.) to not be activists today.[31]

Negative coefficients therefore indicate – relative to the reference individuals – a higher propensity to be activists at the time of the study (for example, in the case of those who participated actively in May '68). Only the variables indicated with stars (b**) have a significant effect on the dependent variable however. The second column contains the standard error.

Conclusion

The variables that are significant in the first regression are no longer significant in explaining current activism. Instead, it is the type of activism in the years that followed 1968, even more than the intensity of participation in May '68 itself, which are the most significant factors. These results therefore validate the hypothesis of a specific role for the political event in secondary political socialisation.

Yet we cannot conclude that the event has a blank slate effect, which would erase all prior distinctions and completely rewrite social destinies. However, the fact that activism both in May '68 and in the years that followed, came to dominate over prior activism, allows us to deduce that it has a decisive role in political resocialisation through the event. In other words, although the differences between the two sub-groups before 1968 are not entirely erased, participation in the events amplified some and diminished – or even reversed – others. This is the case for the correlation between sex and intensity of activism. Thus, although male participants had more chance of actively participating in the events of May-June '68 than females,[32] it is women who have more chance of still being activists today (53% of the women were still activists, compared to only 45% of men).

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31   Indeed the programme attributes the value 0 to the category "militant today", and the value 1 to the category "non-militant today". The logistic regressions were conducted using the programme SPSS.

32   48% of men in the corpus participated actively in May '68 compared to 38% of women.

Finally, the fact that in explaining the likelihood of remaining an activist today, the type of activism between 1968 and 1945 was shown to be more decisive than the intensity of participation in the events themselves, argues in favour of a non-mechanical interpretation of the socialising effects of the events. It is not so much the active participation in the events of May '68 that destabilises these individuals' trajectories, as the subsequent consequences of this participation in terms of insertion into social and friendship networks. The correlation between currently being an activist and having maintained connections with people met in 1968 and in the months that followed, confirms this hypothesis. Activist friendships and social networks indeed contribute to maintaining and reinforcing protest dispositions by allowing their perpetuation. This confirms what Doug McAdam calls the self-perpetuating quality of individual activism (Mc Adam, 1989, p. 754).[33] We can thus compare the role of the events of May-June '68 to a generational prism which diffracts prior trajectories – rather than simply reflecting them – and which therefore produces several generational units.

33   There is a substantial literature on the importance of networks in collective action. See Diani and McAdam (2003).

4   Working to avoid social reproduction

Using a comprehensive approach based on the analysis of life histories, the next two chapters continue our reflections on how an event can impact the individual and collective paths of participants. Having used statistical methods to show what consequences the event produced, we must now seek to understand *how* it was able to alter the trajectories of protagonists and how they reacted to these biographical changes and the ensuing identity negotiations. Asking *how* means analysing the mechanisms for setting aside, transferring, converting and importing dispositions for protest, in various spheres of the participants' lives. Asking *how* means also asking about the political context, the objective constraints (social reintegration, responsibility for children etc.) and the subjective constraints (particularly being faithful to oneself) – that shaped the destinies of '68ers in different ways. Whereas the statistical approach in the previous chapter aimed to be exhaustive, here we focus on a limited number of cases to explore the destinies of '68ers working – both politically and professionally – to break down social reproduction. In so doing, this chapter questions the consequences of activism for social mobility *and* the consequences of social mobility for activism (Leclercq and Pagis, 2011). It explores the inversed trajectories of the workers who went to university and the *établis* who left university to work in factories. It also looks at how political interest in "the people" was converted into professional interests for the working classes, particularly in areas of social and community leadership. The study of these trajectories allows us to give the statistical observations of the previous chapter new temporal depth, taking into account the possible interactions between determinisms and encounters (particularly romantic). This will shed light on the much-neglected biographical consequences of breaking down social barriers.

Students in factories and workers in universities: inversed trajectories

> We came back from Cuba in September 1967... There was the great proletarian revolution and the sixteen-point plan, it was "get down off your horse" and "go among the masses" ... and working on that, "dare to struggle, dare to win:" we learnt lessons from Lenin, from *What is to be done?* [...]. We got *Peking-information...* "power to the people" etc. That was how we created the *établi* party line [...] it was a commitment ... total

commitment. We were there to listen to the workers, to be at the service of the working class. Colette (a student *établi* in a factory).

Gérard Miller boasted about having spent two years as a farm worker, I don't think that the cause of the people progressed much where he had that experience […] The idea of being an *établi* for most of the children of the bourgeoisie seemed very romantic, but there was also no risk. Gilles (a worker, who did not graduate from high school, and who went on to university in Vincennes).[1]

The history of the breakdown in social barriers between the worlds of workers, students and farmers is an aspect of the history of May '68 that is often neglected[2] – even though its "recognition could have become the symbol of May" (Pudal and Retière, 2008, p. 213). In unearthing some of these connections, we can see that – in spite of their fragile, temporary and ultimately ambiguous nature – they constitute a genuine social fact, that is historically situated, made possible, legitimated or reinforced by the critical conjuncture of May '68.

Whether these encounters are ephemeral or durable, whether the equivocal representations that underpin them lead to feelings of contempt, disenchantment, anger or – on the contrary – recognition, they do not fail to have an impact on the world views and the trajectories of the different protagonists.

Becoming an *établi* to "go among the masses"[3]

Ten of the interviewees worked (for periods varying from one month to six years) in factories as "*établis*" (Dressen, 2000). According to Marnix Dressen, the term *établi* does not imply a specific social origin but rather a deviation from a specific type of socialisation, resulting from the decision of young activists to perform manual work, for which their training had not prepared them. The process of becoming an *établi* is not the object of this section, instead it provides us here with an almost-experimental situation through which to study the breakdown in social barriers and its consequences. These young *établis,* who were university educated, trained to fill intellectual positions, and frequently members of the upper classes, left their positions to work in factories. They were following Chairman Mao's injunction to "get down off [their] horses" and

1   Extract from an email received on 18 August 2008. Gilles' trajectory is analysed in detail below.

2   With the notable exception of the issue of Savoir/Agir: Mai-juin 68. La rencontre ouvriers-étudiants (2008).

3   This phrase from Mao became emblematic among French activists and became one of the motivations of the "établi" movement. See, The writings of Mao Zedong 1949-1976, Vol 11, January 1956 to December 1957 JK Leung and MY Kau (eds.) ME Sharpe, NY, 1992, p 381.

"go among the masses."[4] Jacques,[5] who was responsible for the Rank-and-File Vietnam Committees within the UJCml in 1966-1967, discussed the origins of the *établis* movement within the Maoist organisation in his interview:

> In 1967 there were long marches, so in the summer, some came here [*to his house, in the south of France*]: they were looking for the poor farmer, from the lowest level... we returned to the practice of investigation [*Following Mao's teachings?*] Right: "no investigation, no right to speak" (*he smiles*). [...]. The *établis*, that was Linhart's[6] thing, but he did it with a guy called Daniel K.[7] [...] a young leader among us who had been employed in the Perrier factories in Vergez, with his wife [...] They were our first students to become *établis*, workers, but it wasn't like Simone Weil, it was a political construction, based on Mao's writings, for agitprop...

Although for Jacques, the experience of being an *établi* was as short as it was miserable,[8] others, like Colette,[9] cited in the epigraph, or Paul, became

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4   These were among the resolutions of the Cultural Revolution, and the slogans became popular in the famous Little Red Book, from 1966. Mao said that "if you look at flowers on horseback, you'll only get a superficial impression" [...] you must "get down of your horse and look at the flowers, observe them closely and analyse one "flower", the injunction being that the elites must go among the people if they are to understand them. In another text, Mao said, "we advocate that intellectuals must go among the masses, and go into the factories and countryside", "Some of them may just tour around the factories and villages to have a look, this is called "looking at the flowers whilst riding by on horseback" [...] Others can stay a few months [..] they can make friends and conduct investigations, this is called "dismounting to look at the flowers". See, "Some Experiences In Our Party's History", from a talk with Latin American Communist leaders September 25, 1956. Also see, "Speech At The Chinese Communist Party's National Conference On Propaganda Work", March 12, 1957.

5   Jacques' trajectory prior to 1968 is discussed in Chapter 1. This extract is taken from an interview on 18 August 2005.

6   Robert Linhart, was the main leader of the UJCml. He was a student in philosophy at the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure, and later a specialist teacher (*agrégé*). He became an *établi* in the 1970s at the Citroën factory, and published an account of his experience on the assembly line, see *L'Etabli* (Linhart, 1978).

7   Daniel K. (his name has been changed to respect his anonymity) is in fact one of the interviewees. Born in 1944 into a Jewish family, his father was a low-level employee and former resistant member, and mother worked at home. He was a student in sociology when he became an établi in 1967, and his story is told in the book Generation (Hamon and Rotman, 1988).

8   Jacques was employed in 1968-1969 at the Renault factory in Billancourt, but he left after two months because he had not managed to make any genuine activist contacts, and explained that he had found himself "in a dead-end".

9   The case of Colette was mentioned in Chapter 1 regarding the conversion of religious commitments into political activism. Her career as an *établi* is detailed at length in the PhD

blue-collar workers for several years. The comparative analysis of these two latter trajectories is developed in the next section.

Beginning and maintaining a établi *career: a total experience?*
Paul was born in 1947, the son of a schoolteacher and a white-collar worker, both Communist activists, former Resistance members and atheists. In Chapter 2 we saw how he was a student in 1968, studying history, a member of the UNEF leadership in Grenoble, and an activist with the UJCml. In September of 1968, Paul joined the Proletarian Left (GP).[10] He was appointed assistant teacher in a high school where he taught for one year (1968-1969), but quickly had the "uncomfortable feeling of having gone backward, compared to 1968," and became an *établi*.

> I hitched, with my pack on by back, and at the sign for Lyon, there was a note saying they were looking for a petrol pump assistant at Carrefour. So, I took the job, because the problem was having work certificates to show, to get a job somewhere more interesting. I moved to Bron, to a public housing estate, so my wife could show up. [*Why this decision to become an établi?*] For me, it was going where things were happening, and my deep conviction was that it would happen there... I had to continue 1968 in all possible ways, whether in the radical struggles of blue-collar workers or in other struggles... But I didn't go looking for different realities, I went to those capable of recreating May '68, that's all [...] Let's say there was a phase where the construction of a political force implied that we made links we didn't naturally have, and which we were cut out of by the unions.[11]

In Chapter 1 we saw that Colette, born in 1946 to an upper-class catholic family in Marseille, became politicised through the Vietnam War, before joining the UJCml in 1967. That same year she went on a "study" trip to Cuba with her husband, to investigate according to Mao's instructions: "[in Cuba] I met women who were like my mother. Very, very, very, upper-class women who completely devoted themselves to the Cuban

thesis that provided the material for this book (Pagis, 2009, p. 382-415). Here it is used as a counterpoint to Paul's trajectory.
10   The "Proletarian left" was a Maoist group that was active between 1968-1974 in France.
11   The quotations used in this part are from the interview conducted with Paul on 4 July 2008.

revolution, with such generosity... such a wonderful people the Cubans, wonderful..."[12]

These initial comments reveal Paul and Colette's diverging representations of "the people," and their approaches to being an *établi.* Colette's tendency to present herself as a martyred heroine and her essentialist representations of "the people" must be seen in light of her own class belonging, and her religious socialisation. These both encourage an aestheticisation and appreciation of the otherness of a "good" people (Lechien, 2003, p. 94) which cannot be seen in Paul's comments – given his greater proximity to the working class. Beyond these divergences, both interviewees are confronted with the need to disguise their past at university in order to evade the suspicion of the employers and succeed in their career as an *établi.* Thus, Paul says: "You made up a story, like you were the son of a shopkeeper or something, you didn't go to school between 14 and 20 because you worked for your parents in their shop, or their garage."

The need to conceal one's past, both to the employers but also to work colleagues, also implicitly reveals the unforeseeable, socially impossible nature of these transgressions of class boundaries. Keeping this past from others enabled them to integrate into their new social environment, without being accused of madness, and became a condition for living in this new role and protecting themselves from doubt. More generally, this conversion seems to imply breaking links with previous social networks (family, friends, school networks etc.) so that their role would seem credible in the eyes of others, but also (and perhaps primarily) in their own.

This break was more substantial for Colette than for Paul, who grew up in a lower-middle-class intellectual family, from a working-class background. Considering the experience of being an *établi* as a "total experience" (Goffman, 1968 [1961]) which leads to profound resocialisation, remains heuristic in both cases however.

Colette had an experience as a "regional leader" in the GP from 1968-1974[13] and the experience of the breakdown in social barriers also profoundly transformed her everyday life, her social environment, her cultural practices (even banning the use of the radio, or the "bourgeois" habit of reading), even her bodily practices and self-presentation. The break with her former

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12 The quotations from Colette come from the interview conducted with her on 12 November 2005.

13 Colette became an établi with her husband at the Perrier factories in Contrexéville in 1967. She was not able to get a permanent job and thus alternated between phases where she was a worker, and phases of activism, as a worker's wife and a militant leader in the GP.

identity was all the more radical in that she lived in hiding through this period, because of her status in the organisation, and she thus achieved genuine "*metanoia*."[14] More than 35 years later, Colette was still able to say "my experience as an *établi* constituted my total foundation, in other words, I was what I did." She thus underlines this dual representation of herself, characteristic of the converted, which here results from her extreme experience of breaking down social barriers.

From 1969 to 1972, Paul worked as a casual employee in several companies but struggled to find a permanent position. As an activist with the GP in Lyon, he also participated in the newspaper *La Cause du people* (The Cause of the People). Paul was arrested for his activism in 1970 and was sentenced to three months prison:

> We had one *établi* in Berlier who had provoked a strike within two weeks, and three young *établis* at Norev in Villeurbanne, making little plastic cars. They were all fired on the spot: they'd caused chaos on the women's lines; so we had planned to go into the factory to speak out about the sacking, but we hadn't studied the exits very well, and we were picked up by the cops on the way out! [...] And because the GP had been officially dissolved by the government,[15] I ended up in prison, they let us out one by one, but because they had a list from the intelligence services saying I'd been appointed second in charge of the Lyon committee, the judge thought I'd better stay in for a while.

When he came out of prison, he returned to Grenoble to join his wife, who was then pregnant with their second daughter. He worked for a few months in causal positions, with limited political success. It was increasingly difficult to find a position as an *établi* during this period:

> I tried for quite a while, but well, my experience of being an *établi* was a total failure. Well, according to the criteria of the time ... In other words, I didn't develop militant practices, or activist groups where I was. Each time I was caught by the cops, or the CGT, very very quickly [...] Once, in Grenoble, I'd been in quite a big factory for three days, when the CGT

14   Bourdieu described *metanoia* as being "personal regeneration, attested in changes in vestimentary and cosmetic symbolism which consecrate a total commitment in a ethico-political vision of the social world, erected in principle into the whole lifestyle, private as much as public. (Bourdieu 1984, trans. 1988, p. 193).
15   On 27 May 1970 the GP was officially dissolved by Raymond Marcellin, Minister for the Interior.

distributed a pamphlet with my name on the back... And then I was fired immediately, it was things like that...

Shortly afterwards, Paul separated from his wife who suffered from psychiatric problems. In 1971, he set up in a housing estate in Sochaux with a new partner, who was student supervisor in a high school. Hired at the Peugeot factory, he (finally) had the feeling he was able to be politically active:

> I was at the exhaust pipes, it was an assembly line, with rhythms and all that, so revolt was always latent. It was the good side of Taylorism (*he smiles*), the thing where negotiations between capital and labour were direct, so of course, in our discussions at break times, we were quickly talking about working conditions etc.

But his criminal record caught up with him and led to his dismissal within a few months. Whether it is a consequence or a cause of the fact that his break from his previous identity was less radical than some, Paul's comments do not reflect the same degree of sacredness associated with the working class seen in some of the other *établis*. He never repressed his intellectual and artistic ambitions, for example, and did not hesitate to bring Lacan's writings with him to his public housing estate in Sochaux:

> When I went to be an *établi* in Lyon, and then in Sochaux, both times I left with two or three books in my bag. I never left either my Bible or the writings of Lacan, nor one or other commentary on Marx, and I remember one period of ultra-workerism at the GP where that was criticised, but it never stopped me telling those puritans to fuck off.

Paul's working-class background undoubtedly explains why his critique of the bourgeoisie does not involve a rejection of cultural practices, nor a populist attitude idealising working-class thought and lifestyle (Grignon and Passeron, 1989), as we can see in these contrasting representations of the work of *établi:*

Paul	Colette
I worked for a month with Fiat in Grenoble, worked nights, retreading certain tyres: it was quite tough, and I was stuck with all the divorced proles	The political work on the assembly line was wonderful, [I was] only with women, putting little pieces in locks and it went very, very fast, but the oppression was such that: it

who were working nights to earn 20% more. It was a deeply unbearable sector of the working class – a bunch of 30 and 40-year-old proles who spent their time denigrating the women who had left them (he laughs): you can imagine the sexist jokes you can accumulate in an 8-hour night-shift. It got to the point where I couldn't take it anymore!

was easy to work in the proletariat at that time, I can't take any credit for it, the young female workers were just waiting for that! The repression, there were these little bosses, who harassed them, half-raped them when they were getting dressed [...] I just had to listen to them and share their situation [...] I discovered extraordinary men and women, and friendship, solidarity that you don't find anywhere else.

If the aspect of self-purification through the repression of all aspirations unknown to the working class is lacking in Paul's comments (unlike Colette's), his position as an *établi* was still an experience that gave new meaning to his existence, making it part of a collective history that perpetuated the utopia of May '68:

> I had an image of May '68 and the factories during the general strike [...] That capacity for revolt, we had lived through it in 1968 and we had found this total investment in a cause in 1968. That's what we were trying to maintain in the years that followed [...] a sort of "total experience," inevitable, and which in fact doesn't really exist outside of war [...] we were looking for a *radical new beginning*.

This search for "total" experiences becomes meaningful when we situate it in the individual and generational relations that many '68ers maintain with the Second World War and more particularly with the Resistance.

Becoming an établi *while waiting for war? The memory of the Resistance*
In 1972 Paul participated in the sequestration of a man who had injured students during a leafleting operation, and in the interview he discussed the motivations that drove them (within the GP) to resort to this course of action:

> Our idea, at the time, was that we were moving towards civil war, a war that the people unleashed, not the factions, but we were supposed to increase symbolic actions. We were very influenced by the model of the

Tupamaros, and yes, the NRP[16] and abductions like Nogrette, seemed like
a good idea [...]. We gave ourselves the right to abduct and to operate a
parallel system of justice, controlled counter-violence, to throw the system
into crisis… there was another kind of legitimacy that emerged after 1968.

Colette's husband also justified the use of abductions in the context of war,
in an interview from 1971: "It could very well be war. That's why we're going
to be *établis*. If it is war, we'd prefer to organise it. [...] Sequestration for
example, if it was really organised everywhere, sequestration of the bosses in
response to sequestration of the workers, that would be good, wouldn't it?"[17]

Colette herself talks about normality, fairness, and even order when
describing the clandestine "actions of partisans,"[18] organised by the leaders
of the GP. It is difficult to understand this relation to justice, to the state
and to one's own role in history, without returning to the place that the
Second World War occupies in the imagination of these young adults, born
in the early 1940s. More specifically, identification with the figures of the
resistance fighters or the persecuted Jews emerges in several discourses,
more or less clearly, more or less fantasized, from Colette's allusion to the
"deportation trains"[19] in her account of her experience as an *établi*, to more
theoretically founded comparisons. Paul therefore mobilises his family
history to justify this identification, and the fact that this was *"their* war:"

People don't understand anymore, that at the time, we were still at war…
And for some of these people, first of all us, World War Three was coming,
beyond a doubt. The theme of the "New Resistance" was obvious for me,
it was even oedipal: my parents were in the Resistance, I had to do the
same. We were coming out of colonial wars, like in Kusturiça's film on
Yugoslavia, we were still in the underground, like the Japanese on their
island who hadn't been told that the war was over.

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16   The NRP was the Nouvelle résistance populaire (New Popular Resistance), the clandestine
armed branch of the GP.

17   Extract from an interview conducted with Colette and her husband, available on a digital
archive website.

18   With this expression she is referring to the famous "Chant des partisans" (translated into
English as the "Partisans' Song") that was the hymn of the Resistance during the Second World
War, and thus making a parallel between the "partisans" (Resistance members) and members
of the GP.

19   Colette describes her husband's work at Perrier: "they had to put [the bottles] on their
shoulders in the freight carriages of Contrexéville, on the gloomy plain, sorry, it was pretty
much like the deportation trains".

We can see the transmission of a family history of resistance or persecution, as foundational for dispositions to activism. The examples are frequent and all mobilise the spectre of the war to come: "World War Three." The feeling of being part of a persecuted minority sheds light on the apparent irrationality of the activist practices of certain interviewees, in the years after 1968. Geneviève, who dedicated more than ten years of her life to *Lutte Ouvrière* thus told me:

> I am from a Jewish background, my first husband was from a Jewish background, so it's important to specify that in my subconscious it was clear that I was going to end up in a concentration camp [...] that was part of a whole lot of things that were culturally transmitted to me.

The rhetoric of the necessary recourse to illegality and the legitimacy of minority actions is also written in the recent history of the Resistance, which is not limited to the children of Resistance members themselves (like Paul) or persecuted Jews (like Colette's husband). The general strike in May '68, the flickering power of politicians who seemed to not understand the stakes of the crisis, provided a context favourable to many '68ers "joining the Resistance," and then waiting many months, and even years for their war. Anne, who was an *établi* in 1971-1972 said:

> when the vote, and the political game appear rigged, disconnected from reality, violent confrontation is the only outcome. On the other hand, for this generation that "discovered" that the image of the France that resisted was a myth, that what they'd been taught was false, the major reference was that: make the right decision, even if it's marginal, with the secret hope that a good conflict would reveal everything.[20]

Without aiming to explain the *établi* movement, this development on the attitude to war allows us to shed new light on the apparent recklessness of the *établis* regarding their social destinies, often – over-hastily – reduced to the bourgeois origins only some of them actually had. When we are persuaded to live in suspended reality, social mobility is not necessarily a primary concern.

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20   Extract from an email sent to me by Anne, received in July 2008. Anne's case will be discussed in the next chapter.

Etablis *threatening the dominant social order?*
Many members of the GP spent time in prison after the group was officially dissolved in May 1970, and this experience contributed to and reinforced their identity conversion. Indeed, the prison, as a total institution, strengthened the extraordinary nature of the experience of being an *établi.* Moreover, the loss of civil rights associated with imprisonment accentuated the break with their former social identities and closed off some possible exits from the *établi movement.* Colette said:

> I was given a two weeks' suspended sentence, had my civil rights revoked and was banned from returning to [area around] Doubs... And that, when you're 22-23, politics was finished! [...] I didn't kill anyone but Capital was so afraid that the repression was terrible! When the farmers asked me to be on their ballot, that would have been an anchor for me, it would have made us legal, but that repression we had been subject to, and having your civil rights revoked, it stopped us young people returning to civilian life.

At the same time, having an experience of prison was a significant form of symbolic capital, in a specific context (1970-1972) where repression was proof of the threat that the *établis* posed to the social order. At other points in her interview, Colette thus associates this repression with the efficiency of her work as an *établi.* More generally, we can hypothesise that if repression often seems disproportionate to the facts (Paul was sentenced to three months of prison for having denounced unfair dismissals in the factory), it is because the penalties do not merely sanction the illegal acts, but also the social transgression. Indeed, through their very existence, these social migrants may well represent a (symbolic) threat to the social order, because they abolish class barriers in their own trajectories. Through the symbolic reversal that their status as *établis* represents, they are, in a certain sense, working against social reproduction.

The political, professional and familial costs of ending the établi experience

For Colette, the end to her experience as an *établi* was all the more violent because it was imposed on her. In 1974, the GP was dissolved and the father of her children left her. The causes of this separation can be found in the inseparable connection between the political, family, and professional spheres of the couple. They got married in 1967 and remained faithful to the revolutionary cause until 1974, when both political organisation and conjugal ties were dissolved. Colette's case represents an ideal type, because there is no possibility to renegotiate one's identity in such a brutal end to her role. The

return to everyday life is thus marked by "a period of identity incoherence, of which serious somatization is a strong symptom" (Pudal, 2005, p. 163), characterised by the impossibility of maintaining personal integrity. When no form of continuity is possible, what remains is "regression to primary *habitus*" (Dobry, 1986). Colette returned to live in Marseille, to her family home, where she picked up her studies and raised her children, making her living as a teacher in the private sector (she did not have the degrees required to teach in public schools). In the early 1980s she married again, this time to a high school teacher, a practicing Catholic, and became involved in a religious group with him. But this attempt to repress her past as an *établi* was in vain. Colette separated, began psychoanalysis, and set out in search for former Maoist comrades, to try and pick up the pieces of this broken thread. "Everywhere I went I looked for Maoists, every time," she said during our interview. The limits of a sociological analysis of this tragic quest for a confiscated identity are clear. Yet we can hypothesise that the psychological troubles that Colette has suffered from since 1974 are not unconnected to her inability to mourn for her lost leftist identity. In this respect, her trajectory echoes those of the (many) '68ers who committed suicide in the 1970s and 1980s.

The end of Paul's experience as an *établi* was much happier, and reveals – by comparison with Colette's – the conditions for professional conversion from a revolutionary past.

Paul left Sochaux for Belfort at the end of 1972, and once again tried to find a job in a factory before participating in a movement in support of sexual freedom for students. He was sanctioned by the GP for this involvement, which was considered bourgeois. Paul in turn criticised the organisation for "turning its back on all the new struggles: youth, feminist movements etc." He turned towards these causes as a travelling companion on the road to Larzac, or Besançon, in support of the Lip workers.

Paul's experience as an *établi* came to a close more progressively than Colette's, which made it easier; the principle of conversion lying in the time it takes for dispositions to evolve. After having suffered various setbacks in Belfort (he never lasted very long in a given factory), Paul returned to Paris to finish his studies. His decision to leave his experience as an *établi* behind him was linked to the increased costs associated with this action, given that the symbolic returns he had benefited from waned over time and extreme-left activism was increasingly frowned upon. Like for so many others, the fatigue of his revolutionary objectives (in the face of a revolution that was so long coming), as well as the need for social reintegration, eventually got the best of his activism:

> [*What was your motivation to stop being an établi?*] I'd say it was the era [...]
> There is a personal calculation on one hand, like rushing into a dead-end
> street (*long silence*) and the feeling that the pursuit of May '68 would no
> longer continue on a single track [...] So the GP being dissolved wasn't
> such a drama for me [...] The spirit of the times had shifted, both for the
> proles and for us: historically it was no longer a Messianic period.

When he returned to Paris, Paul was put in contact with Robert Linhart,
through an activist friend, and worked with him for a time on a study of the
sociology of work.[21] However, given the lack of stable prospects in this sector,
and with the help of a former comrade, Paul found work with the newspaper
Liberation.[22] This opportunity allowed him to reconcile his aspirations of
perpetuating May '68, whilst also achieving social reintegration, after his
years as an *établi*:

> At that time, at *Libé*, it was like, we dissolve the GP, but we keep the NRP on
> one hand and *Liberation* on the other, both extremes [...] the idea was that
> to be on the lookout for what happens next, the rebirth of the revolution
> in a way, we had to have an instrument for debate, for contact with the
> people. [*Did you still see yourself as a revolutionary?*] Yes and no, because
> I began to get enormously involved professionally. *Libé* was an expanding
> institution where you could do so many things, it was an extraordinary
> opportunity to make something of yourself, a new form of total experience.

Thus, for Paul (but the schema is valid for many ex-'68ers) *Libération* ap-
peared to be one of the possible answers to the "conditions for the possibility
of perpetuating a 'political youth', and saving past ideals, even though
everything surrounding it had changed" (Collovald and Neveu, 2001, p. 79).
The newspaper allowed Paul to convert his dispositions for revolutionary
action into the professional sphere in a way that was progressive and invis-
ible on an everyday level. Moreover, he found himself in a social position
with significant symbolic capital in activist circles in the 1970s and 1980s:
"When you realise after a few years that you're at a dead-end, personally
and collectively, it hurts... I don't know what would have happened to me
without *Libé*, it literally saved me, by allowing me to manage a whole lot
of contradictions."

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21   The conversion of far-left activists to the study of social sciences is the subject of a specific
discussion at the end of the chapter. See Box 4.
22   *Liberation* remains one of France's three most important daily newspapers.

After having been editor of the social desk, before moving onto the news desk, Paul was eventually fired in 1989 following disagreements on the political evolution of the newspaper. If *Libération* allowed him to perpetuate his political ideals whilst obtaining social reintegration, the very specific nature of this transitional space was made clear in his inability to find an equivalent work environment. "The constantly renewed reprieve" (Bourdieu, 1978, p. 18) that his work as a journalist at *Libération* provided him came to an end. He worked at *Infos-Matin* for two years, participated in the launching of several (ephemeral) newspapers, accepted a job at the (Catholic) weekly paper *La Vie,* just to pay the bills, and then resigned. Partly unsuited for the labour market that he had entered through the back door, via his activism, Paul found himself unemployed. When I met him, he was recently retired, on a small pension, after long years of unemployment.

Although they are difficult to compare in numerous respects, the two trajectories analysed here share prolonged experiences of overcoming social barriers; this left biographical imprints that we can try to summarise here. Firstly, the political action of an *établi* was the source of situations of downward mobility (more or less accentuated depending on the experiences in question). The cost of reintegration was all the greater for the *établis* who, like Colette and Paul, had given up their university studies to work in the factories. However, if they did not return to the professional spheres that they had begun their training for, this was partly because the experience of social transgression led to new professional appetites. As a professional journalist Paul was able to convert his past political experience into the professional sphere, and remain faithful to it:

> Finding myself in the sociology of work or in journalism, for me it's almost like being an *établi*: 'no investigation, no right to speak!' [*he is quoting Mao again here*] If you can't be an *établi* you have to at least bend down to pick the flowers, if you stay on your horse, you're just a rider and nothing more... I continued to investigate in very different social areas, and my experience served me well of course: I had seen what work in a factory was like up close!

After leaving business school in his final year and spending six years as an *établi* in a factory, Colette's then husband moved into sociology (1974-1975). Prolonged experiences of the breakdown in social barriers thus left lasting impacts on the professional desires of these young men and women. In different ways, sometimes painfully, they converted their militant interest for "the people" into a professional interest in the working classes, in investigation

(journalistic or sociological) or in the breakdown in social barriers. These social migrants filled positions that did not (really) correspond to their titles. They were moved by aspirations that did not (really) correspond to their qualifications. They frequently found themselves in contact with working-class actors in their professional lives, or had cultural practices that did not (really) correspond to those of their colleagues etc. Ultimately, the experience of overcoming social barriers seems to have become constituent of their way of being in the world.

Workers at university: Gilles, from postal worker to professor

Whilst certain students were "getting down off their horses" to go and "investigate" among the masses, workers, employees and farmers were going the opposite way (Pagis, 2009, p. 430-444), coming into contact with students and intellectuals. Gilles' trajectory sheds light on this aspect of class transgression.

Gilles was born in 1943 in a working-class suburb of Paris, where his father had a stall at the market and his mother worked in a factory and then as a secretary in a bank. His parents divorced when he was three and Gilles was raised by his mother and step-father (an Armenian invalid who had caught tuberculosis whilst in captivity). Gilles grew up in Grasse; his family was poor and they did not discuss politics. They did read a lot (in particular the *Canard Enchaîné*)[23] however, and he developed a taste for reading early in life. Gilles repeated a year at school in order to sit the exams to become a teacher, but he failed. He started work at fifteen, as a courier for the telegraph and telephone company (PTT).[24] He joined the CGT union shortly afterwards, and then joined the Communist Party in 1960, his political conscience becoming more accentuated with the Algerian war.[25]

In 1962 Gilles passed the internal exam in the PTT and was appointed as a "switchboard girl"[26] in the Central Inter-Archival Offices in Paris. He was then 19 years old, lived in a company residence, and was an activist with the PCF. This is when he met his future wife, Marlène, also a Communist from

23 The *Canard Enchaîné* is a satirical political newspaper.
24 His job consisted in transporting letters and parcels from office to office.
25 After an initial telephone interview with Gilles (8 July 2008), we began an intensive email correspondence. Between July and December 2008, Gilles sent me more than 30 emails, and attached documents responding to my questions.
26 The "*démoiselles de téléphone*" or switchboard girls were most often recruited among young unmarried women, hence their name.

a working-class family. It is important to emphasise the homogamy of this first union, given that Gilles' subsequent partners were from increasingly privileged social backgrounds. Gilles went to the (Communist) party schools during this period, which provided a kind of substitute school and reinforced his disposition for learning (Ethuin, 2003). They were married in 1963, and their daughter Nathalie was born the following year, whilst they were living in a hotel room, waiting for access to public housing. In order to mind their daughter, Gilles worked at night whilst Marlène worked during the days.

Up until this point, Gilles had presented all the characteristics of the sub-group situated in the lower left-hand quadrant of Figure 7 of the previous chapter, mapping the futures of the '68ers interviewed. He is male, from a working-class background, a PCF activist, his political opinions were set before '68, and he was working at the time of the events. But his meeting with Claudine,[27] in 1967, would begin his social and political shift.

1967-1968: romance, social transgression and break from the PCF
Gilles fell in love with a young upwardly mobile student from a working-class background, who was an activist with the UJCml.

> With Claudine, I discovered another kind of love, enriched by the intellectual stimulation that she brought me. [The University of] Nanterre, political radicalism, brilliant friends. It was the first time I had had contact with this kind of people, and I saw discussions between students, between politicised intellectuals [...] In the evenings I went to pick her up, but I was just a little prole ...

He continued living with his wife and being an activist at the PCF, but had an increasingly distant and critical relationship with the party. Gilles went with Claudine to the Nanterre Campus on 22 March 1968. He went on strike in May, and participated in the general assemblies in his workplace (he was very shy, and fainted the first time he had to speak in public). But he was rapidly requisitioned to manage the emergencies in the Inter-Archives Service. He worked night-shift, went home to look after his daughter in the morning and met Claudine in the Latin Quarter in the afternoon. The "immense happiness" of the "suspended time" that May '68 represented for him is inextricably linked to his romantic affair – May '68 was also an opening up of sexual possibilities – and the breakdown in social barriers that he experienced daily in the Latin Quarter:

27   Claudine was introduced to him through a friend met during military service.

> May '68!!! We were so in love, Claudine and I, we were participating in
> something that deeply shook up society!!! [...] It was the little people who
> came, discussed, talked about their ideas, not just students... I remember
> young workers, not used to speaking in public, but wanting to.[28]

When the strike ended, both his salary and Marlène's went from roughly
800 to 1300 francs, but Gilles was one of those young workers who tried to
delay the return to work, and who felt betrayed by the attitude of the PCF
(Vigna, 2007):

> The Grenelle agreements did not make the activists I knew jump for
> joy (nor me either), on the contrary, because for us, it meant the end of
> a movement, and we dreamed of it going so much further. [...] We had
> tasted our ability to act. There were still a few of us who believed that it
> was possible to make things change again.

Shortly afterwards, he was transferred to another telephone station, where
the attitude of the other communist activists towards him ("they spread the
rumour I was gay") confirmed his break away from the PCF.

1968-1972 the opening of possibilities becomes concrete in Vincennes
In September of 1968 Claudine returned to university, and encouraged
Gilles to enrol as well. His aspirations of social mobility, reinforced by
socially improbable encounters with activists before and during May '68
(Vigna and Zancarini-Fournel, 2009), became feasible with the decision
to make Vincennes University accessible to those who had not passed the
baccalaureat. Gilles enrolled in law and was an active militant within the
GP in Vincennes, whilst still working at the PTT:

> At the time, I thought that law would allow me to learn to fight against
> injustice on a collective level... I put myself in the current of the ideas of
> the time, halfway between Marxist and anti-authoritarian ideas. I was
> sure that I didn't want to become a manager to implement orders, and
> to be complicit in the exploitation of labour, so returning to study was a
> way to better construct my theoretical bases... And it was also a centre
> of active militancy – that's where it was all happening, where we were
> preparing the change...

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28   Extract from an email received 17 August 2008.

Quite quickly Gilles and his fellow law students (many of whom also did not have the *baccalaureat*) demanded scholarships be open to all students, even those without high school qualifications. They then launched themselves into the creation of a bachelor of political science. Some of them were then employed in administrative positions, like Gilles' best friend, also a student at Vincennes who did not have his *baccalaureat* (and also among the interviewees here), who became a secretary in the sociology department and remained there until his retirement.

For Gilles, the events of May-June '68 are thus the source of a threefold shift: social (through returning to study and gaining a degree in sociology), political (breaking away from the PCF and moving towards the far-left), and familial. He finally separated from his wife in 1972, the same year that he met Nicole, who "was very involved in the Tunisian protest movement at Vincennes, which I would discover through her," and with whom he said he "began to think more freely." Gilles associates the breakdown of his marriage with the opening up of "the imaginable," and mentions again the rewards of his new union: each new partner thus corresponds to Gilles' aspirations (cultural, political and social) at the time of their life together, and helped to increase his social capital by introducing him (or facilitating his entry) into the circles he aspired to. These romantic encounters thus played a central role in his trajectory: launching, accompanying or updating his social and political shifts. After the homogamy of his first marriage, his other relationships were characterised instead by hypergamy.[29]

Vincennes thus represents a particular space in which the trajectories we have explored in this section intersect:[30] Gérard Miller,[31] a student and Maoist activist who became an *établi* in a factory regularly saw Gilles at the meetings of the GP. But his idealistic representations of "the people" prevented him seeing Gilles as one of its representatives, even though the latter continued to work at the PTT, in particularly difficult conditions.

> I had a good laugh the day that Gérard Miller or André Glucksman[32] told me at the GP that I should go be an *établi*! [*How did you react?*] Oh, well,

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29 This term refers to couples that are formed with a person of higher social status or background than oneself.

30 Claude Fossé-Poliak deals with this question of improbable social encounters based on a study of university students without the baccalaureat enrolled at Vincennes in the 1980s (Fossé-Poliak, 1992).

31 Gérard Miller is a psychoanalyst, a University Professor and a film director.

32 André Glucksman was a French writer and activist; he was one of the "new philosophers".

those great intellectuals and me I'm just a little guy who didn't graduate…
I didn't dare burst out laughing! […] I was never considered like a worker,
it's funny… Well I guess, I mostly worked nights so I was often on campus.

Swapped destinies, misrepresentations – did all this lead to mutual mis-
understandings? What did these two groups bring to each other? To this
question, Gilles answered, "I have the impression that I contributed my
youth and my energy and they gave me a quality of thinking that I admired…
There were lots of discussions, even though we also operated with slogans,
but I learnt an enormous amount."

These intellectuals were the incarnation of the "culture" to which Gilles
aspired, even as they rejected it as bourgeois, and sought to be re-educated
by "the masses." Can we conclude that these encounters were born of misun-
derstandings? To a certain extent yes, even if only because they responded to
expectations and interests that had nothing in common, as Gilles stressed:

> Between choosing to live 'like the people' and really being the little guys,
> confronted with the absolute necessity to work to pay for your food, your
> children's food, housing etc. there was a fundamental difference that it
> was very difficult to talk about.

Another interviewee, Pierre, has a darker perspective on this. He was the son
of working-class parents whose union responsibilities at the CGT brought
him into contact with the students of the Union of Communist Students
(UEC) in the Ecole Normale Supérieure, shortly before 1968:

> I was like their mascot you know (*he laughs*), I don't know if you have read
> Rotman's book *Génération*, but at one point they talk about a turner from
> Rue d'Ulm [the street of the prestigious *Ecole Normale Supérieure*], well
> that was me! Some say everyone has their token Jew, their priest, I was
> their token worker! […] What was important was to have been involved
> in these movements, the education, the exchanges, the ideas all stayed
> with me… but the people no… I didn't keep in touch… I have to say that
> intellectuals are so egotistical […] We clutched at the dust from under their
> shoes, but they didn't remember which mat they'd wiped their feet on…[33]

Although often ephemeral, these encounters opened doors and legitimised
aspirations hitherto considered heretical in previous social networks. They

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33   Extract from an interview conducted on 8 March 2008.

functioned as objective evidence of the perpetuation of the breakdown in social barriers to which both groups aspired in May-June '68. The existence of activist spaces like the GP in Vincennes, in the political context after May '68 made these socially improbable encounters possible. Moreover, the connections between the world of the workers and the students, widely fantasized during the events of May-Jun '68, found the objective conditions for concretization in this space. The University of Vincennes therefore functioned, for a time, as a site for the possible synthesis of activism, university studies and professional activities.[34]

For the period between 1969 and 1972, Gilles thus joined the "political leftism" sub-group in Figure 7, in the south of the factorial plane (see Chapter 3). In the years that followed, he continued his movement across the plane, and eventually reached the "countercultural leftism" sub-group on the right.

1973-1981: conversion to leftist counterculture

The context that devalued far-left groups, as well as the development of political environmentalist groups led to a radical redirection in Gilles' activism. Still a student at Vincennes (now in sociology) and still working at the PTT, he said:

> Maoism began to regress, the GP decayed… and I changed lovers, so my centres of interest changed to… at that time there were more anti-authoritarian and environmentalist movements emerging and they seemed closer to my ideas. With the Women's Liberation Movement (MLF) that I'm extremely close to … and our shattered hope for the proletarian revolution led us to see things in a different light.

He met his new partner, Joëlle, in 1974; she was an anti-authoritarian, feminist environmentalist, and with her, Gilles converted his dispositions for activism into countercultural leftism. For a time, he dreamed of going "back-to-the-land" and even obtained a vocational certificate in repairing agricultural machinery. These aspirations must be seen in light of the increasingly untenable mismatch between his work at the PTT and his extra-professional activities (activist, academic or amorous), as well as the political context in the field of activism in the mid-1970s.

After seventeen years at the PTT, and now quite unsuited to his position, Gilles resigned in 1977. Once again it was a new romantic encounter that provoked his professional shift. Gilles became a community youth worker,

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34   Roberte, a feminist activist from the alternative crèche at Vincennes, became a crèche employee when it was institutionalised in 1972, before being appointed to the university cleaning service when the crèche was closed.

a profession that was typical of those that were redefined over the course of the 1970s due to the importation of dispositions for activism (Muel-Dreyfus, 1983). He quit after one year to explore a broader palette of activities, with a different romantic partner at each stage. Retrospectively, he has difficulty accepting certain biographical phases which he only discussed with me after several exchanges of emails:

> After a period of unemployment, I decided to make the most of the benefits awarded to the unemployed to enrol at the chamber of commerce as a travelling salesman. I sold oysters, and then jewellery, I had a crêpe restaurant for the summer of 1981. We were in this period that was drowning in "liberal" ideology (the "Long live the crisis!" of *Libé* and Montand")[35] and, I think, because I was alone (that's the only excuse I can think of) I was partly involved in that.[36]

At the end of the 1970s, as the alternative movements were running out of steam, and separated from his former social networks, Gilles was tempted by the quest for individual salvation and internal exile.[37] By accepting to discuss the hesitant steps that marked his trajectory between 1977 and 1981, Gilles provided a wealth of material in which we can see the hesitations, incoherencies, adjustments and adaptations that characterise the processes of renegotiating one's identity at the critical moment of political disengagement and social reintegration. This key moment occurs in many of the different trajectories of the '68ers interviewed here.

A class migrant, professor of social sciences
The political context was again decisive for the next phase of his trajectory. Gilles benefited from the wave of teaching assistant appointments after the election of François Mitterrand. In December 1981 he became a high school French teacher. He returned to his studies in sociology once again and met Nanou, a teacher at a vocational high school. He graduated with an

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35   He is referring to the television show "*Vive la Crise*", presented by left-wing singer/actor Yves Montand, on February 22 1984, which focused on the neoliberal aspect of the then economic crisis. *Libération* (Libé), ran a front-page story with the same headline the following day.

36   Here we can see the great advantage of being able to see the interviewees again (or correspond with them). Without these email exchanges that followed our first interview I would not have been able to deconstruct the apparent coherence of the trajectory of an employee who did not graduate from high school, who returned to study to become a teacher.

37   Gilles confessed to me, just as I was writing up the thesis (in an email of 17 April 2009) that during this period he "drank a fair bit".

Honours degree in 1983, joined the union and was appointed to a position as assistant teacher in social and economic sciences in 1985. His son Julien was born the following year. Gilles passed the CAPES teaching exam in the mid-1990s, went through further marital problems, and asked to be transferred to Brittany in 1996. Shortly afterwards, he met his current partner, who is a librarian.

Gilles has been involved in the union since he became a teacher, and has continued to vote for far-left parties in the first round of the elections (sometimes alternating with a vote for the Greens). He continues to go to demonstrations regularly and perseveres in his hope for radical change: "After 1968, I always thought that we had sowed a seed that would sprout one day. I'm beginning to find the latency period a bit long, but I still think that capitalism is the worst operating method, both for people and the planet."

Although the conditions that made Gilles' exceptional social mobility possible are to be found before May '68 (his early love of reading, his frustrated goal of becoming a teacher, his activism and the PCF schools, meeting Claudine), these events nevertheless served to legitimise his cultural aspirations, which he had previously experienced as a form of stigma (his work colleagues considered him strange because he did not share their musical, sporting and literary tastes). May '68 essentially enlarged the realm of possibilities for Gilles, subjectively at least (it added "the hope that it would be possible"). The University of Vincennes accepting students who did not have the *baccalaureat* provided the objective conditions to make this possible: the breakdown in social barriers and the encounters between intellectuals and workers were actually brought about in this environment. Considered "atypical" among his work colleagues at the PTT, not recognised as a worker in the GP at Vincennes, and considered as a "pseudo-student" by some of the university professors, Gilles shares the same relative social indetermination that characterised Paul and Colette. The experience of class transgression finally left its mark on Gilles' marital trajectory, punctuated by numerous separations and alliances that are far from anecdotal. Indeed Gilles' successive partners were from increasingly higher social backgrounds, which facilitated and accompanied his upward social mobility. Male hypergamy and class transgression through conjugal alliances[38] can thus be analysed as a biographical consequence of the breakdown in social barriers.

38   Indeed, female hypergamy (when a woman is in a relationship with a man of a higher social status than herself) is characteristic of most couples. Male hypergamy is on the other hand typical of upwardly mobile social trajectories.

Socially improbable encounters "overlooked"

The detailed analysis of Paul, Colette and Gilles' trajectories allows us to contribute to the history of how the social barriers between the worlds of students and workers were breached during and after May '68, which is often overlooked in the memory of these events. Several hypotheses can be put forward to account for this neglect. The ephemeral nature of these encounters is the most important; the fact that they may have led to contempt, resentment and disenchantment is another. Perhaps – or above all – we must seek the explanation in what their deadlocks made it difficult for the protagonists to accept: the dose of illusion and idealisation that fed their intersecting representations of "intellectuals" and "the people." It appears that grief over the illusions invested in these experiences of breaking down barriers became a screen to their "rehabilitation" in memory. It is as though the entrepreneurs of the "official" memory of May '68 (Sommier, 1994) were more interested in discrediting these encounters as errors of youth, or even excluding them from the trajectories of '68ers, which they (re)construct to their advantage, rather than recognising the hopes and the illusions that then underpinned these representations of the world.[39]

Although they were ephemeral and statistically rare, these encounters were decisive for the different protagonists, to the extent that they were veritable catalysts for shifts (social, professional and conjugal) that were often permanent. Of course, the workers who came into contact with Maoist activists were not just any workers, and the social mobility that these meetings induced was preceded by pre-existing aspirations. The post-'68 conjuncture thus made it possible to create atypical forms of intellectual sociability and localized experiences of social transgression – through the *établi* movement on one hand, and through the University of Vincennes opening access to non-high school graduates on the other.

This social weightlessness, which is visible in the difficulty in finding one's own place in the social world is undoubtedly one of the main consequences of prolonged experiences of social transgression, as Gilles puts it:

I avoid asking myself [about my social position] (*he laughs*) [...] no, I have a capacity for reflection... I feel exploited as a prole, as an employee but

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39   Whereas, as Bernard Pudal put it so elegantly, "the populist illusions of a whole generation of intellectuals is worth the disillusioned cynicism of those who, having returned without ever having left, have learnt nothing." (Pudal, 1991, p. 58).

able to talk about things... with you for example... And of course, social classification is difficult and artificial, you know that as well as I do![40]

As the incarnation of social deregulation at the individual level (or even conjugal level, through heterogamy), in a way, these social migrants have perpetuated the opening of biographical possibilities that they experienced in May '68, and have made their trajectories an instrument for the symbolic manipulation of the future. Of course, the comparative destinies that we have looked at here, beginning on two opposite poles of the social space, have not completely converged. But they have come closer, due to the biographical consequences of activism and in particular the experiences of breaking down social barriers (leading to upward social mobility for some, downward for others).

Other sectors of the social world also became havens for socially mobile individuals (upward and downward) in the 1970s, particularly around the (re)invention of "new petit-bourgeois professions" (Bourdieu, 1978). The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to one of these professions: community workers.

Activism through popular education

Whereas for some, moving into professional activity meant the end of activism, for others, "the choice of profession can also stem from – and that is a different explicative logic – a realistic arbitration regarding the possibilities of making a difference in a world more resistant that it initially seemed, in order to change it" (Neveu, 2008, p. 313). Several collective profiles of former-'68ers make up the sub-group that are *activists through their professions*. In this group we find former leftist that have become primary teachers, who fight against the mechanisms of social reproduction through subversive education practices.[41] It also includes feminists who moved into professions related to the condition of women;[42] interviewees who converted their

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40   Why Gilles found an interest in writing more than 40 pages, some of them quite intimate, in answer to the questions of a young sociologist, begs further consideration. Suffice to say that this interest reflects once again his pleasure in intellectual exchanges with women of high cultural capital.

41   This profile (presented in detail in the thesis) is particularly characteristic of the teachers in experimental schools interviewed, like Gégé (Pagis, 2008).

42   Such as Annick, born in 1949, the daughter of socialist teachers, who extended her feminist action into her profession as a "militant" midwife and through her participation in numerous associations to advance the cause of women, legal abortions, and infant and maternal health.

interests for "the people" into a professional interest for the working classes. In exploring the impact that these people had on community professions and vice versa (as well as on the social sciences, see Box 4 at the end of this chapter), we will analyse the room for manoeuvre between the interviewees' roles and their positions. This will reveal various attitudes towards those roles: conformity, detachment, or militancy (Lagroye, 1997).

In order to do this, our analysis will focus on the trajectories of François (born in 1945) and Louis (born in 1947), who were both active in the community sector in Nantes in the 1970s. The convergence in their paths at this time is all the more interesting to analyse given that nothing predisposed them – whether in terms of social origin or their specific entries into their careers – to meet, become colleagues, and finally to become friends.

François, revolution through popular education

François was born in 1945 in Morocco, where his father was stationed as a soldier. He did not know his mother and was raised by his paternal grandmother in Algeria, where his father was transferred to a position as a public servant. He went to a Jesuit primary school, then to a Catholic high school in Algiers, obtaining his high school diploma at age 16. Close to the FLN he was forced to leave Algeria in January 1962, after having run-ins with the police and OAS militants. Following his father's wishes, he then entered the air force school at Salon-de-Provence to become a pilot. But after obtaining a diploma as an electronics technician, he was dismissed for "inaptitude for military discipline." This was in 1966 and François "went on the road, as a beatnik,"[43] with some actor friends. He grew his hair long, made jewellery and leather bags and lived surrounded by artists. After a year of itinerant bohemian life, he enrolled in psychology at the University of Toulouse in 1967. There, he became close to a group of anarchists, children of Spanish republican emigrants. From February 1968, there was significant agitation on campus and François' activism rapidly became his main activity.

François invested the events of May '68 with a range of interests: his virile and anti-militarist dispositions were activated in confrontations with the police and aggressive workerism (with the Trotskyist JCR but also the

Marie's trajectory, mentioned in Chapter 2, is also emblematic of this form of professional conversion of feminism. By becoming a marriage counsellor, Marie contributed to the invention of a profession adapted to the new political aspirations (stemming from May '68) of these young graduates from the middle classes.

43   The quotations from François used in this section come from the interview conducted with him in Nantes, on 5 May 2005, at the neighbourhood house that he runs.

workers union CGT), his anti-institutional mood was expressed through drugs and the counterculture, and his cultivated abilities were put at the service of study groups (close to the anarchists) on theatre and revolutions. He did not sit his exams in 1968; for a few months he frequented the circles of militant graphic novelists in Toulouse, before returning to the road again with a friend. Fuelled by LSD and in search of alternatives to a "system" they rejected, the two friends planned to travel to India.[44] But François' journey ended in Nantes where he met his future wife, Monique, who was a maternity assistant in the hospital there:

> there I met the most beautiful woman in the world (*he laughed*)! The mother of my children... so I didn't go, and it was the right thing to do because my pal came back like that (*he gestures to indicate thinness*) completely stoned, hooked... have to say, at the time we really went at it, drugs, good music too... everything that was part of our search for a different life, a better life. We didn't really know where we were going, but we tried to reset everything and start again differently.

He moved in with Monique, continued to make a meagre living from selling jewellery, rejected the idea of being an employee or participating in elections, and withdrew somewhat, waiting for something to give meaning to his existence. This came with the birth of his daughter, Fleur, in 1971, which provoked new residential and professional stability, and led to a reinvestment in activism:

> In 1969-1970, politically I did nothing, it was a bit of a low point, I may have had a bit too much of stuff you shouldn't... and when my daughter was born and we went to Malakoff, then I got involved again, there was nothing in that neighbourhood!

François began to take on casual work as an electrician, to contribute to the material needs of his daughter and Monique's son.[45] They moved into a state subsidised flat in the working-class neighbourhood of Malakoff, and the lack of sociocultural structures in the area provided François with a new meaning

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44   If these parallel strategies for exile (geographic and internal) in the wake of May 68 are more characteristic of the "leftist counterculture" of the youngest population (see Chapter 5), it is interesting to note that they are not lacking in the biographical horizons of other groups of '68ers' trajectories. They constitute possibilities which will be accomplished for some – more or less temporarily – whilst remaining projects and aspirations for others.

45   François officially recognised Monique's son, Gaël, born just before the beginning of their relationship, as his own.

for his life – "revolution through popular education."[46] He joined an association that aimed to open a community centre in Malakoff, before joining the PCF, the main militant structure in the neighbourhood: "I didn't really know what I wanted to do professionally, so I looked after the children, whilst being an activist, I was a permanent member of the association, but not employed, and I did that day and night [...] I looked for people who were active and their political affiliations didn't concern me much, as long as they were working towards the same goals as me and they were really active on the ground..."

His precarious material situation (his family essentially survived on Monique's salary as a maternity assistant) and his lack of clear professional perspectives, contributed to his gradual shift from a militant attitude towards community action, to a more professional involvement. His meeting with Louis also contributed to this evolution.

Louis: community work through formal qualifications

Louis was born in 1947 in Brittany, in a working-class Communist family. His father was a railway worker, an activist in the PCF (until the events in Hungary), and a unionist with the CGT. His mother, a shopkeeper's daughter, was working as a waitress when she met his father. Their three children were brought up Catholic (although their parents were not practicing), and grew up in an environment where political discussions were an everyday event. Louis thus developed a left-wing political conscience in the cradle, so to speak, but did not engage in his own political activities before 1968. In spite of his good results at school, he was expelled many times for lack of discipline, and repeated several years. In 1967-1968 Louis was twenty years old and in his final year of secondary school.

In May '68 he was involved in occupying his *lycée* in Rennes. This active participation was the source of a socialisation by awareness raising:

I felt like I was a part of a great movement, and we felt like it was led by people who had more experience, more practice, so there was a constructive side to it that was interesting [...] At the time we were experiencing it, it was all parties and jubilation, organisation everywhere, general assemblies, so many speeches – we didn't even understand everything – but we took it all in fast. It was very enriching. Today there are things that I use in my work that I tested and discovered during that period! The experience of direct democracy and especially as it had reached an extent that no one had seen coming, well we

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46 A phrase taken from his questionnaire but which he used several times during our discussion.

realised that we had real power! [...] It was a realisation of so many things all at once, through collective analysis, general assemblies, discussions...

The consequences of activism in May '68 are all the more important for Louis because he was not yet engaged in higher education. He was thus faced with a wide range of biographical possibilities:

In September 1968, I had to do something... I'd been an organiser in a community centre for a few years, and I'd met people I knew were close to the PCF, but they were more social activists than political activists [...] I enjoyed working as a community leader, and in the wake of May '68 the vocational course "Social Careers" was set up in Rennes, mostly by Communist teachers, so I was among the first graduates.

Louis had developed a taste for sociocultural work before 1968, a militant occupation that he pursued alongside his studies at secondary school. But the events of May-June 1968 reinforced and politicised his aspirations to be involved with the working classes. The creation of specific qualifications established the possibility of making a living from this activity, previously considered simply as a volunteer occupation (Lebon, 2003).

Following a similar process to that of Francine Muel-Dreyfus for community organisers (Muel-Dreyfus, 1983), the importation of militant aspirations and dispositions into the professional sphere of community work, in the context of the institutionalisation of the community sector, had a significant impact on the role of community organisers in the 1970s.

1972: The confrontation between militant approaches to community work and official qualifications

Louis became a community worker after validating his vocational diploma in "Social Careers," through an internship at the Youth and Cultural Centre in Colombes. He returned to Nantes to work in 1972, to be closer to his partner. The extracts below compare the way that François and Louis remember their encounter in the neighbourhood of Malakoff in 1972. The different ways they recount this experience reflect the contrasting sources of their interest for professional community work:

François

Louis, at the beginning I was his boss (*he laughs*) and then we became colleagues... I also owe him a lot professionally...

[*But why were you his boss?*] I was the president of the association that asked for the construction of equipment and for the appointment of a community worker to begin the action and to set up the community centre, and that's how we got Louis to come... in 1972 I think.

[*And you were not an employee at the time?*] No, I was an organiser not an employee, but I did only that, activism. [...] I became involved with the Francas [...] because I wanted to be a community worker. I wasn't one at the time, *I had a knack for it but not the training.* So I became the director of a youth centre that we set up at Malakoff, at the same time as I was president of the association for a community centre. And so I had to get some training and at the time the qualification really was a diploma in popular education [...] and so I was trained and became a trainer at the Francas.[47]

Louis

I arrived in Nantes in 1972, it was during the big development of community centres... which were a work environment that totally fitted with my more social aspirations. *I wanted to be able to extend what I had experienced in terms of individual involvement in my neighbourhood in 1968 into my profession.* [...] I think that François would say the same thing, but he had a different background, but all the same it was when I arrived as community worker in Malakoff that he pulled his socks up and became a community worker too. [...]

I began my profession in Malakoff, where we had to mobilise people, convince them, organise them, and he very quickly became involved, first as a volunteer and then, when we had organised the role and the voice of the inhabitants within the centre, then he became one of the leaders. And it was only after that that he worked as a youth worker and then the structure he was working for suggested he become a permanent worker and paid his training as part of the job. And *at that point we became colleagues.* It took a few years...

47   The Francas, also known as the FFC (The Frank Comrades) relied on a network that was already in place (including the secular scouting movement, the youth hostel movement, the Ligue de l'enseigment, and other movements in favour of alternative democratic education), drawing on working-class teachers. This movement had ties to the left (the radical socialist party and communist party) and was often also linked to the public sector. (Lebon, 2003, p. 14).

Francois claims to be the activist genitor of the community centre in Malakoff and explains that he "got [a community worker] to come" (Louis in this instance) for political reasons, whereas Louis considers that he coordinated the creation of the centre and therefore enabled François to become a professional in that context. Their comments underline the combats and issues surrounding the definition of a still poorly delimited sector; at the crossroads between activism and employment, between professional and volunteer work, between political and social activities, on the cusp of popular education and community work. By specifying that François "didn't have the same background" as him, Louis underlines the different sources of their interest in community work, which nevertheless led them to the same working-class neighbourhood in Nantes.

Thus, in 1972, and the date is significant, the "activist" – older, more bourgeois, with little training ("I had the knack but not the training") – met the young professional community worker – a recent graduate from a working-class background moving up in the social world. This is a feature of community work; like other ambiguous professions, it is ideal for saving "unqualified 'inheritors' from downclassing, and to provide 'parvenus' with an approximate pay-off for their devalued titles" (Bourdieu [1979] trans. 1984 p. 150). The comparison of François and Louis' perspectives thus sheds lights on the two prime registers (professional and militant) of legitimacy of community workers, which incarnate distinct, but non-exclusive, ways of "occupying the position." The fact that François followed a training program within the Francas between 1972 and 1974, also emphasises the need for social reintegration and the desire to distinguish oneself from amateurs:[48] "it *really was* a diploma in popular education," he insists.

1975-1983: the golden days of the popular education revolution

Like the humanitarian sector in the 1970s, the community sector functioned as a "market for self-realisation" (Dauvin and Siméant, 2002, p. 74). It constituted a space for the reconfiguration of social and political identities, and provided possibilities for the honourable conversion of activist resources accumulated during May '68 and in the years that followed. Its novelty, and the fact that it was not yet very institutionalised, allowed François to find his vocation whilst still considering himself an activist (the symbolic

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48   The same processes of devaluing amateurism have been observed in the professionalization of unionism (Guillaume and Pochic, 2009, p. 554)

aspect of reintegration), and still obtaining social reintegration (both professionally and materially). Re-establishing himself socially after a period of marginalisation, in a context of significant devaluing of far-left activism, and increasing appreciation of local and "concrete" actions, prevented François' downward trajectory and awarded him a degree of social recognition. For François:

> popular education was one of the best ways to take power, with a smile. It was transforming society through action. I thought, and I still believe, that it is through the development of popular education, culture, that it happens, and not anything else. It's access to knowledge that creates the conditions. And you can see it clearly, because they want to send fourteen-year-olds off to work again, without teaching them anything.[49]

Moreover, François seems to have found a certain form of notability in the neighbourhood of Malakoff, a symbolic capital that contributed to his social reintegration:

> In Malakoff, we were the soldiers of the Republic, along the lines of the village teacher historically. People stopped us in the street – 'hey, you'll see my kid Wednesday, right? And for the summer camp, I haven't had time to enrol him, but he's coming ok?!' I went to people's houses to fill out forms... And when I sold *Humanité Dimanche*[50] I could have sold two thousand if I'd had the time, there wasn't a parent who didn't take one! (*he laughs*) They didn't take it because they were party sympathisers, but because it was François. It was village life... a wonderful neighbourhood!

It was as though in this working-class neighbourhood François found the power and the hold on reality to which his social aspirations and his activist background gave him access, but which were otherwise denied by his lack of qualifications and the objective conditions of the labour market.

Louis and François worked together every day from 1972, became friends and even went on family holidays together. In 1974, they participated in the creation of the experimental school Ange-Guépin.[51] Together, they oversaw

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49   François is referring to a political proposal to lower the legal working age to fourteen, which was being debated at the time of the interview (February 2005), and against which he had demonstrated not long before.

50   *Humanité Dimanche* is the Sunday newspaper put out by the Communist party.

51   Part of the population of the study is made up of families who sent their children to this school in the 1970s and 1980s.

the recruitment and training programme for the first teaching staff at the open school, and trained the first teachers in active pedagogy. The two friends attempted to open a youth centre associated with the school but the project was never completed. Louis explains,

> We positioned ourselves, Francois and I as co-educators, and we wanted to find our place in the school and ensure coherence between the different educative spheres: during school and after school. And well, we never succeeded… The teachers were not opposed to it but they put it off… And there was never really any involvement of the cultural centre in the school… But as parents, yes, we had our place.

The notion of adult "co-educators" mobilised here by Louis, is also used more generally by the teachers of both schools, Ange-Guépin and Vitruve, as well as in the militant texts that challenged the school as an institution at the beginning of the 1970s. The rejection of a vertical pedagogic relationship that socialises the students to relations of authority and hierarchy led them to experiment with new roles for educators. The roles of children, teachers, community workers, and parents were thus redefined around the notion of co-educators. The scheme of the conversion of dispositions for protest into the critique of traditional pedagogical relations is thus characteristic of these activist community workers, as well as most of the teachers interviewed, who participated in redefining the forms of youth and community work during the 1970s (Chamboderon and Prévot, 1973, p. 317).

From 1972 to 1981 the militant and professional spheres of these two interviewees were thus one and the same. They were involved in various projects relating to popular education, including pedagogical experiment at Ange-Guépin, and were members of numerous neighbourhood groups. Louis thus expresses the feeling of "extending May '68 every day at work," by participating in the improvement of living conditions in working-class neighbourhoods. Alongside these engagements, François and Louis also participated in the anti-nuclear movement in Brittany, as well as the movement in Larzac. Yet they remained outside the canonical forms of counter cultural leftism of the time, such as communal living, back-to-the-land movements, and the challenge to the family as an institution. In response to the question of whether these experiences affected them, François and Louis responded:

François

"No, that wasn't my thing… I was about action for transforming society […] Maximum autonomy, creating responsible citizens… the slogan of the Francas was: the freest child possible in the most democratic society possible. That works through education and that was a motto I adopted […] I made the decision to try to push things forward from the inside rather than reinventing everything like others tried to do."

Louis

"No, that notion of back-to-the-land, I never felt it in my environment, even though I knew it existed… and well, you act in accordance with your thoughts and for me, that was – improving living conditions, eradicating a certain number of anomalies, but more to wipe out injustices…"

These comments underline the relative impermeability between the forms of post-'68 conversion that consisted, on one hand, in being an "activist through one's profession," and on the other adopting various communitarian utopias. This confirms the results of the factorial analysis we saw in the previous chapter. The belief in the political usefulness of a social action directed locally at people in difficulty, shared by actors that are also searching for a place in society, in order to transform it through their profession (population situated in the lower quadrants of the factorial plane), is indeed clearly opposed to the logic of withdrawing into the margins and rejecting the "system" (population situated at the right-hand side of the plane, analysed in the following chapter). These distinct forms of post-1968 conversion reflect social differences as well as differences in gender, age or forms of participation in the events of May-June '68. Here, at the beginning of the 1970s, the community sector provided François and Louis – who were both married to women from working-class backgrounds and had children to provide for – the possibility of continuing their militant commitment through the (re)invention of pedagogic action outside the school system.

1980s: professionalization and disenchantment

In 1981 François left Malakoff and moved to a more spacious home in a publicly subsidised low-rent estate (HLM) in a much less disadvantaged neighbourhood in central Nantes. "Louis stayed longer than I did in Malakoff… [*Why did you leave?*] I'd just had enough really… dog shit in the elevator… that was enough. I needed some air… I left Malakoff in 1981 […]

I went to another HLM, we had a wonderful 5-room apartment, 120 square meters, for two thousand francs [300euro] a month."

What had been an important part of François' militant approach – living with the working classes – had become a genuine burden ten years later. Indeed, the symbolic gratification associated with life in a HLM (positive associations with the activist and militant dimension, and local notability) gradually faded with the increasing professionalization of the community sector. In other words, the positive returns associated with militant action progressively disappeared with the professionalization of this sector, previously governed by logics of activism. François then worked as a community organiser in a neighbourhood house and kept in contact with Louis. They both had a difficult time during the 1980s, in particular due to the election of a new Mayor at the municipal elections of 1983. Michel Chauty, the newly elected right-wing Mayor, performed a radical restructuring of the community sector:

François	Louis
"I was completely side-lined because I'd been a manager in the previous association, and I was the union representative, so when the right came in they wanted us out, they didn't succeed, and I was put in a cupboard somewhere for three years, and during that time I went and got a degree in management, just for the fun of it."	"When the right came in in 1983 there was a desire to get control of things, because community work is always potentially dangerous, it can spark movements etc. Their argument was, we subsidise the associations, and then they openly call people to vote against us – which is clear at least! They couldn't fire me but my hands were tied…"

For both François and Louis, the 1980s were therefore a period of disenchantment. The professionalization of community work, and the new control of the sector by a right-wing municipality, as well as a national movement towards the rationalisation of the position of community workers all led to the brutal de-legitimisation of the militant attitudes towards their work that they had constructed over the years. François and Louis therefore lost the flexibility and the power to innovate and create that had made them so enchanted with this occupation in the first place. Now in their forties, their desire to change the world through their occupation began to falter, when faced with ongoing inequalities. They had to face up to the reality that the "revolution through popular education" had not taken place.

In addition to this, there was a certain backlash against the activism of previous years. What had been the main attraction of these professions in the 1970s, now led to fatigue, insecurity and sometimes conjugal separations. As François says,

I'm still a unionist, but I'm not a card-carrying a member any more… [*because of political disagreements*?] No… no… just fatigue you know. Lots of fatigue… We gave it everything. I probably even gave it bits of my kids… I spent my divorce there, because that was also linked to that, to my commitments, my job where I didn't count the hours I worked… It wasn't only that of course, I'm not looking for excuses, but you have almost no family life, outside of holidays, even on weekends. On Saturday I worked all day, there were often meetings at night.

François divorced at the end of the 1980s. Overinvestment in activism and in his profession also produced tensions in Louis' relationship; both he and his wife had had other partners for several years when they finally separated in the early 1990s.

The 1990s: re-enchantment and professional evolution

The left-wing victory in the 1989 municipal elections, with a programme in which the "*quartiers,*" particularly working-class neighbourhoods, were among the priorities of the new mayor, Jean-Marc Ayrault, led to increased prestige for the social and community sector. François was appointed the director of a neighbourhood house and rediscovered the flexibility and recognition that he had previously lost in his work. Louis came out of "hiding" (he had been working for some years in the office of family services) and was promoted to the position of technical advisor to community centres.

At the beginning of the '90s, in Malakoff, it was an election evening, the FN had won 20%, I was in the counting room and people were saying – 'how can that be possible, what can we do?' We were looking for concrete ways to prevent people rejecting each other, being afraid of other people, and so that's how the idea of having intercultural celebrations was born, which I suggested. The first one was at Malakoff, it was 'Mala-colour'. We had substantial support from the council; the representative was there all day. That led to other projects, we started to innovate… Even me, who hates football, I became president of the football club – there wasn't one anymore and the kids were dying for it, so I did it, that's my militant side!

The local political context is thus clearly essential in the perpetuation (or not) of the activist dimension of community work. François and Louis finally succeeded in maintaining (not without difficulty) a social position that, eventually, reinforced their belief in the political usefulness of their profession. François therefore explained his satisfaction in demonstrating alongside the young people he works with:

> That was nice because they were so many young people: the local *lycée* had all come out for the demonstration, we worked with them so I saw heaps of kids I knew from here, who played music, so I was happy to see them there, in the front rows, among the activists, those who are really involved, it makes you feel good, you know! [*You felt like you had succeeded at something?*] Yeah, our job is not to tell them what to do, but there is a side to it, like 'get involved, take a side, don't let them get away with it [...]' that's what I said to the kids at the demo on Saturday, a bit like an old soldier's speech: what do you have in your bag? Two or three beers? And where are your Molotov cocktails? (*he laughs*) You don't think it's time to get them out? (*he laughs*) Well, from my perspective, that's where we are [...] we need a big movement to get going, because we are moving towards a fascist society...

Today, François and Louis continue to demonstrate regularly, they vote PCF and far-left respectively for the first round of presidential elections, and they both voted no to the referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty. But they do admit a certain fatigue.[52] François says:

> I'm nearly retired and in fact, I have two choices. There are people who were communist activists at Malakoff who are today local representatives at Rezé, with Communist tendencies, who want to get out and who are looking for people take their place, in the same vein. So I'm hesitating between that, because that would mean accepting responsibilities, being on the other side – and then saying, I've had enough, seeing people are as stupid as they are, I'm not going to spend more than 40 years of my life to get there, that situation of gigantic egos... I don't get depressed because I act, you know, but it does get tiring [...] I think I'll go and buy myself a little holiday house in Corsica and that's it, because right now, I'm tired!

52   François Lebon has specified on this point that community work is one of the sectors people wish to leave the most. We may conclude that this fatigue is even stronger and more difficult for François to bear because his trajectory has been marked by downward social mobility over several generations, whilst Louis' is marked by – relatively – upward social mobility through community work.

The renegotiation of past political identities and the conversion of dispositions for protest into the sector of popular education therefore occurs progressively and continually over the years. If the activist dimension of this profession was dominant at the beginning of the 1970s, the job also had an impact on François and Louis, who became trapped in the stakes and plays of the community sector which became progressively institutionalised in the 1980s. The reduction of their room for manoeuvre within their positions was accompanied by a material and social stability for the two interviewees, but also by a certain disenchantment. Even though, their dispositions for activism eventually wore out over time, their political convictions were in fact sharpened. The conditions necessary for maintaining (or even reinforcing) radical political opinions are indeed combined in this collective profile of post-'68 trajectories. Being face-to-face with unrelenting social inequalities in one's everyday professional life, contributes to the hope of large-scale social change, in spite of (or perhaps because of) fatigue.

Box 5   From Marx to Bourdieu, professional conversions into social science research

Certain interviewees correspond to the profile developed here concerning professional conversion into social sciences research,[53] but this textbox focuses primarily on the trajectories and the (partially) autobiographical studies of well-known researchers including Luc Boltanski, Dominique Damamme, Marnix Dressen, Claude Fossé-Poliak, Daniel Gaxie, Luis Gruel, Isaac Joseph, Bernard Lacroix, Robert Linhart, Gérard Mauger, Erik Neveu, Gérard Noiriel, Bernard Pudal and Michèle Zancarini-Fournel.[54] This is a heterogenous group (in terms of social origin, age, forms of participation in May '68 and paths of entry in to the academic sphere), and it has not been subject to a specific study. What follows should therefore be read as a simple presentation of hypotheses regarding the conversion of militant interest in politics, into academic and specialized interests in politics.[55]

These researchers belong to cohorts born between 1940 and 1948 and many of them come from working-class backgrounds. Part of the first wave of expansion in access to education, they were led – through their trajectories as

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53   This is true for Jacques in particular, who became an anthropologist and whose trajectory prior to May '68 is discussed in Chapter 1. It is also true for Daniel K. who is a university professor of sociology.

54   The list is not exhaustive, and we can reasonably assume that the patterns for the conversion of dispositions for social criticism are partially generalisable to many researchers who worked with and around Pierre Bourdieu in the 1970s and 1980s.

55   This section owes much to Pudal's very stimulating work (1991).

first-generation intellectuals – to become politically active (in the PCF or on the far-let) in the 1960s,[56] while they were studying at university. After a period of student activism with UNEF and/or the UEC, some of these apprentice intellectuals were drawn towards Maoism. Joining the UJCml meant adopting part of the symbolic capital attached to the figure of Althusser, becoming members of the community of the intellectual students of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*. This offer of salvation goods owes its strength to the juxtaposition between this theoretical elitism and populist practice. Mao's writings provided these students – who themselves came "from the people" – with a justification for their existence, through the role of the intellectual at the service of the "masses," and this helped them become reconciled with themselves. We find similar attempts to "reconcile the irreconcilable" among the communist intellectuals studied by Bernard Pudal: "By representing the 'working class' on the political scene, are they not in fact participating in both worlds? And are they not justified in representing it precisely because of this faithful infidelity?" (Pudal, 1989, p. 133). Familiarity with the working classes linked to their social background, became a resource for those who called for intellectuals to "get down off their horse[s]" and "go among the masses."[57] They therefore found the opportunity to convert a relative social indignity into symbolic capital, whilst the events of May '68 came to confirm the justification of their revolt (the slogan on the cover of the journal of the UJCml was: "Marx's theory is all powerful because it is true").

However, having found (in Marx particularly), writings that "revealed" themselves – in the words of one interviewee – by giving meaning to their revolt, and having dedicated years to waiting for a revolution that did not come and in so doing forming an "imaginary people" (Bourdieu, 1982), these young activist intellectuals experienced a collective situation of doubt in the 1970s. Faced with the waning of Marxism in the intellectual field, they found themselves temporarily lacking answers (or at least doubting them), to the existential question of the meaning to give to their position and their role as intellectuals. This new period would be one of disengagement from activism, and social reintegration. They now had to tackle the "work of mourning" (Pudal, 1991, p. 58) for an idealised people, "to the extent that declaring oneself a Marxist was a declaration of faith […], extracting oneself, also involved a feeling of turning one's back on oneself, scientifically and politically" (Mauger, 2006, p. 19). For many of these (future) researchers, the discovery of the work of Pierre Bourdieu therefore accompanied the shift in their investment: from

56   See Chapter 1: "Upward social mobility and politicisation."
57   Mao Zedong see note 196 above.

activist investigation to scientific investigation, from activism to the study
of collective action, from militant interest in "the people" to academic interest
in the working classes. Bourdieu's theory of domination and symbolic violence
therefore operated as a veritable sociodicy[58] of their disillusions. Moreover,
it provided them with a new reason for their existence and new tools with
which to continue their challenge to the social order. Gérard Noiriel there-
fore describes the re-enchantment provoked by his discovery of Bourdieu's
and Foucault's work at the critical moment of disengagement (he was forced
to resign from the PCF in 1980): "these authors gave me another solution to
persevere in my desire for truth, without abandoning my concern to be of
use to the most disadvantaged" (Noiriel, 2003, p. 269). Bernard Lacroix, for his
part, discussed the failure of the communitarian phenomena at the turn of the
1980s. He describes the Bourdieusian approach that he adopted as a "pilgrim-
age of disenchantment if ever there was one, but which saves – or at least we
want to believe it does – the gift of lucidity." (Lacroix, 1981, p. 17).

This is thus a collective profile of '68ers[59] who, after having pursued activist
investigations, moved into the social sciences to practice scientific investiga-
tion. Pudal left the PCF for good in 1977 and "progressively transformed [his]
interest in politics into an interest in the history of communism"[60] by under-
taking a PhD on the French Communist Party. Jacques, who joined the national
research council (CNRS) in 1966 before becoming one of the leaders of the
UJCml, intensified his work as a researcher as his political involvement faded[61]
and turned towards themes linked to the anthropology of development. After
two years as an *établi* Daniel K. began to teach sociology at the University of
Vincennes as a tutor; he then returned to his studies and defended his PhD in
1984, before finally becoming a professor of sociology in the 1990s. During the
1970s, these (ex)activists thus participated in redefining the role of researchers
in social sciences, by importing the aspirations they developed in the protest
space into the scientific sphere. On this point, Gérard Mauger wrote that the
rediscovery of the notion of the everyday allowed for the "affirmation of the

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58   Pierre Bourdieu, referring to Weber, talks of sociodicy as a theoretical justification for
social success and privilege (Bourdieu 1971). Here it is rather more a theoretical justification of
political failures (or at least disillusion) facilitated by the reading of Bourdieu's work.
59   The date of entry into university is not specified here because there are several distinct
generational units among the researchers brought together here.
60   Extract from an interview with a Brazilian researcher.
61   In his interview, Jacques explains that during his years of near-professional activism, he did
"the strict minimum to not be fired from the CNRS". It is important to note here the specificity
of these public professional spaces that made it possible for intensive forms of activism to thrive
among young activists at the turn of the 1970s (Boltanski, 2008, p. 83-85)

proximity of the intellectual and 'ordinary experience', of 'ordinary people', to reconcile metaphysics and the 'street corner'" (Mauger, 1989b, p. 85). Bernard Pudal accounted for the affinity with qualitative methodology and the biographical approach with an "intellectual style 'linked to the masses', at their service, and giving them 'a voice'" (Pudal, 1991, p. 62). Daniel Gaxie introduced the critical process into political science. The object of his seminal article on the retributions of activism, and its date of publication (Gaxie, 1977), also situates it within the movement surrounding the conversion of dispositions for social critique into dispositions for critical (political) sociology. He indeed specified this himself nearly 30 years later (Gaxie, 2005, p. 161). The trace of the militant past also emerges through research objects.[62] Communitarian utopia, deviance, exclusion, the working classes, development, or activism: these are some of the themes that went from being militant targets to objects of intellectual interest.

By shifting their refusal of common-sense preconceptions into the core of their profession, these young researchers successfully negotiated the painful exit from their revolutionary identities, without renouncing their dispositions for social critique. In so doing, they participated in the invention and redefinition of objects, methods and even sub-disciplines within the social sciences.

Conclusion: activism and social mobility

Through the trajectories analysed in this chapter, we can see that political involvement sometimes produces downward mobility (as in the trajectories of the *établis*) and sometimes upward mobility (Gilles). Inversely, it is sometimes the result of upward social mobility (future researchers in social sciences) or adopted as a way of compensating for downward social mobility (François). We can therefore conclude that there are reciprocal effects between political involvement and social mobility.

Although upward social mobility frequently precedes involvement in activism (see Chapter 1), it is also facilitated by the myriad resources associated with political commitments (Leclercq and Pagis, 2011). The study of Gilles' case allows us to further explore the mechanisms at work in these exceptional trajectories of upward social mobility. Moving into the spheres of politics and unionism produces aspirations that are increasingly out of

62   This question of the effects of May '68 on the practice of social sciences was the subject of a special edition of the revue Cahiers de l'IHTP, "Mai '68 et les sciences sociales", 11 April 1989. In this issue François Dosse describes a similar movement in studies of history (Dosse, 1989).

step with the positions initially occupied. In addition to this, participation in the events of May-June '68 was accompanied by an increase in the range of possibilities through the establishment of the University of Vincennes. Being able to return to university thus meant being able to escape from the condition of workers. It led to a social, political, professional and even conjugal shift. Hypergamy thus became a structural principle of the trajectories of these class migrants, accompanying and boosting the progressive conversion of ways of perceiving the social world.

It is not unusual that aspirations to upward social mobility emerge in the context of socially improbable encounters between activists. We have seen that the context of political crisis contributes to opening up the social networks of activists, thus allowing for the possibility of social shifts. In the 1970s, militant spaces like the GP at the University of Vincennes allowed real connections between the worlds of workers and students. These then contributed to the transformation of the perception of possibilities and beliefs, as well as the social destinies of young students from working-class backgrounds who had not completed high school.

It is important however to be careful not to validate a rose-coloured vision of the link between activism and social mobility. In order to avoid this, we simply need to evoke the situations in which activism is payed for with downward mobility or at least hindrances to professional promotion. In opposition to the representations of a "generation '68" as uniformly opportunistic and converted into the realm of power, the study of the actual trajectories of '68ers shows various situations of social downclassing as being among the possible effects – although socially and sexually unequal in their distribution – of participation in May '68. The experience of Colette, who paid for her years as an *établi* with downward social mobility, marital breakdown and depression, is an extreme case. More generally however, the *établis* all experienced difficulty in re-integrating the professional sphere (more or less depending on the duration of their experience in factories, and the qualifications they had previously) and have poorer retirement conditions today (as is the case for Paul).

Between these two poles, where the effects of activism on social mobility are significant, a large number of post-'68er trajectories are marked by more modest shifts, due to dispositions for criticism being imported into the professional sphere. Here, activism is responsible for conversions towards professions that are initially seen as hybrid, on the hazy border between activism and employment. Many activists therefore moved into community work (like François and Louis), journalism, or social science research, or neo-detective writing (Collovald and Neveu, 2001), thus redefining – or

reinventing – new professions (Bourdieu, 1978). Here there are "fortunate" renegotiations due to the existence of transitional spaces between the militant and professional spheres, such as in the newspaper *Liberation* or the University of Vincennes (Soulié, 2012), survey centres, research networks, or laboratories such as the Centre for European Sociology (CSE) (Joly, 2012, p. 187-239). These forms of professional conversion are thus historically and socially situated.

5 Changing one's life to change the world? The politicisation of the private sphere

The effects of the events of May '68 can also be found in the private sphere,[1] which was subject to its share of breakdowns and upheavals in the wake of activism. Indeed, the sociology of the biographical consequences of activism cannot ignore the personal spaces in which political dispositions and preferences will be applied. From the beginning of the 1970s, many interviewees thus sought to continue their activism by attacking the logics of social reproduction within the family and within the school system. For them, participation in May '68 produced a critical redefinition of social relations of sex, generation, and the roles of parents and children (Chamboderon and Prévot, 1973, p. 317-318). This transfer of protest aspirations into the private sphere did not uniformly affect all the interviewees – it primarily concerns the sub-group clustered around non-institutionalised forms of activism in the 1970s (situated on the right of the factorial plane presented in Chapter 3). This chapter therefore focuses on the biographical impact of May '68 on the youngest members of the corpus, who are mostly women, and who were mostly first-time activists, high school and young university students in 1968, and who generally came from more privileged backgrounds. It focuses on those for whom May '68 played a role in *political socialisation by awareness raising*, altering their political and professional trajectories to different extents, but particularly affecting their private trajectories. This is the pole at which individuals attempted to change their own lives in order to maintain the opening of possibilities they experienced during May '68, including non-linear careers, social marginalisation, or communitarian utopias. This critical renewal of everyday life (Mauger, 1999, p. 234) therefore participates in the politicisation of causes that had previously remained outside the political sphere, such as the family, the place of women in society, the environment, or education.

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1   The forms and boundaries of the private and public spheres have evolved over time. These habitual distinctions between public and private, or between political and domestic, have been widely criticised by feminist movements, notably in the name of the famous slogan "the personal is political" (Bereni and Revillard, 2012). The notion of the private sphere is preserved however, to show just how protest dispositions have been imported into it, leading to a redefinition of its boundaries.

Politicising the private sphere

The core of the many repercussions of activism during May '68 on the familial and private spheres lie in challenges to the family institution, conjugal relations, established norms relating to gender and sexuality, and also child-rearing practices.

Family: I hate you!

"Do you believe that in 1968 (and the years that followed), the family was an institution that reproduced bourgeois social order?" Half of the interviewees answered yes to this question, and within that half, most were women. This disparity reflects the forms of activism that were adopted in the years following May '68. Nearly 70% of interviewees of both sexes continued as activists after 1968, but only 31% of women were activists before the events, compared to 58% of men. May '68 therefore represented a more significant catalyst to entry into activism for the women interviewed. If gender has an impact on the number of people becoming politically involved through May '68, it also has an impact on the forms of politicisation – 60% of the women interviewed said they participated (actively or as sympathisers) in the feminist movements of the 1970s, compared to less than 25% of men. These women imported their critical dispositions into the feminist movements[2] and protested for the evolution of their conditions, attacked social gender relations, and participated in redefining "women's" roles. Gender thus weighs heavily on the forms of conversion of activist resources accumulated both before and during May '68.

Indeed, the men interviewed here seem to have converted their disposition for protest into the professional sphere (see the previous chapter), whilst many more of the women imported them into the private sphere or into care (transferring them to roles as midwives, in crèches, or in family planning). This fundamental difference is a result of the gendered division of labour, which is typical within couples and also reflected in the militant sphere (Dunezat, 2007). Activist work for men leads to the acquisition of skills and abilities (organisation, leadership, public speaking, synthesis etc.) that are more easily convertible into the professional sphere than the

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2   Among these groups were the MLAC – the *Mouvement pour la liberté de l'avortement et de la contraception* (Movement for free access to abortion and contraception), the MLF – *Mouvement de Liberation des Femmes* (Women's Liberation Movement), and numerous other informal feminist group.

resources acquired by women activists, which are less socially recognised and valued.[3] The young women interviewed, who took background roles or performed subaltern militant tasks during May '68, and who often had young children in the 1970s, found a way of appropriating activism through the politicisation of the private sphere. This was the case for most of the women who became politically active through the *matrix of statutory incoherencies*, and for whom May '68 provoked a political awakening. The case of Mathilde[4] serves as an example here; she moved to Paris with her husband in September 1969 to study humanities at the Sorbonne, where she discovered the profusion of activist groups and joined the protest space through the crèche:[5]

> In 1968 everything took off, and the whole generation immediately got caught up in it... [...] What happened outside resonated in every home, in every person, in every couple. That was the beginning of my awareness [...] I went to Paris... And as I had my daughter and I wanted to participate in the movement, I went in via the 'alternative' crèches [...] I got my political education among those leftists [...] And so from that, well feminism, at the time it was the MLF, so I went to their meetings, some awareness raising groups as they called them.[6]

Mathilde quickly became one of the cornerstones of the alternative crèche at the university, as an "activist for anti-authoritarian education and everything associated with that," participating at the MLAC group at the university. In this environment, she discovered the writings of Wilhelm Reich, and *Summerhill* by Alexander Sutherland Neill (1960):

3   The gendered division of forms of participation in May '68 was presented in Chapter 2: public speaking at meetings, "active" participation in events, or the "charisma" of leaders are presented as predominantly associated with men, whereas women "follow", "participate", and play less visible, less "political" and less valued roles. Gender also defines the distribution of tasks between activists and their rank in the hierarchy, according to the two main principles of the gendered division of labour – the principle of separation and the principle of hierarchy (Kergoat, 2000).
4   Mathilde's case (born in 1946, the daughter of right-wing artisans) was used in Chapter 1 to develop the schema of statutory incoherencies.
5   Many of the women interviewed joined the protest sphere at the beginning of the 1970s through alternative crèches, thus combining activist time, familial time and even professional time for those who became professional childcare workers through these structures (Mozère, 1992).
6   Extract from the interview with Mathilde, on 26 January 2004.

> So then, well it was communal living. Our idea was not to stage a revolution
> somewhere else, but to live it in our own lives...we were living as activists,
> that's how it was. So there was a refusal of lots of things, family, school...
> So we looked, once my daughter was a bit older, we had to find a school
> that was not a school...

Mathilde's activism, as a feminist and an anarchist, was thus characteristic
of the sub-group of the corpus situated on the right-hand side of the factorial
plane (figure 7 in chapter 3),[7] which is predominantly made up of women
who were students in 1968, with little or no prior activist experience. These
women tended to access the protest space in areas that were not very
institutionalised (and that were thus less demanding in terms of militant
resources and organisational constraints). Investment in the alternative
crèches also gave them time for activism (Mathilde's daughter was cared
for in this way) and a way to appropriate activism by importing the political
discourses and behaviour from the sphere of production into the sphere
of reproduction (Borzeix and Maruani, 1984). The struggle for the right
to abortion, particularly within the MLAC (Zancarini-Fournel, 2003),[8] is
emblematic of this period and this sub-group of interviewees, who became
active to consolidate the means of their recent sexual independence.

The family as an institution was seen as the fundamental unit in which
social inequalities were reproduced, and as such it had to be shattered in
favour of domestic collectives that were yet to be invented. It was thus
put to the test through various subversive family structures. Against the
institution of marriage and the norm of fidelity which was considered
hypocritical and associated with male domination, "sexual liberation" was
promoted with the slogan "jealousy is forbidden" or "we belong to no one."
Among their intellectual references was Wilhelm Reich, who wrote "today,
the family and the school are, from a political perspective, nothing more
than workshops of the bourgeois social order destined to produce good and
obedient subjects" (Reich, 1972, p. 106). Just over 40% of interviewees say
that they experienced "open relationships" in the 1970s. Doris thus recalls:

> Our thing was Reich, ah yes, yes, we were real Reichians, we had to break
> free from the yolk of marriage and possession and be free [...] because
> you see, all manifestation of suffering, jealousy was considered emotional

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7   In the militant space represented on the factorial plane, Mathilde is situated between the
categories "women", "community" and "student in 1968", and "non-institutional activism".
8   But also Family Planning and the organisation Choice (Pavard, 2012).

Figure 9   Age and communal living
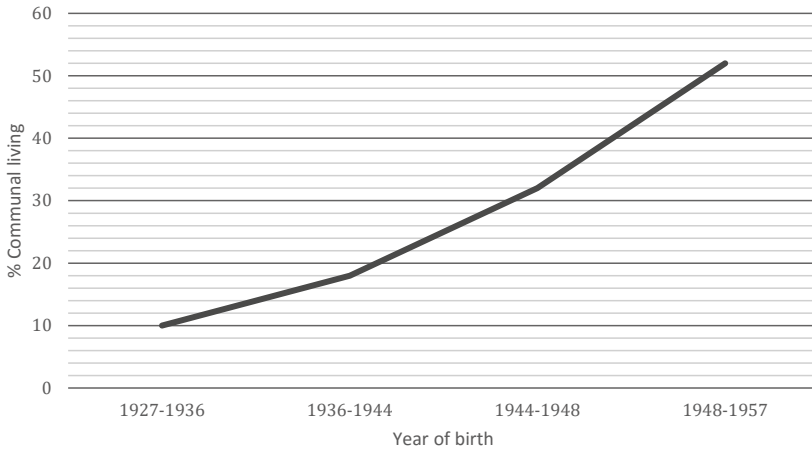
blackmail. There was something by Simone de Beauvoir where she ex-
plained that very well, you could tell that she'd been through that with
her man! Because our model was pretty much Sartre and de Beauvoir![9]

These "everyday activists" (Bidou, 1984) thus experimented with new conjugal
and domestic norms within extended familial configurations; these took
very diverse forms but were regrouped under the term "communes." Of
the corpus as a whole, one third of the interviewees experienced life in a
commune, however, the rate is lower in the population who were already
activists than among those who became activists with May '68. Age (cor-
related to the occupational status in 1968)[10] is the most decisive variable in
accounting for the probability of living in a commune (see Figure 9 below).

Different ways of regulating gender and generational relations existed
in these communes, and they evolved over time within any particular
one (Lacroix, 1981). To return to the example of Mathilde, after an initial
experience in a commune that made it possible to imagine and then to

9   Extract from an interview conducted with Doris at her home in Paris, January 10 2006. The
daughter of a rabbi, Doris was born in 1950. She became politically active with the events of
May '68, whilst she was in her first year of an arts degree at the Sorbonne, and in the years that
followed, she participated in the movement for critical revival of everyday life.
10   45% of students in 1968 experienced communal life in the years that followed, compared
to just 20% of employees.

achieve separation from her husband, her next communal experience took the form of an extended household (Weber, 2002), organised around the collective responsibility for child-rearing. In this commune in the north of Paris, we can see the various attempts to experience a model that could be an alternative to that of the traditional family:

> the main idea was that everyone had their own room, even though couples formed pretty quickly, but that was important! [...] We wrote on the walls, we wrote dazibaos[11] all the time and every time something happened, either on a practical level like the soup wasn't great or whatever, or there was a conflict between the kids and parents, we wrote it on the walls! And pretty soon we saw that even among ourselves, we still had the same distribution of tasks [...] we tried very hard to get rid of that difference, and didn't really succeed, well... perhaps a little [...] the idea of sharing the children too...

As far as domestic organisation was concerned, the rejection of traditional social gender relations was reflected in various systems for rotating tasks, more or less organised and egalitarian, sometimes debated in the general assemblies and formalized in calendars stuck up in communal spaces, or even written on the walls.

Marital breakdowns: a consequence of May '68?

A third of interviewees who were in relationships in 1968 separated in the years that followed; but the women are more likely (than their ex-husbands) to impute these separations to their participation in the events of 1968. In the long term, 60% of the couples interviewed eventually separated, at a time (in the early 70s) when the divorce rate for the general population in France was below 15%.[12] Without suggesting that May '68 represents the unique cause of these separations, some can be imputed to the effects (different for men and women) of participation in these events.[13] It is important to distinguish

11   Dazibaos are handwritten posters stuck on the walls. Imported from the Chinese cultural revolution by Maoist organisations, dazibaos spread quickly through the French commune movement in the 1970s.

12   Data from INSEE and the Minister for Justice. These rates have not stopped climbing since, reaching 42,5% in 2003. In this respect we can characterise our population as a precursor to a general tendency.

13   Doug McAdam obtained similar results with lower marriage rates in the population of former activists than in the control population (McAdam, 1989, p. 757).

what happened during the events of May '68 from what was to play out in the years that followed. For some, May '68 simply played a role in revealing prior dissent. For others, the gap between the discourses of the political organisations they participated in during May '68, and the inequality they experienced in practice, accelerated their awareness of male domination (Evans, 1979; McAdam, 1992; Borzeix and Maruani, 1984, p. 294-296).

But it was above all the investment of interviewees in the women's movement and the discovery of feminism that caused upheavals in their conjugal relationships in the following years (Le Quentrec and Rieu, 2003). Doris thus explained how her trajectory progressively diverged from that of her husband the more she frequented the feminist sphere:

> Robert was not into it at all, he'd just followed May '68 from a distance, but he was already working and I was discovering a new student and feminist environment... And he hated my feminist friends...but it was reciprocal, at the beginning I had to defend him all the time... but well, we just became too different... and let's just say it brought out a lot of things, and on top of that ... I fell in love with someone else.[14]

From the early 1970s, feminism made it possible to politically and collectively re-evaluate situations that had previously been regarded as individual and guilt-ridden, both politically and collectively. Martine[15] thus recounts:

> Before [1968] I thought that I was "backward" compared with the others, that if it wasn't great in my relationship, it was because I had problems... there were so many taboos, it was a bit shameful... and then we realised that we shared these problems with so many other girls! [...] and that it was more widespread!

For many women, the "1968 years" (Dreyfus-Armand et al., 2000) provided an opportunity for personal transformation. Indeed, the divergence between the model of femininity interiorised during primary socialisation (most of the interviewees had a Judeo-Christian upbringing in the post-war era) and the redefinition of new ways of becoming women[16] became a source of deep divisions, both personally and within their relationships. Although men were

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14   Extract from an interview conducted with Doris, 10 January 2006.
15   Born in 1948, the daughter of a right-wing Catholic police inspector and a mother at home.
16   For which they did not have hereditary models from prior generations, that they could readily mobilise (Collin, 2000, p. 29).

also shaped and altered by their activism, it had a different impact on them than it did on women who experienced genuine gender resocialisation, testing their activist claims in their own private lives. In other words, although the social movements of the 1970s did indeed represent "spaces of gender work" (Fillieule and Roux, 2009), they had a greater transformative impact on women. The distinct evolution of representations of the self and one's role within the couple and the family thus provoked situations of increasing dissonance and divergence between the expectations of the two partners.

Once again, the consequences of these separations differ according to gender – men are four times more likely than their ex-partners to be currently in a couple.[17] Although this is in keeping with the classical studies on the fact that women tend to have more difficulty finding another partner after a divorce (Cassan, Mazuy and Clanché, 2001), the gender gap is even more pronounced in the population interviewed here. Yet these women are much more likely than their male counterparts to attribute the changes in their representations of conjugal relationships to the events of May '68.[18] Moreover, finding a partner who accepts to challenge the gender system in conjugal life is clearly not always easy. Marthe puts it like this:

> I realised that men found me scary, I never had trouble having affairs, but whenever it came to becoming a couple, they ran away, as though I was asking too much...[19]

The cost of returning to more traditional forms of conjugal life after having experimented with more diverse countercultural family structures and sexual norms therefore appears to be more substantial for women than for men.

Moreover, although interviewees of both sexes had alternative experiences in the years that followed May '68, temporarily breaking away from their professional paths, the social reintegration of women seems to have been less straightforward. Women were also more likely to have had non-linear professional trajectories, like Annette for example, for whom a succession

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17   One third of female interviewees were living alone at the time of the interviews, compared to just 8% of male interviewees.

18   To the question "Is it possible to credit May '68 with an influence (direct or indirect) on your vision of being in a couple?" nearly half the female respondents replied in the affirmative, compared to one third of male respondents.

19   Born in 1939 in a Parisian bourgeois family, Marthe graduated as a dental surgeon, but had not practiced since the mid-1970s, having transitioned in the 1980s to work in video.

of professional setbacks led to a reaction of withdrawal and disappointment – particularly in political terms:

> My life has been a series of mutations in which I never really found a balance, which I feel particularly acutely at the moment, which is why I have difficulty answering some of your political questions. The questions to do with sharing collide with the need for individualistic self-protection as a result of fatigue, and personal struggle.[20]

The influence of gender on the formation of political generations is dealt with in the next chapter. However, we can already begin to formulate certain hypotheses concerning the gender gap in professional costs and retributions of activism. Firstly, the trajectories of the women in the corpus encounter May '68 at impressionable biographical moments,[21] such that their professional trajectories remain durably altered.[22] Moreover, the gendered division of activist labour (particular in May '68) leads to a difference in knowledge and competences acquired through activism, which benefits the professional reintegration of men. Finally, the statistical analysis of professional effects (see Chapter 3) shows that women are more likely to be concerned by what can be described as parallel strategies, temporary exits and social marginalisation in the years after May '68, compared to their male counterparts. This renders professional reintegration after several "blank" years on their CVs (unusual in traditional forms of work and especially salaried work), especially taxing.

Turning to psychoanalysis: a therapy for fractured *habitus*?

One quarter of the women interviewed said they had experienced depression in the years after 1968 (compared to 10% of men), and 37% had turned to psychoanalysis, compared to one quarter of men. Beyond the context of the late-1970s that was particularly favourable to psychoanalysis, these women's use of this therapy seems to function partly as a way of conceiving and

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20   Extract from an interview with Annette, born in 1948, daughter of a taxi-driver and an accountant, both left-wing atheists. For several of the female interviewees, like Annette, who were divorced, living alone, in chaotic professional situations, downward social mobility combined with the professional costs of past engagements led to a disavowal of the political class.

21   In particular, there are more women than men in the corpus who were still high school or university students during May '68, and who had not yet begun professional careers.

22   In fact 68% of the women in the corpus declared that May '68 led to effects on their professions compared to just 56% of men.

healing the identity tensions that were provoked by their activism after 1968. Indeed, these female pioneers who participated in the profound challenges to the condition of women through the invention and experimentation of new forms of womanhood, often encountered incomprehension or even rejection by their parents and some of their friends and family. The emotional costs of these conversions were all the more intense given that these young women had themselves interiorised the gendered norms that they were now violently rejecting. As Mathilde explains:

> At the time [1974], I began psychoanalysis, whilst this revolution inside me, my life, this enormous revolution, which meant that I completely lost my bearings... that was something that really destabilised me in a way and during this whole period of two or three years where I completely changed my bearings, and well, I cut myself off from my parents [...] and in terms of activism, I also had a few pangs, about abortion especially, that stuck... My catholic education kept coming out and I'd signed the manifesto of the 343 sluts[23] but I knew that I could never have an abortion myself [...] the only really concrete thing that I got out of my analysis was that I understood, in my body, well in my head, that I was free, that I could choose, because up until then, each of my actions, each of my movements had been dictated by morality... Everything was formatted by education, so I had such guilt in going against it! [...] So, it was very violent and destabilising, at the same time as it was a genuine renaissance. That's why for a time I leant on the crutch of psychoanalysis [...] You can't imagine the moral tsunami that it was, for a whole generation.

The family breakdown (temporary in this case, but long-lasting in others), and the break away from certain social networks from before 1968, were part of the consequences of this conversion process, as well as being part of its conditions. Yet Mathilde's comments, particularly on abortion, remind us that these breakdowns are rarely sufficient to shake off dispositions that are internalised early on; the "crutch of psychoanalysis" is thus useful in

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23   The manifesto of the 343, written by Simone de Beauvoir in 1971 to defend women's right to abortion, was signed by 343 women admitting to having had an abortion when abortions were illegal in France. The manifesto became known as the "appel des 343 salopes (sluts)" after a satirical cartoon appeared on the subject. It ultimately contributed to a change in attitudes towards abortion in France which, in addition to the essential work by grassroots feminist movements such as MLAC, eventually led to the Veil Law decriminalizing voluntary termination in the first ten weeks of pregnancy.

helping to resolve these contradictory socialisations and understand these fractured *habitus*.[24]

In the long term, a significant proportion of the interviewees continue to see the events of May-June '68 as having a certain number of effects on their everyday lives, their representations of adult relationships, education and child-rearing practices, even dress codes – once again with significant differences between the sexes (see table 5 below).

Table 5   The influence of May '68 on everyday life by gender

Percentage of interviewees who say May '68 had a "quite" or "very" significant impact	*Women*	*Men*
– on their way of interpreting the world	75%	74%
– on their current style of dress	58%**	31%
– on their vision of the couple	47%**	33%
– their everyday life	43%**	21%

** correlations statistically significant with the Chi2 test

The formulation of the questionnaire allowed the interviewees to specify how their everyday lives had been affected (where relevant), forty years later, by the events of 1968. Environmentalism and refusal of consumerism are among the most frequently recurring themes for both sexes. However male respondents do not emphasise their intimate relations with the social world in the way that women do. Among their responses, we find: "awareness of environmentalism in everyday actions: sharing housework with my partner; non-conformity;" "more marginal life choices;" "the search for equity, thirst for justice, conformity with my ideas in my everyday actions and choices;" "I have always sought to remain in this openness," "I continue to build my relationships according to this engagement and openness;" or finally, "1968: I still live with it."

These differences in the personal consequences resulting from activism in May-June '68 are not easy to objectify through numerical indicators. Yet their traces are visible even on the bodies of the participants, "in a shortened, practical form, in other words mnemonic" (Bourdieu 1972, p. 297). We would need a photo gallery to really account for the differences in bodily *hexis*,[25]

24   In other words habitus "bearing in the form of tensions and contradictions, the mark of the contradictory conditions of formation of which they are the product" (Bourdieu, 1997, trad. p. 64)

25   I abandoned the initial idea of taking photos in order to respect the anonymity of the participants.

so we will make do with a few indications. The interviewees for whom the effects are the most visible present an anti-conformist bodily *hexis*. This might be seen in the rejection of the traditional reservation of the bourgeoisie and a more relaxed style, in highly colourful dress, a historically or typically "hippie" look, clear favourite colours,[26] or in laid-back hairstyles. These more visible forms are incarnated by the interviewees situated at the countercultural pole, who seek to subvert the social order on an individual level, through transgressive trajectories based on the logic of exemplarity: they display their rejection of dominant norms on and through their bodies.

Finally, the rejection of these dominant educative norms is widely shared in the interview population because of the way it was constructed,[27] and nearly 90% of these interviewees consider that May '68 had an impact on their educational strategies – both familial and academic.

Redefining the role of parents

The politicisation of educative practices was a significant part of the critical renewal of everyday life. Childhood was invested by this particular sub-group of the population as a field of political experimentation. The educational practices implemented by these everyday activists must be put into a context in which the social roles of parents and children were being redefined. Based on these interviews, the archives from the schools in the study, and the results in the questionnaires, we can list the main traits (rarely present within a single family configuration) of the ideal type countercultural educational model.[28]

The rejection of the institution of the family, marriage and the couple resulted in a delay in becoming parents, among other things. There is a

26   For example, when I arrived at Christiane's house in Nantes, I was struck by the omnipresence of purple: from the interior decoration, to the Volkswagon painted purple in the yard, to her clothes. Forty years on, these traces of the past are more visible among the women interviewees: they have more attributes (both in terms of body and dress) that are susceptible to manifesting this countercultural past than their male counterparts.

27   We can, however, generalise (in part) this type of effect to a less specific population of '68ers, to the extent that challenging traditional pedagogic relationships and generational relations resonated widely in the 1970s, as we can see in the numerous publications dedicated to the "end of the family", or the critique of the school system, in journals such as *Autrement*, or satirical political newspapers such as *Actuel, Tout, La Gueule ouverte, Hara-Kiri* etc. as well as the number of pedagogic groups and journals that emerged around these questions.

28   I have chosen to use the term counterculture in reference both to the type of activism that Gérard Mauger describes as "countercultural leftism" and the questionings of Annick Percheron regarding the rejection of dominant norms (Percheron and Subileau, 1974, p. 33).

significant age gap between first child(ren) and those that came from any second relationships, and this is also characteristic of the population interviewed here. This meant complex sibling groups (for this period) in broader family configurations. In terms of modes of organisation and regulations of family relationships, these actors who accuse the family institution of reproducing the social order, reject dominant norms whilst experimenting with new norms of parenthood and regulations of intergenerational relations. Criticism of relationships based on authority and domination within the family may also lead to the questioning of the terms of address that typically convey them. Nearly half of the parents interviewed here therefore had their children call them by their given names, which they explain in retrospect by their refusal to conceal relations of domination behind a "system of sentiment"[29] (affective obligations and constraints linked to family relationships) or by the refusal to be reduced to their role in social reproduction:

> Both my sons called me Claire, from when they were very young (except when they needed to be consoled) and continue to do so. All our friends' children did the same […] there is no consciously political justification. That's just how it was, that was the time. With hindsight, you could explain it by a societal desire for change, to not impose on our children what our parents demanded of us. To give children a status that allowed them a future free from imposition – to blossom, without being hampered by their parents' desires.[30]

Gilles emphasises that:

> We wanted to be called by our given names, of course, but it didn't always work […] it was about constructing a non-hierarchical relationship, non-authoritarian, in which power relations were less vocal… and were less concealed by the emotional blackmail stemming from the terms 'mummy' and 'daddy'. So, it was part of a logic of challenging the status of the child and thus the status of the parent as well, of course.[31]

29   Florence Weber reminds us that systems of kinship are threefold: "intellectual (systems of thought), practical (systems of action), affective (systems of sentiment)" (Weber, 2002, p. 74)
30   Extract from an email from Claire received 10 November 2008. Claire comes from a bourgeois right-wing Catholic background. In 1968, she was a technical assistant at the SAT (telecom company) and a CFDT unionist.
31   Extract from an exchange of emails with Gilles regarding the educational practices he used with his daughter Nathalie, born in 1964. (Emails exchanged between 18 October 2008

Child-rearing was also subject to a degree of experimentation. In certain communes, the parents took turns parenting not just their own children but the whole group of children, as a way of collectivizing childcare.[32] Although this collective approach can be understood from the perspective of reducing the costs of the domestic economy, the political justifications remain central in the interviewees' discourses. We can see this in the case of Mathilde:

> I wanted to set up a kind of club for single parents, with only activists…
> I always lived in political communities […] there, my idea, was that it
> was unhealthy to raise your children alone, two-people families were
> considered unhealthy, mother-child couples, and the neurosis, and if
> we didn't feel able to accommodate demands, at certain times etc. there
> had to be a group of adults who could step in, so it revolved around the
> idea that there were groups of adults and children, and being the least
> interventionist possible […] there was also the idea of the non-possession
> of the children […].

The refusal to consider the child as a "future social being" (Foucambert, 1977, p. 138) led to the rejection of authoritarian educational practices, as well as the refusal to keep children at a distance from a certain number of subjects from which they are habitually excluded. The children ate at the same table as the adults and participated in the discussions. They had the right to speak and subjects such as politics and sexuality were discussed with them. The few taboos were always made explicit and even decided together with the children. Early autonomy and responsibilisation of children were the two central and complementary principles of this countercultural socialisation. This operated through substantial freedom given to the children in their daily activities (in terms of both schooling and friendships), but also in their responsibility for a certain number of domestic chores (shopping, housework, managing pocket money, cooking etc.).

In terms of political socialisation, these educational practices directly aimed to encourage non-conformity to dominant norms. This intentional political socialisation meant being open with children about one's political preferences, and having the children participate in various political activities (first and foremost demonstrations, but also political meetings). The refusal

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and 25 October 2008). The trajectory of Gilles is analysed in Chapter 4.

32   An extreme case of this can be seen in Betty (born 1946) who explained in her interview that the names of her twins were decided in a general assembly by the six adults in the commune.

to "format children"[33] or to have them "conform to dominant norms" also involved educational practices that aimed to not reproduce the gendered division of social roles – buying traditionally male toys for girls, and vice versa, equal participation of both sexes in housework, non-differentiation of education according to sex etc. With forty years hindsight, Mathilde reflects on these educational utopias:

> We imagined – we were crazy right! – that by getting at the roots, in the education of very small children, we could abolish the domination of men over women, for us it was clear, and we realised, as we watched the children grow, that it didn't work like that (*she laughs*)!

These comments clearly underline the experimental aspect of these collective spaces for the redefinition of gender relations and educational relations, based on the (relative) suspension of conjugal norms, norms of parenting and gender that had all been tacitly accepted up until then.

Finally, the school as an institution was not left unscathed by the anti-institutional mood of the parents, who criticised it for being the site of the reproduction of social inequalities and the socialisation of children to relations of authority. In 1975, one of the teachers at the Vitruve school wrote,[34] "The school as an institution was created for the dominant classes so that the school machine would keep turning and reproducing itself." Enrolling children in experimental schools corresponds to the parent's desire to find a school structure based on educational practices in keeping with the ones used in the family sphere. In the same way as they mistrust the idea of "academic success" (when they are not openly defiant about it), certain parents do not (or not much) value school qualifications, considering that it is not qualifications that make a person intelligent or happy. At this countercultural pole, we do not always observe (or do so with a degree of ambiguity) a parental mandate for children to extend the social trajectory of the family line. This sometimes leads to various forms of incomprehension, and even intergenerational conflicts.[35] Johanna thus reproaches her parents for not having encouraged her (nevertheless brilliant) education, because

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33 Talking marks are used for the expressions that are frequently mobilised in the interviews.

34 In a book entitled, *En sortant de l'école : un projet réalisé par des enfants de la rue Vitruve*, Paris Casterman, 1976, p. 121

35 On this point, Gérard Mauger wrote: "In the essentially implicit transmission of cultural capital, it is the perpetuation, the improvement or the deterioration of the social position of the line that is at stake and the upward social mobility of the children contains no fewer potential conflicts than decline, regression or collapse" (Mauger, 1989b, p. 113).

her father refused to believe that academic qualification was a source of social happiness:

Johanna[36]

"My parents did not push me at all, because in any case my father always joked that if I wanted to be a plumber I'd be a plumber! Because of course women do the same jobs as men, they have access to everything ... the dream, right! And that's a thing that I do reproach them for a bit: I had enormous abilities and in fact they never pushed me... never, never, never. They even didn't really give a shit, and that, I found that very very hard, because as a child, it's not true: as a child you don't work for yourself, you work to please your parents."

Simon (*Johanna's father*)

"Me, I was part of the hard-core current at Vitruve, I still had my Stalinist side in fact! It was Makarenko, the soviet pedagogue – take the kids away from their families... I didn't like that a lot but at the same time, I thought that if you want to break away from society [...] I was obsessed with politics, you know, the rest was all secondary. The revolution came first, the rest had to come after [...] So we made her work because it's true that at Vitruve she did nothing, but it's also true that we didn't want to over-value academic success so as to not reproduce elitism and to allow her to do what she really wanted to do."

Given that individuals usually try to maximise their inheritance, the refusal to accept it represents an extreme breakdown in intergenerational transmission. Although only one couple of interviewees actually refused their material parental inheritance (by transferring it to the far-left political organisation that they belonged to at the time), the discourse associating inheritance and capitalism is frequent among the interviewees, and various forms of "dilapidation" of this capital can be observed. The refusal of ownership (land or home) is probably one of the most obvious and most generalised forms of it in the 1970s and 1980s. But these interviewees are more broadly characterised by an attitude of refusing private property, different forms of possession and accumulation of private goods. Some of

36   Extract of an interview filmed on 17 December 2007 as part of the documentary *Children of Utopia* (Kaïm and Pagis, 2008). Paul was born in 1965 in Paris, his mother was from a family of artists and taught at a high school, and his father, whose own father was in the military, was a construction technician.

the children recall: "our parents weren't into real estate! Money was dirty! For my parents, ownership and money were dirty – real '68ers. My mother, who is now 68, lives near the freeway in a council flat, and my father lives with his girlfriend, they've got nothing…"[37] Martin's comments are along the same lines: "My mother wants to *help.* The movements of the moment, Solidarnosc or the Chilean Resistance, decorate the house with their coloured posters. […] Everything individual is negative. *Your* things, *your*self, *your* ideas*, your* culture, *your* nation, *your* wife: possession is bad."[38]

We could describe some of the interviewees as "inheritance liquidators" (Gotman, 1988) who apply their political convictions in the family sphere, here in terms of the refusal of their inheritance which is denounced for its role in the social reproduction of inequalities. Overthrowing the economy of exchanges between generations leads to several misunderstandings. The *children-pretenders* criticise their *parents-possessors* (Mauger, 2009a, p. 23) for "not having transmitted," whilst the parents responded that they did not want to *oblige* them (in the sense of obligations that result from gifts) or they wanted to remain consistent in their everyday practices and political ideals.

In selecting the most salient educational principles (rather than the most representative) in the population of this study, and by systematically analysing all the practices (conjugal, educational, academic, successional, and economic) that may have influenced parental decisions in terms of education, we can sketch an ideal type of countercultural education. Although these principles must be seen in light of the explicit desire to harmonise one's practices and one's political convictions, the unhappy relationship that many interviewees have with their own education or with the school system also seems to be decisive. This is because, at this pole, the challenge to the social order and the family order combine, the one not excluding the other. Relations of cause and effect play out in both directions. At one pole we can see the revolutionary political activists who theorised the role of family and school institutions in the social reproduction of inequalities, before putting their discourses of denunciation into practice. At the opposite pole are interviewees who personally experienced unhappy pedagogic relationships which predisposed them to political discourses condemning both family and school as institutions. Empirical study reveals a multitude of intermediary situations between these two

37   Johanna was born in 1967. Both her parents were then Maoist activists in Grenoble. Simon had just been recruited at the CNRS and Hélène was studying history and geography.
38   Extract from an email received on 22 May 2007.

poles, which also constitute two registers of discourse regarding children's education.[39]

So as not to remain stuck in the ideal type, the analysis of an extreme case will allow us to progress further in understanding this collective profile of '68ers, who in the 1970s and 1980s challenged the social order by establishing micro-structures in opposition to it on the margins of the "system."

Anne: remaining faithful to the break

The different utopias that are of interest to us here are born of the discord between aspirations (liberated through the experience of May '68) and the actual possibilities of satisfying them. They structure the diverse offer of ethical-political salvation goods which attracted far-left activists made desperate in waiting for an increasingly hypothetical revolution. But these salvation goods also attracted a younger population who had been spectators during May-June '68 and who became directly invested in the everyday revolution in the 1970s. The forms of counter-societal reconversion (for those who had had previous experiences in left-wing politics) or conversions (for the youngest who had had no prior political experience) were therefore varied.[40] However, the different utopias practiced share the fact that they suspended dominant norms in the context of alternative societies (such as communes, phalanstères, or hermitages), and functioned on the hope of propagating examples in order to ultimately subvert the social order from its margins.

The analysis of Anne's trajectory will allow us to return to the birth of her utopian aspirations, and then to their practical implementation in different countercultural contexts. We will then turn to the conditions for the *exit* from marginalism and reintegration into mainstream society.

1949-1968: the baby boom blues

Anne was born in 1949, to an upper-middle-class intellectual family. Her father was a writer and her mother a high school librarian in the outskirts

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39   The questions linked to pedagogic practices and intergenerational relations are developed at length in the doctoral thesis upon which this book is based. Please see the third part dedicated to the "children of '68ers" (Pagis, 2009, p. 569-818).

40   Bernard Lacroix opposed political and societal utopias (Lacroix, 1981, p. 177) Jean Séguy, however, defined utopia as "any totalizing ideological system aiming, implicitly or explicitly, by appealing to the imaginary alone (written utopia), or in moving to practice (utopia in practice), to radically transform the existing global social systems (Séguy, 1971, p. 331).

of Paris. They were atheists and voted left, but politics was not an object of discussion in the family sphere. Raised by her paternal grandparents until the age of 6, Anne grew up with a family heritage marked by the heroism of her grandfather, who was a Resistance member arrested by the Gestapo in 1944 and who escaped the day before his deportation. She was much less close to her parents, who had her when they were very young and seemed less interested in her education: "I came from a family with a double discourse. You say you love, but you feel nothing, you say you're left-wing but you do nothing. You're an atheist but you enrol your daughter in Catholic school..."[41]

Expelled from several establishments for lack of discipline and defiance against the school system generally, Anne had a chaotic education. After having been dismissed from an umpteenth *lycée*, she enrolled in a theatre course in Paris in 1967, whilst her parents lived in Brittany. But she was anorexic at the time and her parents quickly brought her back to live with them. As a teenager, she was bored and remained perplexed about her role in a society that she judged conformist and insipid: "I had this impression, for years, that everything had happened without us, before us, that we arrived a bit late. The war was over. All that remained was a world without intensity; I was convinced that I had been born into a generation of sheep." Here, the impossibility of accepting the educational relationship within the family sphere and a breaking away from academic authority at an early age (characteristics that are typical of the matrix of statutory incoherencies, see Chapter 1) reinforced a discourse that is typical of the first generation to not have known war (Sirinelli, 2008, p. 177).

Anne lived with her parents in Brittany in the spring of 1968. Her father went to the Latin Quarter from the first days of the events, as a spectator. "Glued to the radio and nose in the papers," Anne also wanted to go to Paris, but her parents prevented her. At 19 years old, she was still a minor. This missed opportunity is still a source of frustration for her, as is the "impression that the generation before, didn't leave room [for her]."

A few months after the events, Anne returned to Paris with some former school friends and fell in love with an activist from the *Gauche Prolétarienne* (GP). Her parents planned to send her to America, and even gave her money for the plane ticket, but she bought a "scooter to ride around the suburbs, living and being an activist with Alain." The events of May-June '68 thus played a role of *socialisation by awareness raising* here, in the sense that Anne discovered and appropriated a political language that gave meaning to her

41   I conducted an interview with Anne at her home on 2 July 2008, and then we continued to exchange emails in the months that followed.

rebellious character. However, we might wonder why she joined a Maoist organisation given the large range of militant causes on offer in 1970. Her romantic attachment was decisive for her shift to action, but it was above all a "sense of placement" that explains this decision: "I had more fun with the anti-authoritarians, but I absolutely wanted to be part of something more hard-core." More than adopting the ideas (Marxist, Maoist) of the group, Anne's involvement with the GP was the result of a disposition for the escalation of radicalism, which underlies the rest of her trajectory.

1970-1974: Maoism, becoming an *établi*, theatre, communal living and motherhood

Anne obtained her *baccalaureat* degree as an external candidate, and enrolled in Chinese at the University of Paris Dauphine in 1970. Although she preferred the writings of Marx to those of Mao – "I found Maoist literature simplistic, I couldn't read it" – she still sold the newspaper *La Cause du peuple*[42] outside the Renault factories and on the marketplace, was an activist with the GP and gave literacy classes to Algerian workers from the Citroën factory. In hindsight she says, "Poor guys! I was teaching them to read with *La Cause du peuple*!"

In 1971 Anne met Fab,[43] a young anarchist artist, in a theatre at Sèvres, where he was staging a play by Artaud. A few months later they moved to Rouvière in the Cevennes region with a friend, to stage a militant play there. The *Amical* was an old theatre that they managed to convince the Mayor to give them the keys to, and it was quickly transformed into a commune. Alongside this, Anne decided to become an *établi,* she was employed as an unskilled worker in a textile factory. But her revolutionary hopes rapidly came up against the chasm that separated Maoist theory from the reality of her factory.

> We had this slogan at the GP – down with the little bosses! So I had it in for them! Bad luck, the lovely women who drove me to the factory every morning was the supervisor! (*she laughs*) But I had bigger goals; because the textiles came in from Roubaix, Lille, Tourcoing, I said to myself, we could organise a revolt among all the factories of the company. And the most receptive to my violent argument was the supervisor – so I was

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42   The newspaper put out by the GP
43   Fab was abandoned at birth, and went through several foster families before arriving at the house in Sèvres, an orphanage run by anarchists.

in the shit! She thought I wasn't far-off on several points (*she laughs*). [...] I couldn't fight against the unions, there weren't any, and as for the workers, I began to raise awareness during the lunch break, following the recommendations of the GP, explaining how much they were exploited. But they didn't care because they all came from farms and they said 'well yeah but on the farm I work ten times as much, for nothing', which was a knockout argument! [...] Finally, there were still heated discussions during lunch time, so I was still hopeful, I said to myself: this is a wakeup call. What I did not take into account because I was naïve and not really politically trained, is that there is a big difference between vaguely supporting ideas and action (*she laughs*). Well, and they had to feed me as well because we had so little money I never had anything (*she laughs*) everything was backward!

Anne was also the only Maoist activist in the commune; the others were anarchists, anti-authoritarians and hippies, and she did not have much affinity with them. "When you get up at five o'clock in the morning, go to the factory and you're the only one working, it's much less cool!" She did appreciate however, being able to meet all sorts of young people searching for projects to defer the return to everyday life:

I met some Maoists who came from Lille – I adored them! [...] that was after the breakup of the GP so they were, well, everyone was in this kind of lost phase, wanting to continue but with the structure that officially no longer existed [...] Moreover, we wrote in *Actuel*[44] to say that we were performing a play and we said something like 'everyone can come', and well they did all come! The place was overflowing, the Rouvière police went crazy, they pretty much posted a guy permanently at the end of the street, there were so many runaways, they fished guys out of the village pond, completely off their heads... well we gave it a good vibe!

At the turn of 1972, the *Amicale* functioned as a transitional space, where activists from various extreme-left groups looking for alternative prophecies to "prolong the utopian inspiration that was not successfully achieved at the level of society as a whole" (Léger, 1979, p. 48) came together. In a context where far-left engagements were increasingly unpopular, communal living helped to absorb the shock of individual disillusionment. It therefore allowed the members of the communes (the "communards" to use Bernard Lacroix's

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44   One of the main underground, countercultural magazines in the 1970s.

term, 1981) to mourn for their revolutionary hopes together, whilst still
remaining faithful to their break away from society. The hope of "changing
the world" was thus gradually converted into a hope to "change one's own
life." The communal space thus allowed them to defer the closure of the space
of possibilities and to perpetuate social indetermination through various
forms of exile or escape. These quests could take on spatial dimensions,
such as in the back-to-the-land projects, or in long-distance travel; temporal
dimensions, such as in "futuristic or backward-looking utopias" (Mauger,
1999, p. 235); or psychological dimensions with the use of drugs etc.

Communes therefore mitigated the absence of institutions providing
legitimacy for the communards (after the dissolution of the political or-
ganisations in which they had been active), and compensated for the lack
of social integration,[45] due to breakdowns with family and friends resulting
from activism or marginalisation. For Anne, the social and political diversity
of the communes represented a way of perpetuating the utopia of a society
without class (or a least without social barriers):

> Very different people came through the communes; some of them were
> very political. We all met in the Larzac, the hippies and all the others. Now
> it seems like these things were separate but it was much less divided in the
> meetings […] What I liked was the mixing. The workers really taught me
> things, and well, I was discovering everything: the first black person I had
> talked to and become friends with was during that time […] Before, it was
> the cloistered world of each to their own, here it was the opposite, openness
> to other social worlds, within the commune, but also within the village.

In these spaces of intense sociability, certain encounters – both between
friends and romantic partners – were responsible for biographical changes
that became all the more decisive in that they occurred at an age of bio-
graphical indetermination (and thus represented so many possible futures).
Anne also recognises that she would not have hesitated to take up arms if
she had had the opportunity at the time:

> I was lost [*after the dissolution of the GP*] and I was looking for something,
> something more extreme. In other words, if I had met people who were in

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45   For Michel Voisin, the solution of the commune "achieves a kind of collective mobilisation
from disarray" (Voisin, 1977, p. 300). Bernard Lacroix also describes the role of communes in
integration, but in my view, he reduces it overly rapidly to the downward mobility of commune
members which, he believes, produces their social exclusion (Lacroix, 1981, Chapter 4).

combat at the time I wouldn't have hesitated for sure. With the mindset I had then, the desire to breakaway from what I had, I would probably have jumped right in (*long silence*). But, well, 80% of the people I met were hippies, so I had occasional urges for violence, but that's all (*she laughs*)!

At twenty-three, with no affiliation to any structured political organisation and without any stable professional future, Anne found herself in a situation of prolonged "temporary irresponsibility" (Bourdieu, 1984a), which made her particularly receptive to the different countercultural utopias on offer.

Sparking a peasant revolt: from disillusion to disillusion

Anne, Fab and their theatre company ended up staging several performances of a play by Rabelais which was very popular with the local population, especially when the local pastor and other people from the area joined the company. Fuelled by this success, they decided to take on a more politically ambitious play: "It was after my observations at the factory. We had to open up to the peasants. We said to ourselves, we're going to put on a play for the peasants, with the idea of causing a revolt. Believing in the virtues of leading by example, we set up a performance based on the successive peasant revolution."

Anne was six months pregnant when she was forced to take leave for health problems. She left the factory where she had been an *établi*. Shortly afterward the theatre troupe went on tour around the communes in France, and performed the play with relative success. The only really enthusiastic (and quite singular) public was in Saint-Alban[46] where, "The principle is that the crazy people can go out in the village. It took them three days to calm the inmates down afterwards: And yes, we called for insurrection, and there we had our best audience: they went into immediate insurrection! That's also when I understood that I wanted to leave the troupe. They made fun of the mad people and I couldn't deal with that... I thought, in fact *they're all rednecks*, it's the same – they're just as stupid as the rest."

Once again, Anne reacted according to the principle mentioned above: flee everything that could be seen as conformist, and genuinely seek the most radical or marginal belonging possible. She used anti-psychiatry to further her critique of the troupe members, seen as "bigots" for having taken the side of "normal people" – a position that she denounced and sought to

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46   St-Alban is a town in the Lozère region of France, whose psychiatric hospital is considered the birthplace of institutional psychotherapy.

eradicate in both others and in herself. This quest for belonging without compromising with the "system" was exhausting. For Anne, it increasingly began to resemble an escape from reality.

1973-1975: communes, LSD, depart for New York, feminism

At the end of her pregnancy, Anne was physically and emotionally exhausted. She was doubtful about the appropriateness of having a child in her current living conditions – the most extreme social marginalisation, drugs and destitution.[47] Disappointed by life in the commune, she persuaded Fab to move with her to Montpellier, so that she could return to her studies. But communal life caught up with her. Fab and his friends moved back into a commune in Aveyron and Anne, who had just given birth to her son Mikaël had no option but to follow them. She did not dwell on the period that followed, in which she knew hunger, cold and the great material and moral difficulty that came from caring for her new-born son almost alone, along with the inevitable tensions within the commune. During this period, Anne pushed her own psychological and physical boundaries as a form of resistance, and was eventually hospitalised:

> It's hard to explain, when I ended up in hospital from having nothing to eat, the doctor treating me couldn't believe it, I was coherent within myself. It's hard to get you to understand, I was sure that I was living in truth because I was paying for it with my body. [...] I grew up, like everyone, in the land of lies, in the land of the Resistance – yeah right! In 'popular' republics that weren't at all, great silences behind the celebrations, not to mention the significant family resources, we experienced all that, so my body suffering, that seemed real, right, just; [...] the main question that I asked myself at the time, I swear I thought about it every day, was – to what point am I able to resist? And against what?

Anne threw herself headlong into a project of denunciation, whose authenticity was founded partly in the bodily risks she took, as in the case "of martyrdom" (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006, p. 88). She sought to (re) live the French Resistance on a personal level, by other means. The spectre

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47   Anne explained in the interview that she rapidly regretted having a child; that was, for her "just as utopian as the theatre project, life in the scrub, the fantasy of going back-to-the-land". For an analysis of the trajectory of this child, Mikaël, his countercultural education and his future, see Pagis (2015).

of the Second World War, which we have already seen as being decisive in the engagements of Paul and Colette (Chapter 4), was also important for Anne, who says in the interview that war never ends but is continued by other means.

In 1973 Fab and Anne returned to Paris, once again stuck on the extreme fringes of society: "We found ourselves on the street, and this friend, a psychiatrist from Saint-Alban lent us an attic room to tide us over: I'd reached a kind of point of no return…" Anne lived doing small jobs, translations – particularly of *Playboy* articles. On the weekend, she helped her friend Laurent, an engineer she had met a few years before in a commune, to renovate his houseboat, and discussed linguistics whilst high on LSD. With a very low income she managed to rent a small apartment and made Fab promise not to bring friends around… in vain. They were so far advanced into marginalisation it was far from simple to get out. Social capital thus became decisive in the conditions for her exit from this marginalisation and Laurent played an essential role in this: "He sold his houseboat. He arrived one night and he said – listen, it's vital for you that you get out, and he gave me a wad of money. The next day I bought a ticket for New York."

Anne left Mikaël (who was then little more than a year old) with Laurent, the only person in her entourage she could trust; Mikaël's father, she said, was "too wasted." In New York she discovered that the nanny she knew as a child had become an activist with the Gay Front, and she was introduced into the radical feminist milieu. She is still moved by the memory of having mixed with Kate Millett shortly after reading her book. She was then "caught up in the most extreme feminist movement." For a few months Anne travelled the United States in search of various forms of belonging "as a rambler more than as an active member… whilst also frantically looking to belong to something completely." In 1974, when she returned to her son, she knew that she had to break away from this marginalisation. But it would take several years.

1975-1980: journalism, squats and psychoanalysis: slowly climbing out of the margins

When she returned to Paris, Anne was 26 years old and wanted to work freelance for various papers. This is how she came to be a journalist at *L'imprevu* and worked for a year (1976-1977) as a script girl for television. She became passionate about avant-garde cinema, and lived for a time with an actor who was well-known for his work in protest cinema of the 1970s. For the first time, she managed to earn enough money to rent an apartment in her own name. But although economic independence was a necessary

condition for moving out of marginalisation it was not sufficient in itself,[48] and Anne's social networks – with which she had not completely broken off – caught up with her: "I was bored in that apartment, I didn't see many people. Then Jojo arrived, a friend from the commune period, and we became professional burglars for about a year."

Through Jojo, Anne met Victor, a far-left psychoanalyst – close to the autonomist movement – who she fell in love with. He would be a bridge from marginalisation to a more conventional way of life. Between 1975 and 1980, Anne remained half in and half out. She trained as a journalist with several papers, discovered a taste for writing, whilst also moving in autonomist circles and "not disconnecting." She also began psychoanalysis:

> I was fully aware that I was in a mode of abandonment – I couldn't live anything long-term... I had a disproportionate desire to belong, and at the same time a deep fear of being abandoned which made me always chuck everything in. [I was] Constantly looking for belongings, but without actually being able to tolerate any of them, which led to this kind of wandering [...] I felt like I was at the end of something ... I think I wanted to do it and I was tired of all my breakups.

Impossible stability (political, professional, familial) as well as the futile search for "total" belonging, were not too far removed from the family configuration in which Anne grew up, or her early inability to accept the educational relationship in the family sphere. In the face of her parents' gap between their discourses and their practices, Anne developed the habit of "identifying double discourses and constantly searching for weaknesses in practice," thus interiorising a critical stance vis à vis the social world. This critical distance would be reflected in all the stages of her career as activist, as a professional and as a parent.

During this period, Mikaël went to various alternative crèches in Paris, as his mother moved around. Anne's description of her approach to education reflects the characteristic traits of countercultural educational practices described above:

> This was an education marked by activism, feminism, rejection of authority in all institutional forms, rejection of family structures (for example, I

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48   Just as it is not enough for someone who smokes marijuana to simply stop smoking to "get out", to the extent that the group of smokers represents the principle support for deviant socialisation (Becker, 1963, Chapter 3).

considered Laurent to be a real father to Mikaël), very often group living […] The political context of the time gave us a revolutionary perspective, what vision of the future could I envisage that wouldn't be thrown into doubt? So I never made a project for Mikaël, I think I was in a wait-and-see position, which was consolidated by the ideas coming out of life in the commune […] we particularly didn't want to impose our choices by playing on our authority, our position of power as parents…

It was a newspaper ad in *Liberation* presenting a project for an alternative crèche in a squat in the 20th district in Paris that made Anne decide to move there in 1977:

> On the right, there was the J street squat, they were all druggies, and us, we were activists, and that is where *Action Directe*[49] was formed, and one of my best friends, who I met there, joined it… So half the autonomists in Paris met up there to yell at each other. I was a very enthusiastic participant, whilst still managing to go to my three session of psychoanalysis a week. So I was not completely out of the woods in terms of coherence…

Following a form of reconversion of militant resources into the educative sphere that was common among women in the 1970s, Anne became the impromptu director of the alternative crèche for a year. Her relationship with the autonomists was ambiguous, as was her desire to break free from the margins: "I thought that the squats were great, but the political discussions, there was something that didn't work, it seemed too simplistic to me. Five years earlier, I was totally convinced, but here, I vaguely began to understand, with the help of psychoanalysis, that marginalisation, which was a choice at first, became a trap." In this period, Anne met Antoine, her current partner, and for a time lived between him and Victor.

1982-1986: reintegration through journalism

One of Anne's best friends, an activist with *Action Directe* was arrested in the early 1980s. As a result she became involved in the active support for imprisoned activists, created a defence committee, sought support

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49   *Action Directe* was an armed revolutionary group in France between 1979 and 1987. They described themselves as a communist anarchist "guerrilla group", which originated in the autonomist movement and committed a number of violent attacks and assassinations before being eventually banned by the French government.

from various high-profile figures, from activists to artists, but also journalists, asking them to sign a number of petitions. It was through this activism that Anne began to work for the newspaper *Liberation* in 1983, to become the "prison correspondent:" "Almost every day I went to *Libé* to give them petitions, articles in support... and I ended up staying there, you know!"

Liberation played a similar role for Anne as it had for Paul (nearly ten years earlier), allowing her to make a living whilst engaging in an activity based on social critique, in a professional environment where she found the activists she had frequented in the 1970s. "I spent my time writing, I was among my own, we understood each other straight away, paths that were all so close to mine, well, at least when I got there, after that it changed [...] And especially, the thing that was so important to me, meeting people from everywhere, that's what journalism was!"

Once again, the newspaper functions here as a path to reintegration whilst still remaining on the outside, of joining the labour market whilst still considering oneself as an activist, getting out of social marginalisation whilst writing articles in support of those who were still marginalised. Anne thus achieved reintegration through professional practice, and was able to progressively renegotiate the schema through which she perceived the world: "the ministry of justice thought that sometimes it wasn't very clear which side I was on, but it was a left-wing ministry so there were lots of people you could talk to, it wasn't Rachida Dati.[50] That's how you learn to think differently... At the beginning I thought all judges were enemies to fight against, but I became more moderate afterwards!"

Several factors contributed to making this change in perspective possible, after more than five years: fatigue (physical and emotional) accumulated over years of being socially marginalised, having a school-aged child to care for, psychoanalysis, meeting Antoine, the social resources necessary to join *Libération* (see Box 5 below), and resocialisation both professionally and socially due to contact with new networks. This was such a long process for Anne because she had genuinely converted to life on the social margins. She had interiorised the ways of being and acting that are specific to a milieu in which the functioning principles are approximately the inverse of those in the dominant social order. This made it impossible to reintegrate the latter overnight: fractured habitus had to be genuinely re-educated, which

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50   Rachida Dati is a right-wing politician who was Minister for Justice and spokesperson for Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007.

required breaking away from the marginal spheres and accepting relations with individuals who had previously been considered enemies.[51]

Her psychoanalysis was involved in the resolution of identity contradictions, and the accompaniment of social reintegration, with all the ambiguity associated with this practice in the 1970s. Indeed the events of May-June 1968 had resonated strongly in the psychiatric sphere. In the years that followed, anti-psychiatry proposed (individual) salvation goods well-suited to demands for alternative prophecies by ex-activists in search of somewhere to belong, after the dissolution of their political organisations. Although many of the interviewees were looking of a way of legitimising their non-conformist way of life (psychoanalysis thus served to expunge feelings of guilt) in this sphere, it often marked the end of activism and the beginning of social reintegration.[52] An in-depth study would be necessary to explore a hypothesis that is only sketched here: the use of psychoanalysis to rationalise and justify (collective) revolutionary disengagement. Faced with the contradictions inherent in his professional practice, Victor ended up stopping all his activity as an analyst: "The day he thought that the job he was doing was leading people to live according to the norm, he stopped being a psychoanalyst and became a translator."[53] Although Victor played an essential role in Anne's reconversion, it was ultimately with Antoine, a university lecturer, that she settled down to live as a couple.

Box 6   Socially differentiated exits from marginalisation

The conditions for leaving marginalisation primarily depend on resources (particularly qualifications), and the social origins of the interviewees. Reintegration was much more difficult for Marinette, born to working-class parents in 1948, who became a school teacher after passing her *baccalauréat* in 1968. After her experience at a commune on a farm in the Loire-Atlantique, where she lived with her husband Yves for nearly a decade in quasi self-sufficiency, reintegration turned out to be impossible. Marinette had resigned from the national education system, they tried to become artisans but failed several times. After the

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51   Anne explains this with respect to judges; but, more generally, anybody who was socially well established was considered suspicious.

52   I asked another interviewee at what point he stopped considering himself a revolutionary, he replied: "I think quite quickly, there was the example of the URSS, of Mao... And then I quickly became interested in psychoanalysis and when you're interested in that, you understand that the revolution can only be personal, and you can't change people, or decide to change people like that, impose it [on them] ..."

53   In particular Victor translated the novels of Virginia Woolf, and expressed his dispositions for protest through his choice of the work he translated.

final bankruptcy, Yves and Martinette, who had meanwhile become close to a spiritual sect, the Universal White Brotherhood (FBU), went through a period of depression and alcoholism.

Forced to live in a caravan, they became more and more involved with the FBU and ended up living at the headquarters as paid staff members. Their lack of social, educational, political and economic resources meant that their various attempts to redefine their space in keeping with their expectations failed after years of marginalisation. Their spiritual exile proved to be a way of avoiding extreme social vulnerability and downward mobility.

1986-2008: perpetuating the openness of possibilities – in spite of everything

Anne's second son, Eli, was born in 1986, whilst she was in a stable professional situation at *Libération*, where she had been for three years, and in a stable relationship with a partner who was neither a burglar, nor a psychoanalyst, nor a leftist, nor an artist (and who was in fact just a leftie)[54] Life on the margins was behind her, although she was still friends with certain "exes," particularly with an activist from *Action Directe*: "I was very complacent; I knew full well that he was carrying out robberies, I knew all that… But I was complacent because I adored that guy, I still do in fact, and because, from my own experience, I knew that […] the only way to get out of there, is to have friends elsewhere, close to him and ready to help him change track."

Anne therefore projected herself onto this friend's story, which reflects her own, and tried to be the bridge for him that others had been for her. This affective connection may also have been a way for her to continue to keep one foot in the margins, as a condition of maintaining her self-esteem.

Anne resigned from *Libération* in 1996, for several reasons; she no longer agreed with the editorial line of the newspaper, but especially she wanted to devote herself to her own writing. She published her first essay in the same year, on a subject that had been close to her heart since the first arrests of GP activists, and then those of *Action Directe* – justice in France.[55] Her thirst for social justice, which had been the driving force in her political activism, before being transferred into the professional sphere and journalistic critique of the judicial system, became a literary project.

54   He was a member of the Socialist Party, the major moderate left-wing party in France, and as such was significantly less radical than Anne's previous partners.
55   The exact reference is not given here in order to preserve Anne's anonymity.

What were the effects of these successive reconversions on a political level? Anne voted regularly for far-left parties in the first round of elections, but has great difficulty identifying with the current political offer.

> My husband is an elected representative in the Socialist Party. We often don't agree, we often agree too, luckily... But I absolutely don't identify with the PS, even the left of the PS; but I also absolutely don't identify with the far left, so I don't know where I am anymore [...] I don't have any political activity worthy of that name any more, perhaps a political attitude in my way of living in a neighbourhood, and living with people. That yes, that stays. But I'm in a sort of political no-man's-land.

When I met Anne, she was a writer (in a financially unstable situation) and involved against the extradition of Marina Petrella, an Italian former activist in the Red Brigades. For this cause, she reactivated her activist network and her contacts made through *Libération*, particularly among political refugees. Anne is thus part of a hotbed of ex-'68ers who are not involved in lasting militant activities but who have latent dispositions for re-engagement. Although supportive of the alternative globalization movement, they are not directly involved, as though they were waiting for a significant social movement which would resonate more with "their history" and in which their involvement would make sense. The analysis of trajectories like that of Anne or Paul thus provides elements of response to questions regarding the conditions that maintain hope in situations of significant social change. Indeed, both of these interviewees achieved more or less successful reconversion of their critical dispositions into journalism, without having to break with their previous leftist identity. Journalism became a way of perpetuating the breakdown of social barriers (through investigation, and the overarching perspective on the social world), and using one's pen to give voice to the dominated, excluded and marginal in society.[56] It is as though their whole trajectory allowed them to remain in a state of social weightlessness, socially unclassifiable, and thus potentially (re)mobilisable. Their living conditions were thus more favourable to maintaining a hope for social change than those of other interviewees whose professional paths irrevocably distanced them from the concerns they had had forty years earlier. This is not to suggest that Anne and Paul did not change their concerns, but they seem to have preserved their reflexes, their affinities with their former milieu,

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56   In this respect, this is equivalent to the profession of research in social sciences discussed above.

transforming their former objects of contestation into objects of study, or even into objects of resistance art, and resorting to forms of protest suited to their situation.

However, most of the interviewees at the countercultural pole of the protest space in the 1970s turned towards an environmentalist vote from the 1980s onward. This was notably the case for Mathilde, who was a unionist with Sud,[57] beginning in the 1980s, before joining the Green party when she retired. More generally, this political orientation brings together the sub-group in the corpus who did not have activist experience prior to May '68, and for whom these events played a role of *political socialisation by awareness raising* or *conversion,* responsible for less institutionalised forms of activism in the 1970s (feminist movements, critical renovation of everyday life, utopian communities etc.).

Conclusion

To what extent can we consider the events of May-June 1968 as responsible for the birth of utopian *habitus*? The temporary opening up of the realm of possibilities which is characteristic of critical moments, produced new aspirations without – in most cases – providing the means to satisfy them. This dissonance between aspirations and possibilities to fulfil them is at the root of utopian representations of the social world.[58] These representations are heterogeneous, and lead to multiple forms of counter-societal conversion (Lacroix, 1981). Protesting against the dominant order can also take the form of withdrawal (voluntary or not) into marginalisation and the development of parallel strategies of latent (or open) confrontation that takes the form of individual escape (depression, drugs, long-distance travel etc.), an anti-institutional mood (refusal to work, rejection of the family or school as institutions) or communautarian utopias.

The communes took very different forms and had clearly heterogeneous objectives because they accommodated individuals who were significantly socially and politically diverse. For those who, like Anne, had previously been activists in far-left organisations, the communal space functioned

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57   Sud (Solidarity, unity, democracy, "*solidaires, unitaires, démocratiques*") is a left-wing federation of unions primarily stemming from the divisions within the CFDT in 1989.

58   This hypothesis is quite close to that developed on this subject by Bernard Lacroix, but his approach systematically reduces the production of utopian aspirations to the experience of frustration or downward mobility, from a perspective that is sometimes too mechanistic (or even legitimistic).

as a space for transition, which facilitated transition and allowed them to imperceptibly convert their hope to "change the world" (with political leftism) into a hope to "change their lives" (countercultural leftism) (Mauger, 1999, p. 234). For others, who were younger and who did not have any prior political experience, the counter-societal phase represents an initial stage in the activist career. Their critical dispositions and their anti-institutional mood were directly activated in spheres that are generally outside politics. These activists also participated in the politicisation of a certain number of causes that emerged in the early 1970s – first and foremost women's rights, but also the situation of young people, homosexuality, environmentalism, or the recognition of regional languages.

For both the first group and the second, the communal phase represented a way of perpetuating the opening of the realm of possibilities and "of making the present a sort of constantly renewed reprieve" (Bourdieu, 1978, p 18) in the hope of a better future, which they were trying to achieve. These counter-societal experiences were more or less long-lasting, but they began to run dry from the mid-1970s (when it was no longer materially possible to delay professional reintegration, or after familial stabilisation). They were then followed by more or less fortunate epilogues. The exit conditions and forms of reintegration that followed these communes are as diverse as the people who lived, long-term or short-term, in them. Although those who had the most social and academic resources managed to convert their dispositions for protest into a certain number of professions that they helped to redefine (writers, teachers, journalists), others, with fewer resources, more or less successfully "invented" other professions (neo-rurals, neo-artisans, artists, storytellers etc.). Finally, for those who did not have the necessary resources to have a basic hold on reality, or to renegotiate their spheres of belonging, exit from marginalism was sometimes very difficult or even impossible, leading to situations of extreme social and emotional vulnerability (depression, alcoholism, hard drugs, and even suicide). In other words, although communes were spaces in which society was (relatively) put on hold, where alternative class, gender and generational relations were tested, and which functioned as instruments for enabling the symbolic manipulation of the future (perpetuating the opening of possibilities), social inequalities generally ended up catching up with the protagonists in their post-communal lives.

6 Micro-units of Generation '68

The preceding chapters have shed light on various socialising effects brought about by participation in May '68. Figure 10 below provides a synthesis of the diversity of responses mobilised in the months (or years) that followed the events, in the face of the twin requirements to remain faithful to past commitments whilst achieving social reintegration. Yet it is not enough to simply list these different forms of activist reconversion to construct a sociology of post-'68er political trajectories. Indeed, we have seen that the quest for political alternatives, and for ways to bring one's environment (particularly professionally) into line with one's political aspirations, are dependent on the resources an individual is able to mobilise, as well as on age, social status in '68 and on forms of participation. It is therefore time to connect the different results concerning biographical phases that occurred prior to, during or after the events of May-June '68.

To do so, this chapter proposes a synthesis of different results from the study, centred on the question of the formation of political generations. The subjective aspect of generational belonging (the generation *for itself*)[59] and the question of the gender of political generations will be covered in the first section. We will then move on to constructing a limited number of collective trajectories, to account for the variations in biographical possibilities among '68ers. We will also ultimately invalidate the hypothesis according to which May '68 produced only one (or two) "generation '68(s)," and show that there are instead a dozen "micro-units of generation '68" that share a common pool of experiences (prior, during and after the events of May '68), which will be developed here.

Social conditions for the identification with "generation '68"

Up until this point we have managed to observe a certain number of effects (political, professional and personal) of the events of May-June '68 on the trajectories of the participants. We have also noted the persistence of distinct generational groups nearly forty years later. For Karl Mannheim, these are the results of the persistent imprints of a shared foundational event, but

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59   Gérard Mauger shows how Mannheim's approach to "generations" lends itself to a Marxist reading, in the sense that it identifies the "generational situations" of actual groups called "generational units" (Mauger, 1991).

Figure 10   Coping with the dissonance between aspirations and abilities to satisfy them
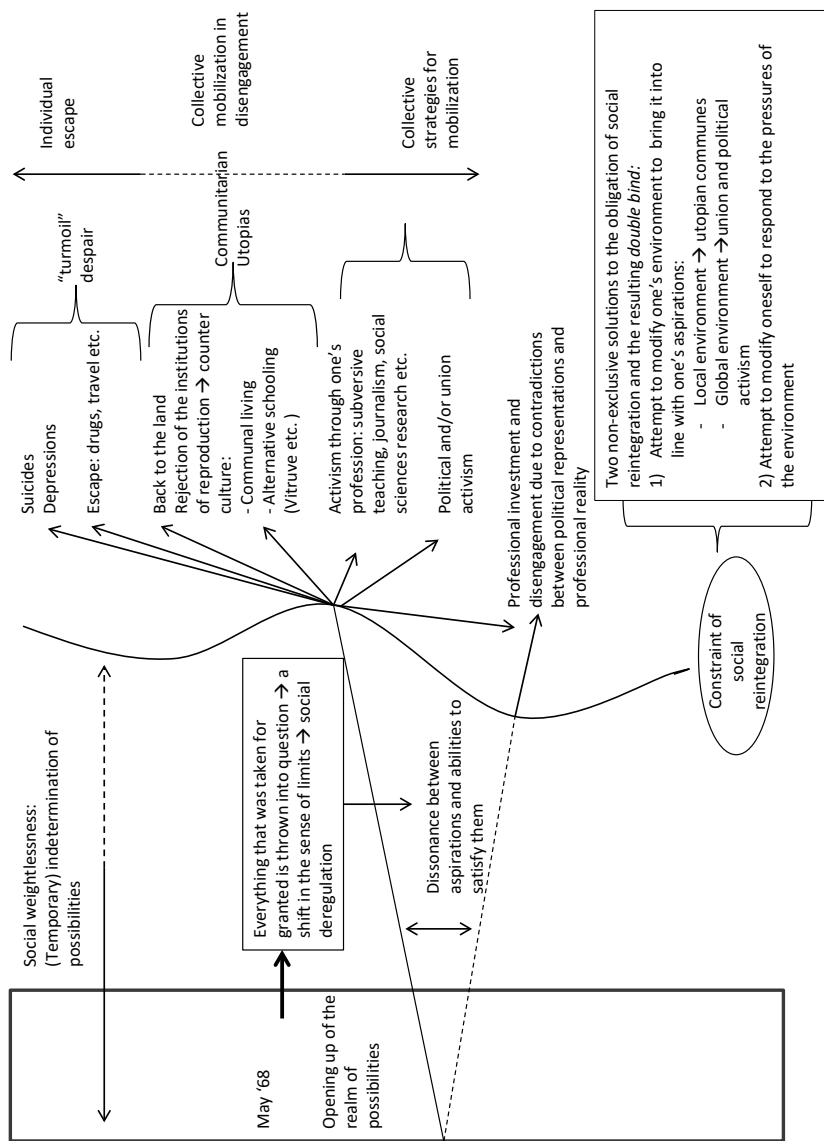
only become genuine "generation units" with the subjective dimension of generational consciousness (a generation *for itself*). It is therefore important to understand this feeling of generational belonging.

Nearly 70% of interviewees claim they belong to a "generation '68,"[60] but this rate varies significantly depending on which sub-group is being studied. How can we account for such an unevenly distributed generational consciousness? How can we grasp its social determinants?

Firstly, this feeling of belonging is most likely influenced by the different effects (political, professional and personal) of May '68, which we have studied in the previous chapters. This hypothesis is confirmed by the clear correlation between an individual's feeling of generational belonging and the (stated) impacts of the events of May '68 on his or her world view (see the first line of Table 6 below).

Although this may appear obvious, behind it lies a dual process that must be investigated: on one hand, there are biographical effects due to the participation in an event, and on the other there is the retrospective construction of an experience that is supposed to have structured the system of reference of the individuals (of various ages and social backgrounds) who participated (in different ways) in that event. It is important to incorporate the contrasting effects of "memory work" (Percheron and Rémond, 1991, p. 170 onwards) into the common usage of the notion of generation, which is associated with an event producing lasting effects and founding collective identity. Naturally, this "memory work" depends on what became of the actors after the events. This is why it is important to deconstruct the feeling of generational belonging (by associating it with its various social determinants) in order to provide elements of response to the question of what conditions are required for identification with "generation '68."

Firstly, two thirds of those who say May '68 had a clear impact on their reading of the world were not activists before the events. We can see here the idea of impressionable ages or social situations for those whose political consciousness had not yet been fully formed by prior experiences of activism. This result raises the paradox we have already discussed above: those who say they share a strong feeling of generational belonging do not bear a sociological resemblance to the leaders we generally think of when we talk about "generation '68."[61] Similarly, the interviewees who consider

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60   The question was phrased as follows: "Do you feel like you belong to a "generation '68?" Yes/No.

61   Daniel Bertaux, Danièle Linhart and Béatrix le Wita also raise this "paradox", emphasising the role played by the book *Génération* in the construction of a single "generation '68", whereas

that their current political ideas were created by May '68 are significantly more likely to also say that they feel like they belong to "generation '68" than those who were already politicised before 1968[62] (see Table 6 below). Age is indeed responsible for this correlation – scarcely more than half of the interviewees born before 1944 claim they belong to generation '68, compared to 70% of those who were aged between 20 and 24 in 1968, and 85% of those who were under 20. These results support Karl Mannheim's hypothesis: "experiences are not accumulated in the course of a lifetime through a process of summation or agglomeration, but are dialectically articulated" around and in relation to the experience of the "natural world view acquired in one's youth," which still remains determinant and "tends to stabilise itself as the natural view of the world" (Mannheim, 1972, p. 298-299).

Table 6   Deconstructing the feeling of generational belonging

	Percentage of interviewees who say they feel they belong to a "generation '68"
Do you think that the events of May '68 modified your "reading of the world?"	
– Not at all	38.5
– A little	55
– Quite a lot	70
– Significantly	**87**
Do you have the impression that your current political ideas can be traced back to:	
– The period before 1968?	60
– May '68?	**86**
– The period after May '68?	75
Were you -	
– Born before 1944?	54
– Born between 1944 and 1948?	69
– Born after 1948?	**85**
During May '68, were you -	
– A student?	**84**
– Working?	55

for them, "it was not one generation that 'created' May 68, but two" (Bertaux, Linhart and Le Wita, 1988, p. 76). The rest of this chapter demonstrates that the idea of two political generations remains overly simplistic.

62   Here we use the responses to the question: "If you think of your political ideas as they are today, do you feel that: 1) you have had them since you were a child or an adolescent; 2) you have had them since May 68; or 3) You adopted them more recently?"

Are you -	
– Female?	**77**
– Male?	60
What is your social background?	
– Upper classes	66
– Middle classes	74
– Working classes	64
Was your participation in May '68 –	
– Active?	**75**
– Not very active?	64
Did May '68 influence your professional trajectory?	
– Yes	**78**
– No	54
Did you live in a commune?	
– Yes	86
– No	60
Would you say that May '68 influenced your –	
– Style of dress?	
• Yes	**83**
• No	57
– Way of educating your children?	
• Yes	**80**
• No	54
– Everyday lifestyle?	
• Yes	**81**
• No	59

Age masks the importance of the one's social situation in May '68 however: 84% of those who were students during the events declare they belong to "generation '68," compared to just over half of those who were working at the time. Youth – in the sociological sense of the term – is thus the most appropriate variable here. Like social indeterminacy (temporary), conjugal indeterminacy should also be a factor in an individual's exposure to the events. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that 75% of interviewees who were single during May '68 claim a generational belonging, compared to 55% of those who were in a couple at the time.

More generally, Table 6 reveals the multiplicity of variables with a statistically significant correlation to the feeling of generational belonging. Having lived in a commune in the 1970s thus increases the probability of feeling like you belong to "generation '68," as does considering that May '68 had an impact on your way of dressing, how you raised your children, or your current lifestyle. Similarly, the interviewees who consider that May '68 altered their professional trajectory are more inclined to express a feeling of generational belonging. Although the intensity of participation in the events themselves is one of the variables in the *generational equation,* it is

the shared experiences (political, professional and private) after 1968 that contribute to forging these generational bonds.

Finally, social origin does not appear to be significantly correlated to the feeling of generational belonging. This is not true for sex however: female interviewees tend to express their feeling of generational belonging more than their male counterparts (77% compared to 60%). This cannot be interpreted unequivocally, to the extent that the women in the corpus are also slightly younger than the men, and especially given that less than half as many women were activists before 1968.

The use of logistic regression enables us to go further and disentangle these causal relations by constructing a hierarchy of the effects of different variables on the feeling of belonging to "generation '68" (see Table 7 below).

The results of the regression provide responses to some of the questions posed above. Indeed, sex, social situation in 1968 and the forms of activism between 1968 and 1974 are the three variables most significantly correlated with the feeling of generational belonging, along with the – subjective – impression of owing one's current political ideas to May '68. This allows us to confirm that it is not being young as such that is important here (age is not statistically significant) but rather the fact of being a student (rather than working), which has an impact on the feeling of belonging to a generation. The next most important variables are the intensity of participation in the events, and the type of professional impact (which are correlated, but contribute less to the generational equation).

Men shaped 1968, but women were shaped by 1968? Gendered generations

Two (non-exclusive) hypotheses can account for the clear gender difference in the feeling of generational belonging: either the participation in May '68 objectively had more impact on women's trajectories than on men's, or the women interviewed are more inclined to overestimate its impact on their trajectories (compared to their male counterparts).

Indeed, the women systematically award May '68 with greater biographical impact on their current political opinions, the way they educated their children, their perceptions of the couple, or even their way of dressing, and this is confirmed in the interviews. Twice as many women declare that there was a certain continuity between their aspirations as '68ers and the situation they found themselves in after the events. Finally, the women in the corpus consider the "end of the post-May period"[63] to be later in their

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63   The expressions in quotation marks correspond to the formulations in the questionnaire.

trajectories than the men do, for those who do not entirely reject the idea of a "return to order." Annick,[64] for example, rejects this notion altogether, saying "[there was] no return to order, things were never the same again."

In other words, the male interviewees tend to claim that they *shaped 1968*, whereas the women say they *were shaped by 1968* – considering their trajectories as marked by a before-1968 and after-1968. For the women interviewed here, the events of May '68 thus played a greater role in *socialisation by awareness raising*, for which politicisation is a by-product of participation.

There are several possible explanations for this. Firstly, gender shapes the kind of skills acquired during primary socialisation, which are then available (or not) for mobilisation in the political sphere. Even though they are the same age and have the same social background, men and women do not undertake their participation in the event with the same political skills and abilities. The predominantly male nature of the activist milieu on the eve of May '68, as well as the fact that women activists had fewer overall activist resources than men, made them more susceptible to the socialising impact of the event. Their trajectories are more significantly altered by the event, which explains, in part, the relatively greater identification with "generation '68" among women.

We have also seen that gender has an impact not only quantitatively (on the number of people becoming involved with politics in May '68) but also qualitatively (on the forms of activism in the years that followed). There are many more female interviewees who became involved in forms of activism outside traditional protest institutions. On the whole, they opted to participate in the critical renewal of everyday life, rather than joining pre-existing political organisations (which were marked by a significant risk of inequality and domination). Katia, who was born in 1951 in a left-wing family of low-level employees, explains in her interview:

> The activist powerbase at Uni was essentially controlled by the guys, and I could see that if I wanted to have some control over things I had to break away from those activists, especially as I had some Trotskyist friends and I could tell they weren't all feminists! [...] Given my political conscience; I didn't have the vocabulary, or any political training, I didn't go through the JC, or anything… So if I joined a party, I would be squashed, that seemed obvious to me.[65]

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64 Born in 1949, the daughter of teachers, Annick became a midwife at an alternative maternity hospital in Paris.
65 Extract of an interview conducted on 12 April 2004. Katia was an activist with the MLAC in Gennevilliers in the 1970s and contributed to the opening of the women's centre in Gennevilliers.

Even the women who were slightly older and who had been activists within political organisations before May '68 expressed the need to open new spaces for activism. They created "women's groups" within their organisations, or joined the MLF alongside their other militant activities, thus helping to redefine the borders of activism and to open "spaces for the construction of a new awareness of gender" (Achin and Naudier, 2008 p. 384; see also, Bereni and Revillard, 2012), as we saw in Chapter 5.

Table 7   Determining factors in the feeling of belonging to a "generation '68"
**   (logistic regression)**

Dependent variable: identifying with "generation '68"[a]	B coefficient	Standard deviation
Sex:		
– female	-1.706**	0.516
Age:		
– born before 1944		
– born between 1944 and 1948	-0.225	0.518
– born after 1948	-0.998	0.509
Professional impact of May '68	-0.662*	0.413
Forms of activism engaged in between 1968 and 1975:		
– non-activist	**	
– unionism	-1.954**	0.721
– far-left	-0.511	0.728
– feminism	-0.311	1.358
– non-institutional activism	0.058	0.623
– PC/PSU	**2.209**	**1.098**
Social origin:		
– working classes		
– middle classes	-0.239	0.575
– upper classes	0.673	0.590
Student in 1968	**-2.004**	0.604
Non-activists before 1968	**1.417***	0.569
Feel that current political ideas were formed:		
– before May '68	**	
– during May '68	**-2.137**	0.693
– after May '68	**-1.395***	0.654
Active participation in the events of May '68	**-1.333***	0.564
Constant	**1.477**	0.760

[a]: feeling of belonging to a "generation '68" = 0; no feeling of belonging = 1
* $p<0.1$; ** $p<0.01$

Gender also has an influence on the relationship we have to past events. Considering oneself and living one's life as an actor who owes nothing to anyone, and who has participated in changing the course of history, are traits that are socially constructed and valued as being "masculine." Recognising the influence of events on one's biographical trajectory could be considered as sign of weakness for men, or on the contrary as a sign of humility in women – this hierarchy of values having been interiorised during childhood through gendered family socialisation.

The role of biographical reconstruction provides a final explanation for the gap in generational identification. Intense activism during a political crisis provides a rare opportunity to reconstruct one's trajectory (McAdam, 1992, p. 1230). Because of the greater posterity of feminism (compared to extreme-left activism in particular) we can hypothesise that it is easier for women to see May '68 as a turning point. The events constitute a biographical juncture between a "before," marked by the conservative state of the moral order, and an "after" characterised by their liberation – although objectively this break did not actually happen until after 1970. Following the political and professional trajectories of activist couples in 1968 allows us to analyse this gendered task of constructing coherence in one's political trajectory around a political event. Let us take the case of David and Annick, for example. In 1968, David[66] was a student at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* and an activist with the UJCml, and he later became a philosophy professor in preparatory classes. He speaks about his involvement as being a kind of activism that was "linked to a time, a context" and he thus distances himself from it. However, his wife, Annick,[67] made her profession as a midwife into the continuation of her feminist commitment. Whereas, for David, the beginning of his professional career corresponded to the end of his activism, Annick has continued to be an activist in several feminist organisations and associations participating in various struggles for women's rights to access legal abortions.

The fact that the female interviewees are able to conceive of their trajectories as the continuation of their past feminist engagements is because the feminist cause gained momentum in the 1970s whilst far-left activism became increasingly unpopular. This made it more complicated, for most of the men in the corpus, to create coherence between their current paths and their past commitments. There is no equivalent of the women's movement, nor its effects, through which they could (re)construct and (re)cast

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66   David was born in 1949 into a Jewish family of furriers, who were close to the communist party but not active members.

67   Born in 1949 Annick's parents were both socialist teachers.

themselves as the inheritors of May '68.[68] Yet collective identity[69] – the generation *in itself* – is a necessary component for the feeling of generational belonging.

As a result of this, gender underwrites all the processes at work in the constitution of *micro-units of generation '68* (see Appendix 3 for the detailed summary table of the different micro-units): from primary political socialisation, to the processes of (re)converting dispositions and skills acquired during activism into the private, professional and political spheres, but also in the modalities of participation in the events. Given this, it is useful to examine the classical question of the construction of political generations from the perspective of gender. We will therefore begin the detailed presentation of these micro-generational units with a discussion of the two that are exclusively female.

Feminists from left-wing middle classes, politicised with the Vietnam War

The first generational unit we will discuss (II.3 in *Appendix 3*) brings together female interviewees born between 1946 and 1948, whose parents, low-level public servants, transmitted their left-wing preferences without being activists. Their politicisation began when they went to university (around 1966) in the context of the demonstrations in response to the war in Vietnam, and within UNEF. These women were heavily involved in May-June '68, they identified with the anti-authoritarian pole of the student movement of March 22. By the end of the 1970s they were invested in non-institutionalised forms of activism, but it was their commitment to feminism that left a lasting mark on their identity as activists, and indeed on their futures. They were activists with the women's movement MLF, like Gisèle and Martine who were both students at the Sorbonne (studying sociology and philosophy respectively). Both of these interviewees contributed to various feminist journals created in the early 1970s. Activism within the MLAC, or the MLF or local feminist groups (Noëlle was a member of the women's group at the EHESS university) was accompanied by a refusal of the patriarchy in their everyday lives, refusal of gendered division of labour, the bourgeois

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68   Three quarters of the interviewees of both sexes declare that they are now feminists, whereas less than one quarter say they are Marxists.

69   In her work on the feminist movements of Columbus, Nancy Whittier shows that collective identity only lasts on the condition that militant memory is transmitted, and that this requires a minimum degree of continuity in militant structures (Whittier, 1997).

institutions of the family and marriage. They experimented with life in communes, challenged traditional gender and power relations (between men and women, between parents and children), and contributed to the creation of many alternative crèches.

For these young women, the events of May-June '68 played a role in *political socialisation by conversion.* They were pioneers in making the personal political, and they contributed to the redefinition of women's roles in the wake of the events. Today, as teachers, research engineers, or social workers, they generally vote for the Greens (or the Socialist Party).[70] Some continue their activism in feminist organisations – like Martine who is involved with the group "Women in Black"[71] – or participate in various feminist intellectual groups. Finally, like Annick, some have managed to make their involvement with feminism into a profession. Annick became a midwife at *Les Lilas*[72] in Paris, and has taken on various associative responsibilities, particularly within the National Coordination of Midwives, of which she was a spokesperson.

The interviewees in this micro-generational unit are thus marked by the gendered impact of their activist past. The years around 1968 marked a biographical turning point which unavoidably led them towards political, personal and professional futures influenced by feminism. The conditions were clearly met for these women to be durably destabilised by their exposure to the events of 1968 and for us to speak of a *female micro-generational unit.* In the interviews, each of them expresses this biographical upheaval in their own way. Mathilde even associates the events of 1968 with a rebirth, which recalls the etymology of the word generation (from Latin, *generatus,* meaning to beget). She says, "I was born in 1968 [...] it's life, you know, that's where it started..."

It is important, however, not to fall into a rose-coloured vision that gives women the advantage over men in claiming the heritage of 1968. This ongoing heritage also has costs (symbolic, psychological, and material)

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70   Some also vote for far-left candidates. The greater diversity of electoral practices within a single micro-generational unit is not surprising because the feminist cause has not been monopolized by a particular political party, but covers a broad cross-section of the left of the political spectrum.

71   The group "Women in Black", created in Israel in 1988 by women protesting against the Israeli occupation, has become an international pacifist organisation, protesting against all forms of oppression.

72   The maternity hospital *Les Lilas* was one of the first hospitals in France to adopt an alternative approach to labour and the idea that birthing classes, such as those created by Dr Lamaze, could help prepare women for natural childbirth.

that are associated with disengagement from activism long after 1968. For the men interviewed, who had been involved in the far left, it was much easier to simply turn over a new leaf after a few months or even a few years of activism. Indeed, social gender relations were not a key target of these organisations in the early 1970s, so activism did not substantially alter their condition as men. Returning to more traditional forms of conjugal life thus proved to be less costly for them than for the feminists interviewed, whose activism was written on their bodies and in their everyday practices. For the latter, feminist activism had become *necessarily* central to their justifications for existence. For certain collective profiles of women, the costs of disengagement were such that they severed familial, psychological or social trajectories.

Depressed and downwardly mobile single women

Another all-female micro-generational unit (III.5 in *Appendix 3*) brings together interviewees born between 1946-1950, who share experiences of long-term depression related to relationship breakdowns. This group includes women of different ages, social backgrounds and religions, and this is because their gender is the most significant variable in accounting for their future experiences.

Some of these women are the daughters of army personnel, engineers, or artisans, who were practicing Catholics and conservatives. They went to religious schools, and observed the events of May '68 from a distance – when they weren't locked up at home by their fathers. Although they did not have much exposure to the events, they nevertheless discovered the existence of social milieus different to their own; Paulette,[73] for example, discovered the very existence of the left. Frédérique[74] realised that girls her age could participate in political events and that they did not all have an authoritarian and religious upbringing. Blandine saw in May '68 the justification of her personal rejection of the family order: "May '68 was a personal awakening for me. Well, I have to say I was coming out of eleven years of religious boarding school! At the time, I had no political awareness, I was only motivated by the violent rejection of the established order..."[75]

73   The case of Paulette, the daughter of a conservative soldier, also a practicing Catholic, was discussed in Chapter 2.
74   Born in 1950 to a military officer, Frédérique was two years away from completing high school in 1968.
75   Extract from a letter that Blandine attached to her questionnaire. She was born in 1944, to parents who were hotel-keepers, and conservative practicing Catholics.

The opening up of the sphere of possibilities that May '68 produced takes concrete form here in the encounters between these women and the more politicised men they married in the years after 1968, and at whose side they evolved, in sociocultural environments that were radically different from their own backgrounds. Their families had great difficulty accepting these marriages and they were occasionally the source of family breakdowns. Dominique, for example, lived with a researcher in economics, and together they joined a back-to-the-land experiment in communal living. Paulette married a sociocultural community worker and discovered unionism, anti-nuclear activism, and the demands of feminism. Yvette married a music teacher and discovered the countercultural sphere in Nantes with him. Alongside their husbands, these women challenged all the fundamental teachings of their education. They experienced a genuine resocialisation, and paid the price for it in identity tensions, as Paulette explains regarding the baptism of her daughters: "Patrick did not want to have them baptised, and even though I understood and pretty much agreed with him, it was such an insult to my parents, it was just unimaginable for them, and it was painful for me to subject them to that…"

After breaking away from the social frames, values and visions of the world they had interiorised as children, and having reconstructed their lives around the lives of their companions, these women then saw their husbands leave them in the late 1970s or 1980s. These separations left them doubly alone – separated from the men with whom they had found (new) meaning in their lives, but also cut off from most of their social networks, which were mainly built by and around the male partners. These women suffered long-term depression as a result of the rupture between a primary *habitus* that had been partially repressed in the course of converting to a new lifestyle (conjugal, professional and political), which now rejected them. It must be said that these separations did not have the same psychological and material costs for them as for their ex-partners. The women retained custody of the children and had much greater difficulty re-integrating (see Chapter 4). Their professional trajectories were sometimes disrupted, marked by periods of unemployment. Their downward social mobility, combined with the personal impacts, led to a feeling of withdrawal and disengagement, and even repudiation of the political class. Madeleine's experience is an example of this, moving between work as a secretary, bank employee, and now unemployment. She says:

> I have to find work. I'm 55 years old and I'm not certain I'll find any. Perhaps I'll end up on the streets. […] My life has been a succession of disappointments. A major one is the champagne socialists who gave

us practically nothing, I voted Mitterrand, just to see [...] As long as we have power-hungry charlatans as our government leaders, either left or right, who don't give a damn about the future of French people, we will become more and more underdeveloped. [...] I am both reactionary and an anarchist, depending on what they subject us to.[76]

We can also quote Blandine, who talks about her years of psychoanalysis and her political re-orientation in the early 1990s, after voting left since 1968:

In 1981, I started working, after doing secondary refresher classes to get into a social work course, from 1977 to 1978. [...] I remember this was an important period, when there were meetings with Palestinian doctors, members of Fatah, who came to talk to us all the time about the history of their country. Voting left two years after this experience was obvious, we were all waiting for the big day [...] My return to traditional values coincided with the end of a very long psychotherapy that I began in 1981 after my partner left. So, a return to reality, really from 1991, I supported Gaullism, I lost lots of friends and won back my parents' admiration.

For the women in this profile, marital or conjugal breakdowns later in life were not liberating. On the contrary, they led to disengagement from activism and long periods of depression which disrupted their professional trajectories – sometimes for good. Tania, the daughter of left-wing teachers, a student affairs and guidance counsellor, has suffered from depression since 1990, and wrote: "my exit from activism came from an emotional separation." Josette, a research engineer at the University of Vincennes, who divorced in 1979 and began psychoanalysis in 1984, had a nervous breakdown, stopped working, and moved home to live with her mother.

The tragic nature of the collective trajectories of these downwardly mobile women, who are alone, depressed and torn between resentment and nostalgia of the period around 1968, must be seen in light of the degree to which their trajectories (and their role as women) were altered after the events. We must also consider the brutal disappearance of the social frames in which they rebuilt their lives. Here we can talk about unfinished conversions (that we can see in the different ways in which they returned to their original socialisation), to the extent that the material, affective and symbolic conditions required to safeguard the conversion were lost after emotional and conjugal separations.

76   Extracts from comments written by Madeleine in the margins of the questionnaire. Born in 1950, Madeleine is the daughter of an engineer and a housewife, both right-wing and Catholic.

What became of the '68ers: a range of futures

Having examined the different aspects of '68ers' itineraries, and having demonstrated the influence of multiple factors, it is now time to put the puzzle together for the period before, during and after May '68, in order to reveal a small number of *micro-units of generation '68.* In order to link together trajectories marked by common experiences, the questionnaires were examined again, in light of the results obtained up until this point. For each interviewee, a number of indicators were selected – age, sex, matrix of politicisation, activist trajectory prior to May '68, the register of participation in the events, occupation at the time, the type of subsequent activism, the kinds of professional and personal impact of the events, and finally voting behaviour in 2002. Only a limited number of configurations are responsible for similar impacts, distinct families of experiences and collective political identities – in the sense of the redefinition of oneself due to being immersed in a social movement (Whittier, 1997).

The analysis reveals three groups of micro-generational units – broadly divided by the period during which they were politicised (the Algerian War, between 1962 and 1968, or with May '68). Each is then subdivided into micro-units, and then (for some) into sub-profiles (see the summary table in Appendix 3 for full details of the micro-units in these groups).[77] As we have already discussed two of these micro-units above, those two that are exclusively female, we will now look in detail at the other 11. In presenting these micro-units briefly here we will be able to emphasise certain social conditions for the persistence of political opinions and engagements and identify the relative importance of the events of May '68 in the overall progression of these trajectories.

First generational unit: The importance of the Algerian War among the eldest interviewees

The first generational unit is made up of interviewees born between 1938 and 1944 (aged 16-22 in 1960) who were politicised in a context that was extremely polarized due to the opposition to the Algerian War (Bantigny, 2007). This shared context would leave a lasting biographical imprint, shaped

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77   Certain lines of the table will not be discussed, particularly those concerning the workers and employees who did not play an active role in May '68 at their place of work, and for whom this small engagement had no notable effects on their futures (see for example section III.4 of the table in the appendix). To the extent that the event did not have a genuine destabilising effect, this group of actors do not constitute a "generational unit" according to the definition applied here.

by social origin, parents' political and religious orientation and the age of the protagonists. In this unit, we can thus identify three micro-generational units made up of interviewees from working-class backgrounds, and two of future '68ers from more privileged backgrounds.

I.1   First-generation intellectuals from right-wing Catholic families

This first micro-unit (section I.1 of the table in Appendix 3) primarily brings together men whose parents were workers, farmers or small businessmen, and conservative Catholics. These interviewees come from large sibling groups and were educated in Catholic schools – some even attended seminary. They were good students and were the first in their families to gain access to higher education. They joined the Catholic youth action groups, the JAC, the JEC or the JOC, in the 1950s and were progressively politicised through their participation in the religious sphere, around the late '50s and early '60s. The emergence of dispositions for activism is also linked to their trajectories as class migrants who moved into the student milieu at a time of intense politicisation linked to the Algerian War. They were then often active within the student union UNEF.

Two sub-profiles emerge in this micro-unit, which we can distinguish according to their political affiliations – the first covers those close to the then Unified Socialist Party (the PSU), whilst the second covers those who leant towards the far left (Trotskyist in particular) during the Vietnam War.[78]

The first sub-group temporarily ceased their activism when they ended their university studies, but remained close to the PSU. They were workers in 1968, and were mainly involved in the events in their workplaces. The events of May-June '68 played a role of *political socialisation by maintenance* here. Most of them continued their association with the PSU (only a minority were activists however) and joined the CFDT trade union. There were no remarkable family repercussions due to their participation in May '68, but there was a certain openness to feminism (through the PSU or left-wing Catholic organisations). Today most of them vote for the PS; some remained union activists up until their retirement, whilst others left their activism behind when they moved into management positions.

The second sub-profile in this micro-unit covers interviewees who were activists with the JCR or the Maoist Rank-and-File Vietnam Committees (CVB), on the eve of May '68, and who participated actively in the events beyond their workplaces (many of them were teachers). For them, the event

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78   This was the case for Jean and Christiane, whose trajectories prior to May 68 were analysed in Chapter 1.

constituted *political socialisation by radicalisation*. Immediately after the events they became activists in far-left groups, union members (particularly in association with the Emancipated School movement),[79] and soon became involved in burgeoning feminist movements (for the women among them). Although they had by then been employees and parents for several years, their intense exposure to May '68 and the political movements in the years that followed led to relatively significant family impact (participation in feminist movements, experiences of "sexual liberation," challenges to authoritarian education, separations, etc.).

I.2   Upwardly mobile children of (*Jewish*) Communists

The second micro-generational unit can be distinguished from the first by the political and religious orientation of the interviewees' parents. It brings together respondents who grew up in communist working-class families, who were Jewish or who participated in the Resistance during the Second World War. Here, the matrix of family transmission of dispositions for activism can be seen in early politicisation. Born between 1938 and 1942, these interviewees became activists during the Algerian War, within the JC, anti-fascist groups or – for those who were then at university – with the Antifascist University Front (FUA) or the student union UNEF. Critical of the PCF line (particularly because of its position rejecting Algerian independence), they were among the dissidents of the UEC (Matonti and Pudal, 2008) who joined the UJCml (or the JCR) at its creation in 1967. In 1968 they were employed, most often as teachers (or researchers), and were very active in the events, taking on positions of leadership in their organisations(s).[80]

For these interviewees, the political crisis constituted *political socialisation by radicalisation,* reinforcing their revolutionary beliefs, that they then put into practice in the years that followed within far-left organisations (particularly the Maoïst GP). Their participation in May '68 had a range of professional impacts such as becoming an *établi* (Paul), refusing to become a manager (Claude, an engineer thus turned towards journalism), and for some, temporary professional disengagement (which was easier in the public sector).

This sub-group, which was less susceptible to the propositions of the counterculture,[81] ceased their activism with the decline of far-left groups

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79   The Emancipated School (*l'Ecole emancipée*) movement was a current within the FEN that attracted revolutionary unionists who had broken away from the PCF, including Trotskyists, but also anti-authoritarian activists.

80   Like Paul, see Chapter 2.

81   This can be explained by their age, and the fact that they were working in 1968, as well as by the fundamental role that "political leftism" played for these actors, and to which they dedicated

(from 1972). They were then sporadically involved in various national social movements (particularly those in 1995) or others at the local level (involvement in workplace conflicts for example). Today they are still at the far left of the political scale (although some also vote for the PS).

I.3   Unionist workers in May '68

The third micro-generational unit brings together interviewees from working-class backgrounds, who are slightly older than the previous groups (born between 1930 and 1942). They did not graduate from high school and were working in 1968. Their politicisation is linked to the workplace rather than to the Algerian War. This profile can be clearly distinguished from the two previous ones in terms of educational and professional trajectories (in 1968 they were workers or employees who had not graduated from high school). For most of them, the biographical impact of participation in May '68 was minimal (1st sub-profile), with the exception of certain cases in which social barriers were genuinely broken down (2nd sub-profile).

The first sub-profile is made up of male respondents who are slightly older than the rest of the corpus (1935-1939). They are the children of artisans, or low-level public servants, and they entered the labour force as apprentices when they were young – particularly in printmaking and publishing – and became politicised in these spheres via unionism (in particular the printworkers' CGT). Their participation in the events of May-June 1968 was exclusively as unionists and limited to their workplaces. For them, the political crisis represented *political socialisation by maintenance.* Indeed, they continued their union activism (some joined political parties, the PSU or the PCF), but they did not experience any professional or personal destabilisation.[82] They currently participate in political associations such as Attac, or environmental protection groups and vote for the PCF or the PS.

The second sub-profile here covers children of workers (or farmers) who did not graduate from high school, and who were employed and unionists (CGT) in 1968, but for whom participation in the events led to socially

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many years of their lives. There is a younger sub-profile (1942-1945), however, that is slightly more susceptible to the countercultural offer (critical renewal of everyday life, Larzac, critique of pedagogical relations). Agnès and André (see Chapter 2) are representative of this sub-group; they converted their dispositions for protest into the critique of the education institutions, within movements and journals attacking traditional pedagogy.

82   This is the sub-group situated on the lower left-hand side of the factorial plane presented in Figure 7, in Chapter 3.

improbable encounters that led to genuine social shifts (via far-left activism and/or further education at the University of Vincennes, as was the case for Gilles, discussed in Chapter 4).

I.4   Politicisation of students from well-off backgrounds

The interviewees in this fourth micro-generational unit were born between 1936 and 1942, and come from upper-class (generally left-wing) backgrounds. They became politicised as part of the student movements against the Algerian War (UNEF in particular).

Those whose parents were members of a religious minority (Jewish or Protestant) had trajectories that were similar to those of the interviewees in profile I.2 (see Appendix 3), but they were not as severely affected by the effects of downward mobility provoked among first-generation intellectuals by far-left activism in the years after May '68.

Those who came from left-wing Catholic backgrounds became activists with UNEF or the Union of Grandes Ecoles (UGE), but not at the UEC as was the case for the previous profiles. They supported the ideas of the PSU in the years that followed. As they were sensitive to themes connected with decolonisation[83] they became involved in literacy activities. They were not heavily involved during May '68, and the events provided *political socialisation by maintenance,* without altering their professional trajectories (which were already well established), nor their political (perpetuation of their unionism, and possible activism with the PSU) or familial ones.

I.5   From contesting authority to activism

The final micro-generational unit in this first group of trajectories covers interviewees who were politicised in the early 1960s, who came from upper-class backgrounds and who shared an early opposition to family and school authority, which led to educational trajectories that were prematurely interrupted.

This collective profile covers firstly male respondents born between 1938 and 1944, sons of Catholic military personnel, who defied parental and school authority even as children. They often describe themselves as the "black sheep" of the family, as "misunderstood," and as rejecting (and rejected by) their parents and the school system at an early age. Marc, whose father and grandfather both attended elite engineering schools, was the only one of seven children to repeat several classes and to be expelled

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83   We can see here the affinities between Catholic education and third-world activism analysed in Chapter 1.

from numerous establishments for lack of discipline. Alexandre, whose father was in the military, left school before the *baccalaureat* to escape from the authority of his parents (he became a construction technician). The discrepancy between their aspirations and their (lower) social situation, as well as their working conditions (for example they speak of being "humiliated by my bosses as an apprentice," and "bored by my work as a technician") led to involvement in union activism (CGT or CFDT) and a political awakening.

The rare women in this micro-generational unit are younger (born between 1943 and 1945) and they speak of their experiences as young women, humiliated and subject to injustice due to their sex. Unequal treatment compared to their brothers, particularly in access to education (but also in social restrictions), was the source of their dispositions for protest.

The mood of protest among these young men and women, which developed in the private sphere, then became politicised through protests against the Algerian War and then the Vietnam War. These interviewees were particularly drawn to anarchist and anti-authoritarian milieus and were heavily involved in the events of May '68, as "free electrons," not associated with any particular movement, but ready and willing to fight against the police (for the men). The experience of the conjuncture of crisis operated as a catalyst for their aspirations to change their lives, which were the source of genuine biographical breaches (*political socialisation by awarenes raising,* or even *by conversion*). The professional and personal impacts of such involvement were significant. After several months – or even years – of life on the margins or in utopian communes, their social reintegration took place through artistic spheres or alternative pedagogies, thus perpetuating the refusal of social finitude by adopting relatively open-ended positions that allowed them to reintegrate whilst still enabling them to maintain a militant role in their profession.

Second-generational unit: Earning their stripes against the Vietnam War

Younger than the previous group (born between 1944 and 1949) the interviewees in this second generational unit joined the militant sphere after the end of the Algerian War but before 1968. Although certain profiles are relatively close to the collective profiles presented above, the French political context between 1963 and 1967 left specific imprints. Here we primarily see the opposition to the Vietnam War, which operated as a catalyst for the shift to militant action, with once again substantial differences depending on the social, religious and political origins of these future '68ers.

II.1   Students from right-wing Catholic families against the Vietnam War

The first micro-generational unit in this group covers interviewees born between 1945 and 1948 in right-wing, provincial, upper-class and middle-class families. They had a Catholic education (some were Scouts), went to university between 1964 and 1966, and were relatively uninterested in politics at the time. They had their first contact with activism through the student unions (UNEF) and some went on to become involved in the JEC (such as Marie-Madeleine),[84] and entered a student milieu that was heavily mobilised against the Vietnam War.

In 1968 they were students at provincial universities and participated in the events of May-June alongside the PSU, without being party members. The crisis provided them with *political socialisation by awareness raising*, resulting in significant political, professional, and personal effects. Politically, their participation in May '68 established a lasting affiliation with the left, and most were union activists (CFDT) throughout their career. The women in this micro-unit participated actively in the feminist movement from the beginning of the 1970s. Marie-Madeleine for example set up the MLAC in Dijon with a friend, and helped perform clandestine abortions until they were legalised. Members of this group also participated in the protests on the Larzac plateau, as well as in the anti-nuclear struggles.

On a professional level, some turned towards teaching (appreciated for its altruistic dimension and opposed to the much decried position of manager). Others became community or youth educators, working with marginalised populations, as a way of perpetuating their "activism through their profession." The relative exposure of feminism led to impacts in the private sphere (challenges to the gendered division of labour in the family environment), but these remained moderate. They did not, for instance, lead to radical rejection of the family institution, and only rarely to experiences in communal living. Most of these interviewees now vote Green, and are members of environmental associations.

II.2   Students from left-wing bourgeois backgrounds who became political organisers

Born between 1948 and 1950, this micro-generational unit brings together interviewees from Jewish (or Protestant) families and/or communists, from upper-class backgrounds, who inherited a feeling of belonging to a

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84   Born in 1946 in a middle-class Catholic family from the Jura region in France, her father was an engineer and her mother was a housewife.

persecuted minority as part of their family heritage. This feeling took on a political dimension as early as the *lycée* where they became student activists against the Vietnam War. For Johanna, who grew up in the United States, it was the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)[85] that was the site of her politicisation, before protesting against the Vietnam War. As soon as she arrived in Paris in 1966 she joined a Trotskyist inspired National Vietnam Committee (CVN).

These interviewees joined the JCR shortly after its creation in 1967 and were active militants at the time of the events of May '68. They were then young students, in a phase of indetermination (social, professional, matrimonial); the full range of possibilities were thus open to them. The political crisis thus led to a *political socialisation by conversion*. They dropped their studies (or continued intermittently) in order to dedicate themselves exclusively to far-left activism. Johanna thus became a paid staff member at *Rouge* (the LCR newspaper) from 1970 to 1975, whilst also an activist with MLAC. Gérard became a party organiser for the LCR between 1969 and 1984 (see Chapter 2).

The impacts of this involvement on the family are significant. Feminist commitments, as well as the repercussions of activist involvement on the private sphere led to many relationship breakdowns. On a long-term professional level, downward mobility was a consequence of this extreme form of engagement on the far left. After he left his paid position at the LCR, Gérard managed to become a (casual) teacher at an architecture school, but not without some difficulty. Johanna went through a series of causal jobs (as a secretary, as an English teacher) whilst still an activist with the LCR from 1975 to 1979, before becoming a party organiser at the International Communist Organisation (OCI) between 1979 and 1985. After spending two years in Brazil, and working as an activist with the Brazilian Worker's Party, Johanna stopped her full-time activism at the end of the 1980s: "I had no money and two small children."

Today, the members of this micro-unit regularly attend demonstrations, vote for far-left candidates, and remain involved in various social movements. Some are still card-carrying members at the LCR. These trajectories are extreme cases that shed light on the social conditions for the perpetuation of radical political involvement. Professional political activism proved to be a (temporary) solution that preserved these actors from the inevitable tensions

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85   Johanna was born in 1950 to a university lecturer and an American actor, both Jewish and Communists. Doug McAdam sets out the history and role of the SNCC in the engagement of young students in the civil rights movement in America (Mc Adam 1988).

between the expectations of the professional sphere and the activist sphere (which was often the source of disengagement from activism). Johanna's trajectory, however, reminds us just how much the scarcity of financial reward from far-left activism in the 1980s, and the domestic constraints linked to caring for young children, throw into question the perpetuation of revolutionary projects.[86]

II.4   Teachers from working-class backgrounds who never stopped being activists

The last micro-unit[87] in this group covers first-generation intellectuals, born between 1944 and 1948 in left-wing (or apolitical) working-class families. They became activists during the student movements against the Vietnam War whilst they were at university, within UNEF or in Vietnam Committees (primarily the Trotskyist CVN). The state of the political conjuncture in 1966-1967 led to many of them joining the JCR. All participated actively in the events of May-Jun '68, which produced *political socialisation by reinforcement* for them, to the extent that the political effects were accompanied by professional effects (and sometimes also familial effects). Politically, most of these activists were members of the LCR (or the PSU) in the wake of May '68, whilst still remaining active in the union (generally the teachers' unions).

This micro-generational unit, characterised by its far-left activism (political leftism) remained relatively immune to the various effects of the counterculture in the years after the events. We can attribute this to the strong union involvement that provided a channel for their activism which did not run dry after 1972, unlike involvement in the far left. This group of trajectories, of these militant teachers, is primarily characterised by the remarkable continuity of their activism. Indeed, beyond the teachers' unions that they remained active in (some participated in the creation of the union Sud, others joined it later), they also joined organisations like Attac, Palestine support networks, or committees advocating for the "No" vote in the 2005 referendum on the European constitution. Today they continue to vote for far-left (or PCF) candidates.

These trajectories are thus heuristic in grasping the conditions that are required to perpetuate activism (and far-left political preferences). In fact,

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86   She wrote: "I would love to be an active militant, but the need to earn money, the lack of a retirement, and the fact that I still have school-aged children, all prevent me."
87   Micro-unit II.3, which concerns women from middle-class backgrounds who became feminists and activists against the Vietnam War, was presented above.

because they spent their careers entirely in the public sector (teaching or research) these activists never had to confront the management positions encountered by those in the private sector. They were thus relatively well protected against the contradictions that other interviewees experienced between their convictions and the everyday realities of the professional environment. Moreover, their professional trajectories were all the more compatible with the perpetuation of militant activities in that they had a significant amount of free time.

Third generational unit: Interviewees politicised with May '68

The three micro-units in this last generational ensemble concern interviewees who had no experiences of activism prior to May '68. In these profiles, the religious and political orientation of one's parents, as well as one's own gender appear even more decisive than for the previous profiles. Indeed, most of the micro-units described here encountered the political event at a particularly impressionable age, when everything seemed possible (at least subjectively), where no political, professional or long-term matrimonial experience had served to stabilise the interviewees on their paths to their probable destinies. As a result, the destabilising effect of the political crisis was amplified.

III.1 Feminism and communitarian utopias among the middle classes
Born between 1947 and 1952, the interviewees brought together in this micro-unit come from middle (and sometimes upper) classes. They have left-wing or apolitical parents. In the 1970s, all of them participated in the critical renewal of everyday life and experimented with various communitarian utopias. However, for some this communal experience was political and was accompanied by standpoints in the 1970s protest space (1st sub-profile), whereas others cultivated a much greater distance from politics (2nd sub-profile).

From the refusal of parental authority to the politicisation of everyday life
Sons and daughters of small business owners, teachers, unionists, telephone company employees, communist sympathisers, writers etc.; these first interviewees were primarily high school students or in the first year of university in 1968. Women are over-represented in this group, most of them suffering from the tension between the political progressiveness of their parents and their conservative education.

Roberte,[88] for example, wrote: "I'd been waiting for just that, for 1968." In just a few words she summarised the encounter between the collective crisis of 1968 and the individual trajectories of these women who broke away from their families, and increasingly couldn't cope with the models of femininity which they were assigned. For these young women challenging authority in the family or in school, May '68 was the opportunity to politicise their taste for protest, according to the *matrix of statutory incoherencies.* Active during May '68, these women became close to far-left factions or anarchist movements, which were the only ones with a political programme that enabled them to oppose their parents (often specifically the father figure). Anne emphasises that: "In all these groups, I immediately felt closest to the Maos [...] I have to say that I chose a political group that my father was deeply allergic to."[89]

For these respondents, the political crisis was responsible for a *political socialisation by conversion* to the extent that it permanently altered their political, professional and private trajectories. Indeed, many of them abandoned their studies shortly after the events, thus rejecting the school institution along with the professional expectations awaiting them, in order to put their dispositions for protest at the disposal of various communitarian utopias. These young adults sought to establish "emancipated spaces," utopian micro-societies in which countercultural norms could be experimented with (norms to do with gender, conjugal relations, education, consumerism etc.). Politically, they became involved in feminist and environmental movements in the early 1970s.

After many years of unemployment, communal living and countercultural activism, some of these respondents returned to university, others joined professional spaces that were as then still unregulated and non-institutionalised (as youth workers or trainers with the employment services, as puppeteers, or running bookshops or alternative restaurants). They were active in support networks for undocumented immigrants and for other vulnerable populations more generally – indeed their chaotic professional trajectory brought them close to these people in many ways – but they were also involved in demonstrations against nuclear energy, or in defence of organic agriculture. Like many of the interviewees who were students with no prior activist experience in May '68, they participated in less institutionalised forms of activism in the 1970s, and now regularly vote for the Greens candidates.

88   Born in 1948, her father was a diplomat and her mother a teacher. Roberte always felt out of step with and "cast off by her parents". As a child and adolescent, she suffered from the fact that they were unconcerned about her future at school, by contrast with her brothers.

89   Extract from an interview with Anne (see Chapter 5).

Utopian communities and distance from the political sphere
Slightly younger than those above, the "apolitical" interviewees in this
second sub-profile were still high school students in 1968, and broke away
from their families, or from the school system early on. Many of them were
opposed to their parents on political grounds, and some (notably the children
of Communist activists) seem to have been immersed in politics throughout
their childhoods, such that by 1968 they were all quite fed up with it and
now removed from the political sphere. Yet, although they were not active
in the events, the political crisis had significant biographical impacts on
them in the years that followed.

Several of them abandoned their studies to move to the countryside and
experiment with communal living. Yet here their utopian aspirations were not
politically founded, and many of them did not vote (at least up until the 1980s).
Although they were sociologically similar to the population in the previous sub-
profile, it seems that they encountered May '68 with relatively fewer political,
social and academic resources, and that the political crisis was not so much
a *collective* opportunity to politicise situations of imbalance, as an *individual*
opportunity for resolving identity crises. As Françoise says, "political discourse
took hold of May '68 to make it into something political. But May '68 was in fact
something else, which was never said, which can't be said. Everyone found their
own personal stories in it, their own remedies and their way of living, of being."[90]

May '68 was also the opportunity to change one's life, without necessarily
aiming to change the world. After several years of living on the margins of
society, these interviewees managed to reintegrate through manual labour
for the men (refrigeration mechanic, construction work, works director)
and through education and care professions for the women (youth and
cultural workers, psychological nurses etc.). Today most of them vote for
the PS, but they maintain a significant distance from the political sphere.
Yet they continue to stand out in their specific cultural habits, even their
eating habits – practicing yoga, vegetarianism, everyday environmentalism
and a certain taste for the esoteric[91] (attraction to Buddhism and various
spiritual gurus such as Jiddu Krishnamurti).[92]

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90   Françoise was born in 1947. She is the daughter of a left-wing hotel-keeper and a right-wing
bank employee, both atheists.
91   Some were even involved in spiritual communities, such as Marinette who was a member
of the Universal White Federation (recognised as a cult) from the late 1970s to today.
92   The initiation proposed by Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986), an Indian philosopher who
called for a radical transformation of the individual resonated particularly strongly with these
interviewees' expectations.

III.2 Trotskism and counterculture among the youngest participants

The second micro-unit that was politicised with May '68 brings together interviewees of both sexes, born between 1949 and 1954, who were thus generally still at high school in 1968 and who became activists after the events in far-left and predominantly Trotskyist organisations.[93]

The children of left-wing workers, telecommunications employees and Communist Jews who ran small businesses, these interviewees inherited a left-leaning political conscience in the family environment, along with dispositions for action that they put into practice during May '68, essentially within the high school action committees (*Comité d'Action Lycéen – CAL*). Depending on the local political context in their high school, these students joined either the Communist youth JC or the Trotskyist youth JCR, and actively participated in the occupation of their school buildings. The CAL also played a central role in the political socialisation of these interviewees and in the forms of activism that they took up after the events (the "Red Circles"[94] and the JCR). Their appreciation of Marxist discourse and the experience of active militancy during the events of May-June '68 constituted resources that enabled them to collectively join an organisation like the LCR – especially given that it was newly formed which meant they would have greater control over its future.

In the years that followed, these young revolutionary activists participated in the movements associated with the critical renovation of everyday life: feminism, environmentalism and so forth. Some even left the LCR to go "back-to-the-land" or to try communal living in the early 1970s, whilst others continued their activism there whilst also becoming involved in feminist and women's rights movements (particularly with the MLAC) and in unionism.

May '68 also caused significant upheaval in their professional trajectories, given that in the years after the events, revolutionary activism was their primary concern. Some dropped out of school or university early, others changed to more politicised courses or universities. They became teachers, youth workers, journalists or artists in the 1970s. David studied humanities in Montpellier and was an activist with the OCI between 1971 and 1973, before becoming an actor "to be free in [his] choices and lifestyle." He

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93   Only the sub-profile from the working class is presented here (they represent the majority), but there is a smaller secondary sub-profile that draws on children from more affluent, Catholic and right-wing backgrounds who, for those interviewed here, were more drawn to the organisation "Revolution!" (a far-left Mao-spontex organisation).

94   After the JCR was disbanded in 1968, the sympathisers and activists came together in these "Red Circles" which were often held in senior schools with the objective of politicising young students.

experimented with life in a commune for several years, participated in the demonstrations in Larzac, and has been sporadically involved in artistic circles ever since. Those who became teachers were involved in the union throughout their careers, but most left the LCR in the second half of the 1970s. They were involved with the union Sud, the support networks for undocumented immigrants, and several are still members of the network Education Without Borders (*Reseau éducation sans frontières – RESF*). Today most vote for far-left parties.

For this "leftist" micro-generational unit, the events of May-June '68 thus provided *political socialisation by conversion*¸ radically altering their political (they joined the protest space with May '68), professional (dropping out of studies early, converting dispositions for protest into the professional sphere) and personal (redefinition of male/female roles, parenting norms, communal life etc.) trajectories.

This micro-unit shares many traits with the interviewees in I.2 above (upward social mobility, active political leftism). But unlike this first group, these interviewees also participated in countercultural leftism and in the feminist and environmental struggles of the 1970s. In this instance, their age and where they were in their careers as activists when they encountered May '68 were decisive factors in this difference. May '68 and the political leftism of the years that followed (up to 1972) concluded a cycle of activism for the older group. But for this micro-unit, who were slightly younger, May '68 marked the beginning of their activist career, at a point when anything was biographically possible.

III.3 *"First-generation graduates" activists through their professions*[95]
Born between 1947 and 1954, this profile only covers interviewees from Nantes,[96] who are children of railway workers, or low-level public servants, and whose parents were Catholic and left-wing. They had a religious upbringing and a minority became members of the JOC. They were the first in their families to obtain a high school qualification, but did not continue their studies any further (unlike the first-generation intellectuals we have seen up until now). In 1968, they were at high school or in their first year of university. They participated in the events of May-June '68 in association with the PSU in Nantes.

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95   Micro-unit III.5 has already been discussed in the section on feminism, and micro-unit III.4 will not be presented here because there were no lasting impacts on the trajectories of its members. As such it does not constitute a micro-generational unit in the sense that we have outlined here. See the table in the appendix for details.
96   These are the interviewees who enrolled their children in the Freinet school in Nantes.

For this sub-profile, May '68 played a role of *political socialisation by awareness raising,* radically altering their political and professional trajectories (and for some also their familial trajectories). Indeed, having become politicised with May '68, they had to choose their professional orientation in the wake of the events. For these first-generation graduates, who had just pushed open the doors to higher education, political aspirations would play a decisive role in their professional orientation. They thus imported their dispositions for activism into areas like sociocultural community work, and work with disadvantaged groups (specialist teachers). Alongside this, they were active in neighbourhood organisations, in organisations supporting immigrant workers (such as GASPROM),[97] in anti-nuclear struggles, and were also involved in unionism (CGT/CFDT) like Louis, whose trajectory was discussed in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

How did participation in a political crisis like May '68 influence individual trajectories and lead to the formation of "political generations?" This question has been the guiding theme of the reflections and analysis developed up until this point. Certain responses may be put forward here by way of conclusion.

We cannot understand what produces activism without also analysing what this activism is the product of, and tracing this back to the roots of this engagement. This is the first finding of our analysis. Conceptualisation in terms of generation – which associates a founding event with a socialising effect which would provoke similar disruptions in the trajectories of all those who participated in it, conceals what happens prior to, during, and after this event. In other words, the notion of generation does not help us to understand how the political event *acts* on individual trajectories. The trajectories of the interviewees who participated in the events of May-June '68, but who were not durably influenced by it serve to remind us that participation alone cannot be held responsible for the long-term establishment of political opinions and behaviour.

It is therefore not only the short term of the event itself that leads to the destabilising effect described by Karl Mannheim, but perhaps especially its effects in terms of shifts in social and friendship networks, openings into new political, professional, amical or romantic connections. These results

97   GASPROM was a group to welcome and assist immigrant workers and was a local branch of the Association for Solidarity with Immigrant Workers (ASTI).

advocate for a non-mechanical interpretation of the role of the political event in the formation of generational units. The *micro-units of generation* laid out in this chapter are therefore not the result of participation in May '68 alone. Indeed, this participation is itself engendered by prior history – both individual and collective – which is expressed in the short term of the event, and which depends on biographical availability, place, sex, the degree of exposure, meetings in the context of the crisis etc.

Finally, the study allows us to understand how an event can destabilise (or not) certain trajectories. Suspending routine social relations in a context of crisis creates a situation where the realm of biographical possibilities becomes radically opened, which in turns leads to the various socialisation effects that we have seen over the chapters. We can hypothesise that they are the result of the experience of social deregulation specific to these critical moments, which leads to upheavals in the sense of limits and to the emergence of new aspirations. These new expectations however run up against the objective (im)possibilities of satisfying them. With the few exceptions that we have seen in the previous chapters, the event thus produces disappointed aspirations; it increases the hiatus between expectations and satisfactions. Various individual and collective responses are thus developed to face up to these imbalances and to maintain personal integrity. These results encourage us to return to the question of "relative deprivation," which has been rightly criticised from a new perspective by various authors in the sociology of social movements.[98] Indeed, the studies that draw on the notion of frustration due to relative deprivation often explain it by downward social mobility, and all-to-quickly consider it a determining factor in activism. Yet activism in May '68 led to a range of different forms of unease and distress, associated with downward mobility. Downward mobility, along with relative deprivation, therefore become consequences of activism in May '68 and not causes (Siméant, 1998, p. 421). This, in turn, confirms the importance of investigating the question of disappointed hopes[99] without miserabilism, as a source of the multiple forms of mobilisation (individual and collective) that emerged to confront it.

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98   Which emphasised, through the work of numerous researchers, that there were always sufficient frustrations to explain mobilisation, and condemned the miserabilism often associated with theories of downward mobility and relative frustration.

99   This is also defended by Christophe Traïni, for whom "it is important to protect oneself from miserabilist implications that are often associated with theories of downward mobility or relative frustration. Individuals affected by a pragmatic paradoxical situation are not necessarily invalids, indigents or afflicted by a social trajectory that resembles a descent into hell" (Traïni, 2009, p. 106).

7   A ricochet effect on the next generation?

Figure 11   Living with children; drawing from Cabu

Source: Drawing from *Hara-Kiri magazine,* 154, July 1974, by Cabu. On the banner are the words "Living with children." Meeting of "La Gueule Ouverte."[1]

1   *La Gueule Ouverte*, ("jaws agape") and *Hara Kiri* were satirical political and ecologist magazines published in the 1960s and 1970s. *Hara Kiri* would go on to become (after its official censorship) the satirical journal *Charlie Hebdo*. My heartfelt thanks to Cabu for allowing this cartoon to be republished here. Cabu was tragically murdered in the terrorist attack against this satirical newspaper in January 2015, which left 12 people dead.

Initially, the question of the "second generation" was covered from the perspective of the transmission of family memory relating to May '68, particularly through parental narratives of the events, books, photos, objects or even given names. However, the explicit part of this transmission process proved to be minimal compared to what had remained implicit. I therefore ultimately concentrated my focus on the central vector of this transmission: primary socialisation.

As I specified in the introduction, the material concerning the "children"[2] of 68ers were collected from among students at two experimental schools. Through the subversion of pedagogic relations, the schools of Vitruve (Paris) and Ange-Guépin (Nantes) participated in the wider post-1968 movement criticising social relations based on domination. This particular access to the field therefore specifically selects '68ers who adopted and implemented their dispositions for protest and anti-institutionalism within the spheres of family and education. Their children, born between 1965 and 1980 are at the heart of this critical redefinition of educational norms (in the family and then in the school). Research over two family generations allows us to trace what became of these children, and to observe the different effects of these politicised educational practices. However, this book explores only one aspect of these family transmissions – the question of attitudes towards politics and activism.[3] How do these children of '68ers appropriate their political heritage, and what place does activism have in their collective future? For those who became activists, what structures did they become involved in? Does the repertoire of action circulate from one generation to the next in spite of the transformations of the political context?

Although the question of intragenerational (dis)continuities of activism has been relatively well covered in the literature (McAdam, 1988; Whittier, 1997; *RFSP,* 2001), the issue of intergenerational continuities and discontinuities has not provoked the same interest. Yet our research protocol, both longitudinal and paired (parents and children) allows us to separate the question of the transmission of dispositions for protest, from that of actual engagement in militant action, and thus contribute to the reflection on the family transmission of dispositions for activism.

After providing a succinct comparison of attitudes towards politics in the two generations within the families interviewed, factor analysis will

2   I will refer to the interviewees of the second generation as the "children" for simplicity, whilst keeping in mind that they are between 33 and 47 years old today.

3   The study of the collective futures of the children of '68ers (Pagis, 2009, p. 569-820) will – perhaps – be the object of a future book.

once again allow us to demonstrate the diversity of the children of '68ers and to construct seven collective profiles of these "inheritors." Two of these profiles (those in which the children went on to become activists) will be the focus of the following section, which is dedicated to the processes by which dispositions for protest are transmitted within the family.

Strong family political transmission

The transmission of political preferences between parents and children has been shown to be facilitated by parental opinions that are strong, homogenous and highly visible. As such, the families here are prime candidates for such transmission.[4] Indeed 82% of these parents say they are "quite" or "very" interested in politics today (see Table 8 below). Moreover, although in 1968 72% of respondents situated themselves at position 1 or 2 on the political self-declaration scale (where 1 is the far-left and 7 the far-right),[5] 65% of them still position themselves in the same place today. Furthermore, over 80% of them say they had frequent political discussions with their children[6] and there are very few cases of heterogeneity in the parents' political choices.[7] The corpus here thus presents a rate of nearly 90% of what has been called a "perfect reproduction" of political preferences,[8] compared to a rate closer to 50% among the general population.

The families interviewed here are also particular in their choice of educational models, as we saw in Chapter 5. Indeed, in the years after May '68, the family as an institution became a favourite target because of its role in socialising children to social relations of domination. Many interviewees

4   Percheron, 1993, p. 137.
5   Position 1 corresponds to the far-left and 7 to the far right. By way of comparison, 20% of parents interviewed at the national level in 1975 by IFOP situated themselves in positions 1 and 2 (Percheron, 1993, p 132).
6   Whereas in the 1975 study, only 15% declared that they often had such conversations (Pecheron, 1985, p. 213).
7   Defined in the quantitative studies cited above as the fact of not sharing the same political identification (having one parent who identifies as left-wing and the other as right-wing). Only eight "children" of the 180 in the population said that they were "right-wing" or "centre-right". Among them, six grew up in situations of parental political heterogeneity, and two have both parents who situate themselves on the left of the political scale (they correspond to the "non-affiliated" category, see Muxel, 1992).
8   The quantitative studies on non-specific populations describe "perfect reproduction" as a case in which a child situates themselves on the left (or the right), and his or her parents do the same. Beyond the various problems in definition raised by this indicator, it is clearly inappropriate (because non-discriminating) for the population studied here.

thus sought to perpetuate their activism by attacking the familial logics of social reproduction. Their countercultural educational practices must thus be seen within a context of redefining norms and family roles.

As far as the children are concerned, nearly 20% consider themselves activists today, whereas that figure is closer to 50% for their parents. Are these figures enough to conclude that there is a non-transmission of dispositions for activism? Far from it. Nearly one third of children declare that they aspire to activism, but struggle to find a political organisation that suits them. This reveals the importance of distinguishing dispositions for activism from the fact of being an activist. The children interviewed are thus surprisingly close to their parents in terms of partisan preferences and political position (see table 8 below). In both generations, roughly 40% voted for the PS in the first round of the elections, 16% and 17% (of parents and of children) voted Green, 18% and 19% voted for an extreme-left party, 5% and 6% voted communist, and slightly less than 5% voted far-right.

Table 8   Two generations of political preferences

	Parents (%)	Children (%)
Strong interest in politics ("very" or "quite")	**82***	69
Current political position:		
– 1- Far left	25	25
– 2	40	39
– 3	21	24
– 4	5	2.5
– 5, 6 and 7 (far right)	3.5	4
Believe society needs to be radically changed	**58**	43
Consider themselves "activists" today	**49**	22
Participated in demonstrations over the last five years ("a few" and "often")	**66**	44
Political ideas have an "important" or "very important" place	**77**	60
"Always" vote in elections	**83**	69
"Strongly disagree" with the privatisation of businesses	**55**	49
"Strongly agree" with regularising undocumented migrants	**47**	40
Strongly or quite in favour of the ratification of the European Constitution	43	**51**
"Little" or "no" trust in:		
– the justice system	**60**	45
– the police	**80**	68
– the traditional school system	**50**	33
Consider themselves adapted to current society:		
– "yes, completely" or "yes, quite well"	22	**47**
– "feel slightly or completely marginal"	**78**	53

* Note: Percentages are indicated in bold when the situations are statistically significant (Chi2).

However, politics does not occupy the same place in the everyday lives of these two generations. Firstly, interest in politics, although high among the children (69% say they are "very" or "quite" interested in politics), was transmitted less strongly than political preferences. In terms of activist practice, the second generation also seems less militant than their parents. Indeed, at the time of the study the parents are more likely than the children to be engaged in militant activities (49% compared to 22% among the children), to demonstrate regularly (66% compared to 44%) or to consider that society needs to be "radically changed" (58% compared to 43%).

Finally, the children's generation appears more trusting of state institutions, such as the justice system, the police or the school system. They are also twice as likely to say they feel "completely" or "quite well" adapted to current society, whilst they are more reticent overall concerning radical ideologies and organisations contesting the established order (see Table 9 below).

Table 9   The limits of family transmission

	"Do the following words have a negative or positive connotation for you?" (Percentages of "positive")							
	Political Party	Union	Activism	Communism	Utopia	Revolution	Make a lot of money	Authority
Parents	**53**	74	**78**	**49**	**78**	**79**	19	26
Children	38	66	68	37	69	60	**43**	30

Note: the higher percentages are indicated in bold, where the differences between parents and children are statistically significant (Chi2).

In spite of the obvious reservations that we may have regarding this kind of overall comparative table,[9] it nevertheless emphasizes the influence of the socio-economic context and the current political climate in the conditions required for the appropriation of political heritage. Thus, we can see the congruence of logics of family transmission on one hand, with the influence of context on the other; a context in which the militant activities that were valued and prestigious in the 1970s, no longer necessarily are today. Finally, the parents interviewed here visibly have more trouble transmitting their anti-institutional mood and the challenge to everyday order, than their political preferences. The children are thus more favourable to marriage than

9   These figures obscure a diversity of profiles among the inheritors, as we will see in the rest of the chapter.

their parents and more reserved regarding experiences of sexual liberation.[10] These two observations are not satisfactory in themselves however, given the diversity of the futures of 68ers' children, as we will now show.

Different inheritors, different profiles

What impact did May '68 have on the trajectories of the second generation? Do "children of '68ers" represent a sociologically relevant category? Can we identify *second-generation micro-units* and, if so, what are the conditions of their formation?

The countercultural socialisation of the children interviewed here sets them apart from their peers. During the 1970s, the 68ers invested childhood as a field of political experimentation, seeking to subvert parental, educational and domestic norms. Their educational practices bear the mark of the importation of dispositions for protest within the family sphere. Challenges to the gendered division of labour, rejection of marriage (or even of the couple), refusal of inheritance, experimenting with new ways of regulating gender and generational relations, rejection of authority and the figures of speech that incarnate it, refusal to socialise their children to dominant norms, etc. In this respect, enrolling their children in experimental public schools was a prolongation of the countercultural educational practices in the family sphere – it was therefore the school as an institution and its role in reproducing the social order that was contested. However, the education that these children received was also in many ways opposed to the educational models their parents experienced (and which they frequently sought to not reproduce[11]). However, given that the transformations of forms of reproduction were the basis for the appearance of distinct generations (Mauger, 2009a, p. 21), we may suppose that the transformations of educational strategies that resulted from the participation in May '68 produced distinct generational units among the '68ers' children. We would equally expect these units to be characterised by a range of norms that set them apart from their peers and from previous generations. Finally, if these generational units are born of familial and educational experiences, they are also a result of their time.

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10   Annick Percheron speaks about the "secondary role of transmission in the domain of the liberalization of mores" (Percheron, 1982, p. 200). There is a problem here with the format of this note: the line goes too far in the right margin...

11   A majority of interviewees had negative experiences of education (either in the family or in school), which influenced their choice to enrol their children in experimental schools.

In other words, they are marked by a specific social, economic and political context. When they left these experimental schools, the children of '68ers therefore found themselves confronted with other, potentially discordant, frames of socialisation (school system, peers, labour market etc.).

A dissocialised generation

Overall, the children interviewed here have internalised partially contradictory dispositions between countercultural primary socialisation and the secondary socialisation that they were confronted with as soon as they integrated traditional schooling – this is what I call dissocialisation.[12] However, this process was more or less pronounced depending on parental educational practices, and the fact that often parents' choice of non-interventionist practices (out of a rejection of authoritarian education) potentially left them in a weakened position in any power imbalance between socialising agents. The question of the efficiency of a non-interventionist education, particularly when it vehicles minority preferences and behaviour, is thus a particularly sensitive issue in the families of these interviewees. Indeed, many of these parents have sought to both "let their children be free" (principle of non-direction), *and* to transmit principles and systems of values in conflict with those transmitted by other agents in their socialisation. This ambivalence is at the root of many misunderstandings between these generations.[13] This is the meaning behind Cabu's drawing at the beginning of this chapter, which was sent to me by Gilles (see Chapter 4). He interpreted it like this:

> He shows that anti-authoritarian ideas led parents to be totally non-interventionist in education. It was also the time when Dolto[14] was on the radio, saying the same things. So, we see two parents, back to nature, greenies, who let their child follow his own ideas but who are of course shocked by the kid's choices. I feel like I experienced something similar with Nathalie. I think that the weight of social control over individual choices (and not just for children) is much more vivid than

12 A concept freely adapted from Louis Chauvel (Chauvel, 1998, p. 16)

13 In some cases, it even led to conflict or intergenerational breaks. These misunderstandings have notably led to various pamphlets mentioned in the introduction, written by children of '68ers who accuse their parents of "not having transmitted" (among other things).

14 Françoise Dolto was a French psychologist specializing in children. She is known for her vision of recognising the child as a person, the importance of "truth" in communication with children and recognising non-verbal forms of communication.

we can understand, not everything comes from the family, especially when the family chooses marginality.[15]

In other words, the symbolic cost of interiorising non-conformist norms can be relatively high in situations of pronounced dissocialisation. The children interviewed here were thus exposed to genuinely *conflicting norms* (Elias, 1991, p. 37); dissonance between frames of socialisation encountered over the life course is indeed the source of contradictory injunctions and *double bind* situations (Bateson, 1980), which they must confront. Acculturation to the traditional school system takes different forms depending on the interviewees, but in most cases is marked by tensions, to the extent that responding to new expectations means divesting oneself (at least partially) of previously internalised habits. Yet this acculturation cannot proceed without a certain disqualification of one's original world. Like for the first-generation intellectuals we saw in Chapter 1, the confrontation with the dominant academic order through the school system, after several years spent in schools that were veritable counter-institutions, is responsible for tensions and later difficulties in "finding one's place" in society, to use a frequent expression in the life histories collected. The case of children resisting non-conformism (see Box 6) implicitly reveals the costs of marginality in childhood.

Box 7   Forms of children's resistance to non-conformity

Most forms of resistance and the various ways of refusing one's inheritance in these trajectories emerge when the children leave the experimental school or as they grow up. They appear at the point when the individual is confronted with agents and forms of socialisation that are (at least partially) dissonant with the parental model. Most of the children therefore say they did not realise their education was unusual until they became aware of the educational model most children of their age experienced, and the difference was then obvious. It is interesting to explore the cases of "early" resistance to this countercultural socialisation, if only to try and evaluate the symbolic costs and benefits for a child in being "different" (to his or her entourage). It is also important to avoid explaining the interviewee's judgments of their education merely by what became of them later in life.

   The most common form of childhood resistance to certain expectations of the countercultural educational model consists in refusing to call one's parents by their first names. Gilles explains that he tried to instil this "without much

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15   Extract from an email from Gilles, received 7 November, 2008.

success." Mathilde, who lived in a commune whilst her daughter Corinne was a child, also failed:

> Most of the children called their mothers by their first names, but Corinne, she always refused […] I would have liked to draw her more towards the first name, but she never wanted to! […] I have another anecdote about that: at school, they were asked to draw their dream home, to do a floorplan, and Corinne started drawing this little two bedroom flat, so I said: 'Listen Corinne, you don't understand, you're to draw your dream house! You can have a huge house, everything you want…" But she was stubborn… and I understood that what she wanted was to live with me, just the two of us!

Corinne's resistance to the counter-cultural family norms also included norms relating to self-presentation, as she refused to wear the clothes her mother proposed: "we always had lots of clothes that were used for everyone, but she always wanted to wear pleated skirts, posh things, chic, well you can't really be chic when your 7, she didn't know but she didn't dress like those in our milieu. She resisted in a lot of ways."

Antoine, the eldest of Jean and Christiane's three sons, also reacted to the pressure of conformity by insisting on going to school at Vitruve with a schoolbag, even though it was empty. His mother remembers, amused, "he was bothered by going to school without a schoolbag! He asked us to buy him one and he went to school with his empty bag, or sometimes he put a pair of trainer in it (*laughs*)!"

The question of bodily *hexis* was important for many of the interviewees. Thus, Naïma remembers having "specifically wanting certain clothes, even around five or six years old, which [her] mother refused to accommodate."[16] She explains that her mother "dressed her any which way." More generally Naïma was highly critical of the educational model she experienced and she developed her critique at length in five double-sided pages that she attached to her questionnaire, unprompted. Interestingly, Naïma has a twin brother, Max, who experienced this shared childhood in a completely different way. We can begin by invoking the divergence in the social trajectories of the twins, and the downward mobility of Naïma (unlike her brother) to explain these discordant retrospective perspectives. Yet, although this aspect deserves attention, their mother emphasizes that their reactions to the education they received in the family and at Vitruve diverged very early on. The fact that they are fraternal twins, a boy and a girl, also allows us to put forward new hypotheses to account

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16 Extract from a handwritten letter that Naïma attached to her questionnaire.

Figure 12   A girl sticks out her tongue at the red flag

for the different attitudes towards their countercultural primary socialisation. We might therefore think that the pressure to conform is greater for girls, who are the first and most visibly affected by challenges to gender norms. Finally, the gendered identification of young boys with their father and young girls with their mother (Vernier, 1999) probably contributes to this divergence in social trajectories and retrospective perspectives on childhood. Indeed the heterogamy of their parents' couple (their mother was from a working-class background, and their father from a more affluent one)[17] seems to have had an impact on these twins' attitudes to school.

Finally, there are other forms of resistance that are easier to explain: those of children who experienced the political activities of their parents as directly competing with the time they could be spending together. This was the case for Gilles' daughter Nathalie, for example. She got bored during the demonstrations her father took her to and reacted by taking her anger out on the flags: "May 1, 1971 saw the extreme left organise a very significant demonstration – looking at

17   Their mother Betty came from a working-class background and abandoned her studies at the end of middle school in 1964. She returned to school in 1968 at the University of Vincennes (without a high school diploma) and graduated with a degree in Education Sciences. She then worked as a community worker before becoming a professional storyteller. Their father, Philippe, who came from a more comfortable background, also returned to study at Vincennes (he had previously graduated with a vocational diploma), and became a research librarian in the 1990s. Since then, he has worked at the publications office of a university in Paris.

the number of participants. Nathalie and Manon were with us. They spent most of the march booing the red flags we were carrying and mocking the different slogans (see Figure 12 below, in which Nathalie is sticking out her tongue at the flag). They were 7 years old."[18]

The children were thus confronted with the question of their social alterity during their childhoods. But how they perceived and experienced this depended on their age and their gender, as well as the material and emotional security they had in the family and school environments, as well as their (more or less substantial) need for recognition from their parents and/or peers. These forms of childhood resistance remind us that the results of countercultural education are as much a question of reception and re-appropriation as they are of parental intentions (Percheron, 1985).

Dealing with dissocialisation

The children of '68ers interviewed here adopt different coping arrangements in the face of the double bind that results from their dissocialisation. Like the first-generation intellectuals (see Chapter 1), these "displaced persons" (Memmi, 1996) left the world they were born in and migrated into another, a *host* world, to which they were not entirely adapted, and as a result they often felt at home in neither. If these displaced people paradoxically question their "place" in society, this is because their social situation is far from self-evident for them. Several collective responses to the question of their "place" emerge if we observe their future socio-professional trajectories. Using the work of Gérard Mauger on class migration,[19] of Bernard Lahire on dissonant socialisation, and the empirical material collected from the children themselves, we can distinguish four main arrangements to deal with this dissocialisation: (1) repression of the stigma of one's origins (and thus of initial countercultural dispositions); (2) a utopian rejection of secondary

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18   Extract from an email from Gilles, 28 September 2008. I would like to thank him for allowing us to reproduce this photo here.

19   Mauger distinguishes "four autobiographical postures (successive or simultaneous, compatible or not) that must be associated with types of trajectories and/or positions in the social space: erasure of the stigma of one's origins, populist rehabilitation, social schizophrenia and a reflexive posture." (Mauger 2004). For Bernard Lahire there are three possible attitudes for an individual incorporating contradictory dispositions. He or she can (1) smother or silence prior dispositions; (2) clearly divide or separate the universes in which they implement such dispositions; (3) constantly suffer from the weight of the contradictions between the dispositions (Lahire, 1999, p. 139).

socialisation; (3) those between the two, a "social schizophrenia" that is more or less successful (Lahire, 1998); or (4) a reflexive posture.[20] These different positions are not mutually exclusive of each other and can be implemented synchronically (or diachronically). The use of the term arrangement, which reflects situations, stages in the trajectory of an individual, thus enables us to account for possible articulations, associations and successions of different arrangements a given child adopts to deal with dissocialisation. We will briefly present this typology before associating the futures of the children of '68ers with the trajectories of their parents.

Repression of countercultural primary dispositions can be seen in the children who, for various reasons (primarily failure at school and downward social mobility) suffered from the stigma of their difference. These children became young adults who generally rejected the heritage of their '68er parents, and sought social stability and conformity (in their professions, social relations, the education of their children etc.). Sarah for example left the Vitruve school with the desire to "erase the stigma of Vitruve, and try, with all the strength of a ten-year-old, to move towards the greatest normality imaginable."[21] In opposition to her education, Sarah got married, and raised her children "in the greatest conformity and very reassuringly [...] the complete opposite from us [...] above all not treating them as adults." She enrolled them in a private school. At this pole, we find young adults who express a strong need for social recognition, aspirations that we can see – in light of Elias' work on the relationship between the established and the outsiders (Elias and Scotson, 1965) – as linked to the suffering and humiliation that they experienced due to their marginalisation.

In opposition to this is the *utopian posture rejecting secondary socialisation*. This operates through an inability to adapt, to adhere to the school system and the labour market. Instead of responding to the pressures of one's environment, this consists in seeking to modify that environment to bring it into line with one's initial, countercultural, aspirations. The trajectory of Chloé, raised by her mother who was an actor (and who lived in a commune for five years) is thus entirely motivated by her attempt to find "niches," protected spaces in which she could express her countercultural dispositions. Rebelling against the school system (she left after middle school), she explained in the interview that she sought "to prolong the

20   Which consists, to put it briefly, in putting one's "secondary" dispositions at the service of the aspirations produced in countercultural primary socialisation.
21   Sarah, born in 1965 was raised by her mother Simone (see Chapter 2), who is a painter.

experience of Vitruve" that had "seared itself into her," through different artistic practices in particular. She was thus successively a model, an actor, a cameraman, a dancer and a painter. With her own son, Joachim, she reproduced the countercultural educational practices that she knew as a child. At this pole, we find interviewees who, like Mikaël (Anne's son, see Chapter 5), do not consider themselves to be unsuited to society but rather that society is unsuited to their aspirations: "I wondered if, given all these 'chaotic' paths, sometimes broken […] if this 'unsuited-ness' to society, is not in fact at least partly due to society's inability to 'absorb' these 'different' citizens.[…] It is not 'us' who are out of step or abnormal, its society that is unsuited to our desires."[22] Professionally, we find these interviewees in artistic sectors where there are fewer codes and less institutionalisation, and which are particularly favourable to agents who confront their difference through a posture of sublimation. Chloé puts it like this:

> My family context and Vitruve meant that I was never completely in the mould […] I was always looking for something that didn't exist and I'm still looking… […] Since childhood, I've had a different world, a dream world, that has of course caused suffering because it is a dream world and today, at 40, I tell myself – go on, achieve your dreams! […] Utopia is a great protection against reality […] The mark of Vitruve is this critical perspective, this right to do things differently, to take a different path […] I will develop this state of being through painting and dance.[23]

Between these two poles is the posture of *social schizophrenia.* This brings together the children of '68ers who regularly oscillate between the two previous postures, trying to compartmentalise the different spheres of activities in which they activate dispositions that cannot be activated in the same place. These interviewees do not want to (or cannot) prioritise the contradictory injunctions they are exposed to (adapting and integrating socially whilst remaining themselves). They describe themselves as "constantly torn" or "cut in two." These tensions, born of the dissonance between primary and secondary socialisations, are not necessarily a source of suffering (Traïni,

22   On Mikaël's trajectory, see Pagis (2015). The extract cited here comes from an email sent on November 6 2008.

23   Moreover, Chloé is one of the members of the "Starlit Circus" (*cirque étoilé*), an experimental educational project conducted at Vitruve school between 1974-75, which was the object of a documentary in which she and Sarah were both interviewed (Kaïm and Pagis 2008). On the "Starlit Circus" see Pagis, 2008.

2009, p. 106). They give rise to different ways of expressing the plurality of dispositions.[24]

The final posture brings together interviewees who face up to these contradictory injunctions by taking a critical distance from them or by making them into an object of study, through a *reflexive posture*. These interviewees tend to have less difficulty "finding their place," and on the whole turn towards teaching and research or towards journalism; professions that are well-suited to the actualisation of countercultural aspirations, through pedagogic practice or through objects of research and investigation.[25] This is the case for Sebastian, for example, a university lecturer who completed a PhD in social psychology on workplace suffering. An activist without ever having been a member of a political party (he became involved in protest movements in 1986 and joined the union when he became a lecturer), he converted his political and countercultural heritage[26] into a professional resource, studying marginality and questioning the border between the "normal" and the "pathological" in his research. Thus, where the trajectories of Chloé and Sarah are marked by successive adjustments and a series of shifts that might be analysed as ways of finding the *right* distance between the "established" and the "outsiders" (Elias and Scotson, 1965), Sebastian found an established position for himself and studied outsiders. It is in this respect that we can describe his position as reflexive: in the same way as the mentally ill and mental health issues pose the question of the border between the normal and the pathological, certain "displaced" people, like Sebastian, use their work to question of the border between "us" and "them."[27]

24   Certain interviewees expressed contradictory dispositions at different stages of their biographies. Others expressed them simultaneously by compartmentalising different spheres of their life and activities (employment, friends, relationships, associations etc.) which represent so many scenes in which partially dissonant aspirations can be expressed (Pagis [2009], Chapters, 6, 7, 8).

25   Of course, I would situate myself in this reflexive posture. However, the three other postures are not unfamiliar to me and I have experienced all of them at one point or another (or even simultaneously) during my own trajectory. This relationship to my research object has allowed me to have both a comprehensive approach and a great proximity to most of the children of 68ers during the study, but has also put me in a (relatively) external position regarding each of these postures.

26   Sebastien, born in 1967, is the second son of Jean and Christiane, first-generation intellectuals whose upward social mobility went hand in hand with far-left Trotskyist activism (see Chapter 1).

27   Regarding the question of the upward social mobility of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are part of the positive discrimination programme of preparatory classes for the prestigious Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, and the effects of this social displacement, see, Pasquali (2014).

Political activism could have been identified as the fifth specific approach to dealing with dissocialisation, to the extent that it also constitutes an activity that aims to modify the environment we live in to bring it into line with one's aspirations. However, activism appears to be transversal to the different postures defined above (with the exception of the first, rejecting the primary dispositions), as we see in the remainder of this chapter.

The social space of the second generation

We will once again use factor analysis to represent the diversity of profiles among the children of '68ers and to characterise the inheritance they received. This type of analysis allows us to show the connections between the political behaviour and the futures of the interviewees on one hand, and the characteristics of their primary socialisation on the other. In order to analyse the transmission (or non-transmission) of dispositions for activism and the challenge to everyday norms,[28] a four-category variable is used to account for the various forms of parental activism during the interviewees' childhood (see Table 10 below).

Table 10   Challenges to the everyday order and the political order

		Parental political activity outside the family sphere during the interviewee's childhood	
		Yes	No
Politicisation of education: was the child an "object of politicisation?"	Yes	"Activist parents, politicisation of education" (25%)	"Non-activist parents, politicisation of education" (20%)
	No	"Activist parents, no politicisation of education" (23%)	"Non-activist parents, no politicisation of education" (32%)

We must now characterise the education received in the family environment and situate the parents' educational practices in relation to the ideal type of countercultural education (see Chapter 5). In order to do this, a three-category variable will gauge the influence of May '68 on the model of education ("countercultural education +++" (45%),

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28   Indeed, it is important to distinguish between challenges to the social order and challenges to the everyday order, as Jean-Claude Passeron and François de Singly advised, when they wrote: "taking one's distance from domestic traditionalism does not obey the same socialisation logics as challenging the social order." (De Singly and Passeron, 1984, p. 62)

"liberal education" (40%), "quite authoritarian education" (15%)). Another variable traces the terms of address used by the interviewees to refer to their parents.[29] Finally, another variable relates to specific educational practices, and measures the interviewees' retrospective judgments on the responsibilities they were given at a young age.[30] The frequency of political discussions in the family environment during childhood is also included in the analysis.

Having characterised sex, age, social origin and the type of education received, we need to also record what has become of the interviewees. Thus, their professions,[31] their interest in politics, how frequently they participate in demonstrations, whether or not they have activist experience ("have been an activist before," or "have never been an activist"), as well as their electoral behaviour,[32] are also studied.

Finally, the following illustrative variables are also added to the analysis: identification with the category "inheritor of 1968," and the subjective feeling of dissocialisation, recoded into three categories[33] (no feeling of dissocialisation [13%], feeling of dissocialisation and suffering [41%], feeling of dissocialisation without suffering [46%]). The objective here is to test the possible links between the internalisation of systems of dissonant dispositions and militant activity (Traïni, 2011, p. 69).

To understand the positions of the interviewees (N = 168) in the factorial plane of Figure 13, let us begin by accounting for the way in which the two axes are structured.[34] The x-axis is structured by variables relating to

29   Some call their parents by their first names (30%), others "Daddy" or "Mummy" (53%), and other use either form, depending on the situations (27%).

30   These judgments, mentioned in open-ended questions, by those who say they were given responsibilities very young were recoded into two categories – "critical" and "uncritical" of early responsibilisation of children.

31   Workers and low-level employees were combined into a single category, "working classes" (17%), the middle classes were divided into two categories, "middle-class, teachers" (over represented in the corpus, 16%), and "middle-class, non-teachers" (24%). The upper classes were also split, due to the over-representation of "higher education teachers" (10%) compared to the "upper-class, non-teachers" (16%). Artistic professions (16%) and students (4%) remain distinct categories.

32   A variable with seven categories: does not vote (4%), right-wing (5%), PS (40%), Greens (18%), far-left (19%), PCF (6%), and a final category "PS/PC/Greens/far-left" (8%) covering those who identify with the left but not with a particular political party.

33   Based on responses to the question: "Do you feel there is a discrepancy between the values you have inherited and those promoted by the society in which you live? If yes, is this a source of suffering for you?

34   The first axis contributes 15.5% to the total inertia of the cloud of points, and the second 10.7%.

Figure 13   The social space of the second generation

Factor 2

Anti-authoritarian inheritors (3)

Far left inheritors (4)

Distant inheritors (5)

Inherit dispositions for activism

Demonstrate often

PC
Have been activists

Far Left

Lydia

Hugues-R

Middle class, teachers

Interest in politics ++

Olivier

ACTIVIST PARENTS+ NO POLITICISATION OF EDUCATION

Frequent family political discussions

Gaël

Dissocialisation + suffering

Inheritors of 68

Sebastian-R

Higher education

ACTIVIST PARENTES + POLITICISATION OF EDUCATION

Inherit mistrust of organisations

Counter cultural education ++

Critical of early responsibilisation

Ambivalent inheritors of utopia

(2)   1,0   Factor 1

Benoît

Regular family political discussions

Mikaël

Aspirations to activism, lack of offer

Camille   Psychological help

Parents' first names

PS/PC/Verts/Far left

Born before 1968

Interest in politics +

First names + Daddy/Mummy

Demonstrate sometimes

Women

Verts

Artistic professions

NON ACTIVIST PARENTS+ POLTICISATION OF EDUCATION

Everyday inheritors

(1)

Do not vote

0,5

Downwardly mobile children

0

Born 1969–1974

Men

Dissocialisation without suffering

Born after 1974

Liberal education

Daddy/Mummy

Middle class, non teachers

Working class

NON ACTIVIST PARENTS + NO POLITICISATION OF EDUCATION

students

Little effects of parental activism

Rare family political discussions

Upper class, non teachers

Have never been activists

Not inheritors of 68

PS

Interest in politics –

Never demonstrate

Female downwardly mobile inheritors (6)

-0,5

Quite authoritarian education

Lack of dissocialisation

Interest in politics – –

Few family political discussions

Reaction/parental engagement

Right

Rejection of inheritance (7)

0,4

-1,0

-0,4

0

parents' activism, as well as the political behaviour of the children.[35] This axis thus divides interviewees who have activist experience and whose parents questioned the social order *as well as* the everyday order whilst they themselves were still children (on the right-hand side of the plane), from interviewees who have never been activists and whose parents were not – or not very – involved in activism (on the left of the plane).

The y-axis on the other hand is structured by the children's year of birth, the educational model and the parents' form of activism.[36] It separates interviewees born before 1968, whose parents focused their dispositions for contestation in the family sphere (in the lower quadrants) from a younger group of interviewees, whose parents had a political activity outside the family sphere (in the upper quadrants).

The four sides of this figure therefore correspond to the different kinds of effects May '68 had on parental trajectories: to the left-hand side there were no major effects, at the top there were effects on the political trajectory alone, at the bottom there were effects in terms of critical renewal of everyday life, and to the right there were mixed effects (both political and familial).

An initial reading of this schema reveals several general results concerning the transmission of the inheritance of May '68 in the family environment. Firstly, interest in politics, vote for extreme-left parties and activism appear to be strongly correlated with the frequency of political discussions within the family, and the visibility of parents' political engagements. Indeed, the variables "interest in politics +++," "demonstrate a lot," "have been activists" and "frequent family political discussion" crowd together in the upper right-hand quadrant.[37] Whilst Annick Percheron demonstrated that the visibility of parental political *preferences* facilitate their transmissions (Percheron, 1993), this observation allows us to broaden this finding to include activist *practice.*

Moreover, identification with the category of "inheritor of 1968" brings together most of the interviewees situated on the right-hand side of the

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35   Among the ten first contributions to the x-axis are the categories "non-activist parents, no politicisation of education", "activist parents + politicisation of education", "have been activists", "demonstrate a lot", and "never demonstrate".

36   The five most important contributions to the y-axis are: "non-activist parents + politicisation of education", "born before 1968", "activist parents + no politicisation of education", "counter-cultural education ++", "call their parents by their first names".

37   Similarly, the categories "interest in politics +" and "demonstrate a little", are clustered with "regular family political discussions", slightly to the right. Finally, in the lower left-hand quadrant, the categories "little interest in politics" and "have never been activists" are close to "few family political discussions".

factorial plane. It therefore covers not only the children of political activists, but also those who have witnessed (or been involved in) challenges to the norms of everyday life. Claiming to be an "inheritor of 1968" thus proves to be correlated above all with the greater or lesser dissocialisation of the interviewees (see the proximity between the categories "dissocialisation and suffering," and "inheritors of 68," just above the x-axis on the right-hand side, as well as the categories "not inheritors of '68" and "lack of dissocialisation"). The feeling of belonging to this category of inheritors of '68 seems to be linked to the destabilisation of parental political *and* family trajectories, without which the event could not have a ricochet effect on the second generation.

Finally, the parents who converted their dispositions for contestation into the family sphere alone have apparently not transmitted dispositions for activism to their children (in the lower right-hand quadrant). However, they do seem to have transmitted their critical perspective on institutions and conventional political practices (see categories "do not vote" or "inherit mistrust of organisations").

The statistical classification of the corpus allows us to further refine these initial results, by distinguishing seven sub-groups of the second generation, projected on to the factorial plane (see Figure 13).[38] By combining statistical results and representative life history analysis, we can classify these different profiles according to the nature of the inheritance transmitted and by associating them with the year of birth, sex, social origin and types of parental trajectories, educational practice, and the political and professional futures of these children. We can thus identify the everyday inheritors, the ambivalent inheritors of utopia,[39] the anti-authoritarian inheritors, the far-left inheritors, the distant inheritors, the downwardly mobile inheritors, and the rejection of inheritance (see Table 11 below).

The two groups that cover the greatest number of activists (profiles 3 and 4 in the upper right-hand quadrant) are presented in detail in the rest of the chapter. Focusing on these two groups allows us to study cases of intergenerational transmission of activism, in order to analyse the processes by which parents transmit dispositions for activism on one hand, and on the other, the forms that activism takes for the next generation.

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38   Analysis by classification consists in dividing the corpus into n sub-groups according to the dual foundation of internal homogeneity (in terms of sociological characteristics of the interviewees in each sub-group) and external heterogeneity (difference from other sub-groups). This division of the corpus into seven groups takes into account the ten first factorial axes, such that their projection on the two-dimensional factorial plane is purely indicative.

39   The profile of the ambivalent inheritors of utopia is presented in detail in Pagis (2015). Please refer to the PhD thesis for discussion of the others.

Table 11 Synthesis of the seven profiles of inheritance

	1. Everyday inheritors	2. Ambivalent inheritors of utopia	Activist inheritors		5. The far-off echo of May '68	6. Downwardly mobile inheritors	7. Non-transmitted inheritance
			3. Anti-authoritarian	4. Far-left			
Age	Born before 1970	Born before 1970	Born between 1970 and 1975		Born after 1974	Born before 1970	Varied
Parents' social origin	Upper classes	First-generation intellectuals and middle classes	Middle classes (upwardly and downwardly mobile)		Very varied	Downwardly mobile mothers (from upper and middle classes backgrounds)	Varied
Forms of parents' activism during childhood	Unified Socialist Party (PSU) sympathisers + critical renewal of everyday life	Far-left + communitarian utopias communities → end of activism in the 1970s	Far-left + countercultural	Far-left, not countercultural	Young parents, not very active in 1968 → social work or apolitical utopias	Single mothers, downwardly mobile, absent fathers	Mothers – strong impact of 1968; Fathers – no impact
Educational model and retrospective judgment	Countercultural; quite positive judgments	"difference" based educational strategies; ambivalent judgments	Countercultural; mixed judgments	Liberal, politicised; very positive judgments	Liberal, not politicised; very positive judgments	Countercultural; feeling of having been "utopian guinea pigs"	Parental dissonance or strict upbringing
Feeling of being inheritors of 1968	Yes	Yes sometimes "in spite of themselves"	Yes	Yes	Mixed	Mixed, tending to no	No

Table 11   Synthesis of the seven profiles of inheritance

	1. Everyday inheritors	2. Ambivalent inheritors of utopia	Activist inheritors		5. The far-off echo of May '68	6. Downwardly mobile inheritors	7. Non-transmitted inheritance
			3. Anti-authoritarian	4. Far-left			
Memories of primary school	Good	Mixed	Very good; at school they became the "children's avant-garde"		Good and very good	Bad; criticised for not having sufficiently prepared them for "reality"	Bad; criticised for being too permissive
Structure of the inheritance of May '68	Primarily countercultural	Bodily inheritance (marginality)	Predominantly political		Left-wing values, inherit the gains of May '68	Social marginalisation	Non-transmitted
Dissocialisation and resolution of tensions	Strong but not very binding: reflexive postures and/or artistic sublimation		Strong and marginalising	Strong; activism as a way to resolve tensions due to dissocialisation	Weak dissocialisation	Repression of stigma and aspirations to conformity	Dissonance due to parental divergences
Activist experiences	No, but demonstrate "regularly"	No, demonstrate "a little"	Yes, anarchist and/or anti-authoritarian	Yes, far-left organisations	None generally	None at all	No, do not demonstrate

Table 11   Synthesis of the seven profiles of inheritance

	1. Everyday inheritors	2. Ambivalent inheritors of utopia	Activist inheritors		5. The far-off echo of May '68	6. Downwardly mobile inheritors	7. Non-transmitted inheritance
			3. Anti-authoritarian	4. Far-left			
Political trajectory and electoral behaviour	Everyday environmentalists, feminists, anti-racists; vote Green	Vote PS, Greens, PC, and far-left	Anarchists/anti-authoritarians, reject voting	Vote far-left	Not very interested in politics, humanitarian involvement	Left-wing, but substantial distance from the political sphere	Mixed (over-representation of right-wing preferences)
Professional Trajectories	Intellectual and artistic trajectories	Predominantly artists + literary sphere	Profiles rejecting work	Teachers	Middle and upper-middle classes, non-teachers	Trajectories for downward mobility	Employees and managers in the private sector
Impact of parental activism	Inherit mistrust of political organisations		Inherit dispositions for activism (critical perspective on the evolution of parents' politics)		Anchorage of political preferences on the left	Reaction against parents' involvement, considered destructive	– Rejection of maternal engagements – Or no impact
State of intergenerational relations	Harmonious (strong reproduction)	Ambivalent (oscillation between admiration and rejection)	Pride and disappointment of children/parents and relative downward mobility	Harmonious (reproduction of political preferences)	Harmonious (strong reproduction of parental preferences)	Highly conflictual (damaged affective economy)	Conflictual (Vitruve) Harmonious (A-Guépin)

Transmission of activism: intergenerational (dis)continuities?

The anti-authoritarian inheritors and the far-left inheritors share certain characteristics. They were all born between 1968 and 1975 and as children they observed the political activism of their parents (in extreme-left organisations for the most part). They inherited dispositions for activism from their parents that they activated through militant experiences (see the statistical description of these two populations in Box 7 below). The student movement of 1986 represented for them what May '68 had been for their parents: it gave them the opportunity to come into their inheritance and to appropriate it. This is how Loïc, the son of Jean and Christiane, puts it:

> they are very strong memories, and I'm happy that I had that in my political life, so to speak, because I'm sure that at that time, it raised so much stuff in me, something adventurous as well, because when we were kids, the *Ligue* had become a clandestine group, my parents were clandestine activists, the intelligence agency was always sniffing around below our apartment, ... Can you imagine that, in the mind of a kid! I remember that Ernest Mandel, who was a *persona non grata*, a Belgian economist from the Fourth International, came from Belgian to hold meetings: well, he came to our place! And someone went to get him on a scooter from Père Lachaise, and brought him back, hiding their tracks, and we, we saw all that, so there was something very adventurous about it, which I rediscovered in 1986. Because in '86 we occupied the Uni, we organised our own security, we organised ourselves in commissions, we had the feeling we were a little May '68... *taking a bit of control over our lives, you know.*[40]

The two groups of activist inheritors differ however in the relations these inheritors have to the political sphere. Although they are all "very" interested in politics, and participate regularly in demonstrations, the first (group 3 in Box 7 below) developed a greater distance regarding the party system through which they do not feel represented, they affiliate themselves more with anarchism and some reject the vote altogether. The second group (profile 4) situate themselves on the extreme left of the political field. The first are active in less institutionalised activist networks and proclaim their outsider status with regards to the political field (anti-authoritarian

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40 Extract from an interview conducted at Loïc's home, on 26 October 2005. After the student movement in 1986, he joined Unef-Id, and then SOS Racisme, before becoming a member of the JCR and then the LCR, which he quickly left to participate in the creation of DAL.

and anarchist groups), whilst the second are active in Attac, the LCR, DAL (*Right to housing*), or in unions such as Sud.

Box 8   Statistical description of the profiles of activist inheritors

Group 3/7: *Anti-authoritarian inheritors*

V.Test* Characteristic levels of the variables

4.66	Interest in politics ++
4.38	No criticisms concerning responsibilisation
3.60	Lots of family political discussions
3.52	Countercultural education ++
3.09	Call parents by their first names
3.05	Middle-class, teachers
3.04	Have been activists
2.77	Activist parents + politicisation of education
2.58	Do not vote

Group 4/7: *Far-left activist inheritors*

V.TEST* Characteristic levels

6.58	Often demonstrate
6.36	Have been activists
5.47	Inherit dispositions for activism
5.14	Vote far-left
3.60	Interest in politics ++
3.37	Call parents "daddy or mummy"
2.85	Vote Communist (PC)
2.61	Middle-class, teachers

*   The value test or V-test measures the deviation between the proportion of individuals in the cluster characterised by a particular level, and the proportion in the overall population (expressed in units of standard errors). When this value is greater than 2, the corresponding level is significant for that cluster.

The statistical approach allows us to reveal correlations between parental activism, educational models and the children's political behaviour. However, it remains blind to the mechanisms by which dispositions for activism are transmitted. Only an in-depth study of trajectories allows us to open this black box of family transmissions and to show that family variables lie at the heart of intergenerational continuity in activism, whereas contextual variables dominate in explaining the discontinuities of forms of engagement.

(Re)inventing anti-authoritarian activism

In order to characterise the profile of anti-authoritarian inheritors, we will follow the trajectory of Olivier, who was born in 1975 in Paris, and Fleur, who was born in 1971 in Nantes. Their trajectories, which are representative of the collective profile,[41] allow us to show that the forms of activism they invest in are intimately connected to their familial and professional futures. The invention of communal lifestyles and forms of activism would indeed emerge as a response to dissocialisation and downward mobility in this category of inheritors.

Childhood immersed in politics
Olivier's parents belonged to the youngest generational units that discovered activism with May '68, in their case within the JCR and then the LCR. Lisette, his mother, born in 1954, is the daughter of a primary school teacher and a telephone worker, both left-wing.[42] As a high school student in 1968 she affiliated herself with CAL, and then with the Red Circles, before joining the LCR in the early 1970s. She failed her baccalaureate, enrolled in the University of Vincennes, lived in a commune for several years with Benoît (her husband) and other friends, and participated in feminist movements. Lisette was 21 when Olivier was born and 24 when she separated from Benoît and began to work as an educator in community education networks.

Fleur's parents are older. Her father, François, was born in 1945 in Algiers (see Chapter 4) and was politicised during the Algerian War. Having participated actively in the events of May '68 in Toulouse, we have already seen that he was about to leave for India in 1969 when he met Elise, Fleur's mother and decided to abandon his trip. Born into a Catholic, petit-bourgeois family of eight-children in Nantes, from whom she was by then estranged, Elise was a maternity ward assistant. She had a very young child, Gaël, born in 1968, whom François would raise as his own.

The interviewees in this profile were not direct witnesses to the most intense periods of their parents' activism and counterculture (unlike the

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41 The choice of the trajectories analysed in this section was not intuitive: Olivier, Fleur and Lydia are paragons of the two profiles studied here. In other words, they are the individuals identified by the software's analysis as being the most representative of each of the groups.

42 His father, Benoît, did not participate in the study. The data I have access to come from the questionnaire and interview conducted with Olivier. Benoît graduated with a vocational certificate and was a production officer in an IT company when Olivier was born, before becoming a carpark attendant.

ambivalent inheritors of utopia): they were born just afterwards, and in fact their birth provoked a certain return to normality for their parents (or a relative disengagement). François thus explain how he came out of his marginal phase (drugs, refusal to work, street stalls etc.):

> it was a desire to move on, and well you know, having children, I stopped selling jewellery in the street when my daughter was born [1971] … so it was the fact of being confronted with obligations. We had brought children into the world, we had to take responsibility.[43]

Olivier's parents stopped their active involvement with the LCR in the second half of the 1970s, so he did not really see this militant phase of their lives:

> I was too little to remember all the effervescence of the 1970s, but they told me a lot about that time and I listened when they got together with their mates and told their old war stories! [...] Also, when we were small, we went to all the feminist demonstrations with my cousins. We were on the front page of *Libé,* eating cake at a feminist demo… so yeah demos, I've been to loads, loads![44]

Like most of the activist inheritors, Olivier and Fleur grew up in highly politicised environments, in which politics was omnipresent. They took to the streets with their parents on numerous occasions during the 1970s. Demonstrations, parental narratives, and frequent political discussions during meals or parties with friends, thus encouraged the transmission of family histories relating to May '68 (and the years that followed), as well as the development of a political conscience early on in life.

Although these parents had countercultural educational practices, they were more a result of practical necessity than of theoretical construction, as Fleur's father explains:

> My ex-wife worked at the CHU with stupid hours. Me, I was meeting up with the activists in the evening so I would come home really late and we had set up a system. The last one to go to bed would heat the milk for the morning and put it in a thermos on the table with a sweet

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43   The quotes from François come from an interview conducted with him on February 10, 2005.

44   Extract from an interview with Olivier, June 16 2005.

little note and they would have breakfast by themselves [...] And they did live in communities a lot because in summer I organised holiday camps and I took them with me, even when they were little, 4 and 5 years old... So they were autonomous and responsible very young, they had to be!

The fact that Olivier was raised by a single mother meant that he also had to be responsible quite young:

My mother worked far away and late at night, so I looked after myself quite young! I cooked for myself when I was very little [...] and then at Vitruve I had to be responsible. They talked to us about responsibility, and so it was a vision of education that was highly politicised [...] with Lisette, I had a feminist education... and Vitruve went in the same direction as my education, in fact.

Olivier went to primary school at Vitruve and Fleur went to Ange-Guépin, and both have excellent memories of these experimental schools, in which they say they learnt "autonomy, initiative, and the ability to say no" (Fleur), or "self-management, collective organisation and commitment" (Olivier). They remain positive in spite of the substantial lacunae in their education when they integrated the standard high school system in sixth grade.

Chaotic school trajectories, family conflicts and political divergences
In 1986 Fleur was in the first year of *lycée* and participated actively in the movement among the high school students, never missed a demonstration and was elected "strike delegate"[45] by her classmates. Olivier was in the first year of middle school: "the first political thing I participated in directly was in 1986. We went on strike for a day and refused to go to classes. The principal was insanely angry, we'd only just begun sixth grade!"

After his baccalaureate, Oliver became active again against the proposed youth employment contract known as the CPE (*Contrat première embauche*[46] (1994)). But it was when he went to university that he became a real activist, during the social movement of winter 1995.

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45 The term she used in her questionnaire.
46 This was a specific type of contract proposed by the Balladur government, that aimed to facilitate the recruitment of young people by allowing them to be hired on contracts that paid only 80% of the minimum wage. It was withdrawn due to substantial protest, particularly by young people.

at the beginning, I wasn't in any group. I went to the general assemblies etc. and then I signed up for the anarchist movement and the Scalp group.[47] [*Why Scalp?*] Because I knew people who opened doors for me… I wasn't that into the *Ligue,* that was my parents' thing […] and then a movement is quite educational, we see who does what and how…

Fleur, on the other hand, had enrolled in her first year of university, studying history and geography, and then modern languages, at the University of Nantes from 1989 to 1994, and working at the same time as a youth worker in out of school care. Unemployed in 1995, she also participated in the social movement and was in contact with different collectives for vulnerable workers in which she became an activist and was trained in anti-authoritarian and anarchist practices and readings.

The 1995 social movement represents a turning point in the political trajectories of these anti-authoritarian inheritors. After these events, they became active militants and developed a critical perspective on voting and political parties. They joined anarchist networks and collectives in which they activated both dispositions for political engagement and countercultural dispositions that they had internalised during their primary socialisation. Although they followed their parents' footsteps in terms of activist practice, this was less true in their vision of the social world. Critical of their parents' activism, they sought other ways of transforming a society in which they felt themselves to be marginalised. Of this, Oliver says:

> I especially saw my parents and all their friends stop protesting. Over time you see people settle down, and they quarrel because they don't have the same lifestyle any more … I saw it like that for the most part, they believed, but now they don't believe at all anymore […] Some went back into the ranks, others joined the other side […] I'm very critical of them for having stopped their activism. When I say "they," it's a whole generation, not just my parents […] and I said to them – if we're doing this now, it's because you did bugger all! That makes them face up to the end of their activism, and a life that became a bit more normative, a bit more comfortable.

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47   Scalp is an acronym for "Section carrément anti-Le Pen", which translates roughly as the "group completely against Le Pen."

Growing up in a period where one's parents were no longer activists (or had reduced their activism), yet remained highly politicised, seems to be favourable to the internalisation of a filial duty to prolong one's parents' activist project. "They didn't go all the way to the end," says Olivier. As for Fleur, she asks herself, "Their rebellion: where is it now? And their social and political conscience?" If there is a reproduction of activism in the family, these critiques regarding the disengagement of '68ers are the sources of the transformation of forms of activism and a search for political alternatives. In some cases, they can lead to the breakdown of family ties. This was the case for Fleur who did not see her parents for ten years, criticising them for "only looking after themselves, and abandoning their children and their utopias." François is not uncritical of his daughter either:

> My daughter is a crow. [*what do you mean by that?*] People all in black... they live on the margins of society, with her guy, they run the car off frying oil, in a godforsaken corner of Brittany, it's unbelievable! The only coffee shop in France, it's there! It's all 'we don't fit into society but we're happy to take advantage of it'; so we were angry with each other for a long time. Rob a bank and I'll pay you the best lawyer in France, but live off state benefits...

But François' relationship with his daughter is ambivalent, and at other times in the interview we glimpse his pride in seeing her take up the torch of contestation.

In these complex intergenerational relationships there are also many questions of inheritance and transmission. If children's activism can be experienced by parents as a successful transmission of a certain number of principles, it can also reflect the negative idea of their own disengagement and renouncement of key ideals.

Downward mobility and (re)invention of countercultural lifestyles
Among these inheritors, we can see several lifestyles and types of activism that are characteristic of communitarian utopias in the trajectories of '68ers, such as the refusal to vote, the rejection of employment and institutionalised forms of work, or the rejection of consumerism, or even, for Fleur, the refusal to have children.

Between 1995 and 2002, Fleur did not vote, but she then re-registered to vote after the results of the presidential elections. Since then, she has voted LCR, but does not feel that she is represented by any politician. Olivier, on the other hand, stopped voting when he joined SCALP-Reflex:

I do enough for society as a full-time activist to allow myself to not vote
[...] the next elections, there's a good chance that it will be Sarkozy who's
in the second round, against either Ségolène or Le Pen, but for me, once
we get there it's too late... Because it means we took the wrong path a
long time ago [...] Voting, as we do it, means you delegate all your power
to people who, even if they are good people, will end up screwing you
over because they are in a system where when you have power, well...
you manage it... according to the laws of capitalism...

Fleur and Olivier also share a critical attitude towards the world of work.
After obtaining a research Masters in mechanical engineering, after nine
years of study, Olivier left to travel in South America for several months,
before becoming a casual teacher in a middle school:

I failed to internalise the idea that work is central to life, and so I'm a bit
in the shit now. Basically, in 30 years, I've worked maybe two! I always
managed, giving maths classes... And as I don't have a frantic need to
consume, I've managed to get by like that [...] When people ask me what
I do, I say I'm an activist.

As for Fleur, she writes in her questionnaire that she has been officially
unemployed for the last sixteen years and adds, "let's talk about activity
rather than work (an instrument of torture)." Further on she adds that, for
her, work represents one of the most difficult compromises to accept. At the
time of the study she was a teaching assistant in a vocational high school,
and lived in a small rural village in Brittany, with her partner Anthony,
unemployed. She said, "Coming here was a big turning point in our lives, a
throw with a single dart; a spur of the moment decision against a background
of social instability, guided by a radical social, economic, and environmental
analysis."[48]

Anthony and Fleur describe themselves as "cyber-neo-rurals:" they run a
neighbourhood house that organises screenings and debates where several
generations of neo-rurals come together. Fleur is the secretary of the as-
sociation *Démo-Terre-Happy*, which defends "people caring for society"
and participates in various local social forums. However, she refuses to be
described as an activist: "I don't like the concept of activism. I have moved
from activism to everyday resistance."[49]

48   Extract from an email received on 15 November 2006.
49   Response to the question "do you consider yourself an activist today?"

We can see that Oliver has a similar perspective; he is also searching for political alternative and answers to social instability. He has a project to buy some land with friends, and to build some collective housing, so that they can escape their dependency on landowners. He founded a "counterculture collective" to organise concerts at the International Centre for Popular Culture "at the crossroads of activism, alternative rock music, counterculture, and the anti-authoritarian, anarchist, and autonomist spheres…"

Finally, the rejection of activist asceticism and the desire to focus on concrete local struggles constitute two central aspects to the forms of activism taken on by these anti-authoritarian inheritors. Although the critique of parents' political models has undoubtedly influenced the forms of second-generation activism, the transformations of the activism on offer also played an essential role. The new forms of neo-rurality (Fleur) or the militant experiences in the Alternative, Anti-capitalist and Anti-war Village (VAAG) during the G8 counter-summit (Olivier) thus represent ways of reconciling radical activism, activation of countercultural dispositions internalised during childhood (practical implementation of self-management, feminism, political environmentalism) and immediate returns on current activism.

However, these new forms of activism must be understood as a response to the downward social mobility (individual and structural) of the cohorts born in the 1970s (Chauvel 1998; Baudelot and Establet, 2000; Peugny, 2009). In fact, in these forms of collective living that apply the modes of organisation they hope to see everywhere (along the lines of phalanstères), anti-authoritarian inheritors find political alternatives and answers to their social instability.

Inheriting the need to make sense of one's life through activism

The processes of transmission and political inheritance in the second profile of *activist inheritors* will now be explored through the case of Lydia. These inheritors are involved on the far-left rather than at the anti-authoritarian pole,[50] and the comparison with the previous profile allows us to show how the divergences in their political futures must be considered in light of family variables (particularly the continuity of parental political engagements during their youth) but also their social and professional trajectories.

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50   This profile of activist inheritors brings together three times as many participants as the previous profile (30 versus 10)

A child schooled in revolution

Gérard, Lydia's father, was born in 1948.[51] He was enrolled in a scientific preparatory class in Toulouse in 1968. Close to the JCR, he was part of the occupation of the *Lycée Fermat* during the events and became an activist with the young JCR in the months that followed, as he was accepted into the prestigious engineering school, the *Ecole Cenrale de Paris.* For him, May '68 represented a "genuine turning point in [his] life and above all the opportunity to give meaning to [my] existence."[52] Three years later he became a paid party official of the LCR, and stayed there until the mid-1980s. Through his activism, he met Eliane, Lydia's mother, in 1972. Born in 1954, Eliane was still a high school student at the time, and she joined the LCR and dropped her studies after passing the baccalaureate. When Lydia was born in 1975, her mother was working as a newspaper copyeditor.

Lydia's parents separated before she was two years old. For Eliane, this romantic breakdown also meant a break away from activism, but also from her daughter, who remained in the sole custody of Gérard. As a result, Lydia scarcely saw her mother before she was seven years old.[53]

Lydia describes the education that she received as permissive and progressive. Gérard took her to nearly all the meetings he participated in, to the point where Lydia was a "little revolutionary" from an early age:

> When I was in primary school... I spent a lot of time at the printshop for *Rouge*;[54] I drew pictures, I knew the place by heart, I knew everyone, I was like a fish in water! [...] I was proud that my father was an activist! I was very aware of what was happening: I was totally into it! I was really, completely indoctrinated (*she laughs*)! My father transmitted his revolutionary faith to me. Later on, I questioned all that, but not when I was a kid![55]

Although they were given responsibilities early in life by parents who were very busy with their activism, the interviewees in this profile grew up with

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51   His parents were left-wing Protestants and participated in the Resistance. Gérard's trajectory was mentioned previously, in Chapters 2 and 3.

52   Extract from the interview conducted with Gérard on 3 March 2006, at his home in Paris.

53   Eliane refused to participate in the study, considering that she was not concerned by the Vitruve school.

54   *Rouge* is the newspaper of the LCR.

55   Extract from an interview conducted at Lydia's home, on 15 March 2006. All the extracts in this section are from this interview.

a certain material, affective and political stability. They were born a few years later than the children who were on the "frontline" of educational experiments, mostly born before 1968 (see profile 2 in the schema above). Their parents were not unemployed, and they observed stable political behaviour in their parents. At a very early age they therefore internalised the need to commit to radically transforming society.

Reversing the stigma
Unlike the interviewees who shared the negative feeling of having been the objects of political experimentation at Vitruve school, Lydia, like most of the *activist inheritors*, adored and completely adopted the Vitruvian approach:

> I was so proud of my school and always motivated... super enthusiastic about learning citizenship, participating in voting, meetings, sharing responsibilities etc. [...] I remember workshops where we had subjects to debate in a kind of arena, you know, verbal jousting, to teach us how to debate, how to defend ideas.

These students also say that the institutions and the functioning of the Vitruve school played a role in their future militant engagements. How can we explain such different reactions from those who, for example, criticise the school for not "having prepared them for reality" (a posture often accompanied by a rejection of activism)? We can hypothesise that the homogeneity of forms of primary socialisation (in the family and in the school) represents an initial factor favouring the "success"[56] of Vitruvian socialisation, and being aware of one's own education in a school outside the norm, is another. In other words, these children internalised the *illusio* necessary to believe in the counter-system incarnated by their school, whilst being conscious that the rest of society did not follow this model. In this, we can see a characteristic of the parents of this profile who challenged the social order, and partly the everyday order, but who rejected more utopian positions. Gérard for example says, "I had both the deep conviction that we had to shake up society, as a whole, and particularly the school system, but I also thought that creating alternative micro-societies was not going to solve the problem."

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56   In the sense that these former students consider that Vitruve had a positive impact on the formation of their dispositions for activism (which constitutes, at least implicitly, one of the objectives of socialisation at Vitruve).

Thus, unlike the interviewees who experienced a more radically countercultural primary (family) socialisation (in particular the profile of the *ambivalent inheritors of utopia* and *downwardly mobile inheritors*), Lydia and those like her were aware of their difference from a very early age, which made it easier for them to confront the frames of secondary socialisation.

These future activists quickly adapted to secondary school (whereas profiles 2 and 6 were unable to overcome their academic shortcomings). Lydia was an excellent student, and elected class representative several times. Although she felt different from her classmates, she never suffered from this feeling, unlike those who saw their difference as a kind of stigma. This is because success at school has a strong influence on how dissocialisation is managed. It is much easier to reverse the stigma of marginalisation when one is accepted by the school institution. By contrast, those who failed at school sought to repress their countercultural dispositions, aspired to conformity, and did not become activists.

Lydia went to the local *Lycée* after four years of middle school at Vitruve, where upon her father's advice she chose to study English and Spanish.[57] This parental rejection of elitist academic strategies emerged again when Lydia told Gérard that she wanted to go to the highly prestigious *Lycée Henri IV* for her final year, but the latter did not encourage her.[58] She obtained her baccalaureate with third class honours, and enrolled to study history at university.

In search of salvation goods: in the (partially contested) footsteps of her father
Lydia left France to travel around Mexico after she finished her undergraduate degree. She found herself in the Chiapas region in 1994, in the midst of the Zapatista uprising. Although she was political she had never been directly involved in activism, and she began to question her political heritage through her experience in the field:

> I met two people who had a strong impact on me: a woman who was the coordinator of a rural development program, which was reformist and so opposed to what the Zapatist National Liberation Army (EZLN) had done. And I worked in a Catholic mission with street children, with a

57   This secondary school (which is not an experimental school) has a relatively poor reputation and most of the interviewees pursued their secondary studies elsewhere.
58   At the time Lydia wanted to undertake a preparatory course for the grandes écoles (hypokhâgne) so she decided to go to Lycée Henri IV, but also to pursue a girlfriend she had fallen in love with.

priest who was an extraordinary man, a Marxist, and who made a big impact on me (*she laughs*).

At age nineteen, Lydia was going through what she describes as a "mystical crisis." She read up on all religions, searching for answers to her existential questions, and challenged the materialism she inherited from her parents. The very fact that she was asking these questions underlines the affinities that can exist between religious and political engagements and why it is interesting to consider activism in terms of the offer of salvation goods (Siméant, 2009).[59]

When she returned to France, the young student concluded her research for salvation goods with the observation of the inadequacy between her aspirations and what religion had to offer. She specifies that such a conversion would have been too costly in any case, "believing in God called into question too radically the foundations upon which I had built myself." However, Lydia's need to achieve self-realisation through her engagement continued to guide her in the years that followed.

Several interviewees in this profile became activists with political organisations close to the ones their parents had been involved with, before ultimately realising that it was impossible to reproduce parental activism identically. Lydia laughs, "it would be incestuous for me to be a member of the LCR!" By using the term incest Lydia expresses the widely held need of those in this profile to appropriate their political heritage through activist engagements that make sense in terms of their own trajectories as well as in the socio-political context of the 1990s. Yet this is a context that is incomparable to that of May '68 and the early '70s, marked by high unemployment, structural downward mobility for young people and a significant devaluing of far-left activism.

The results of National Front (FN) at the presidential elections of 1995 (15%), as well as the size of the social movements over that winter were catalysts for activism among many of the interviewees born in the 1970s, as were the student movements of 1986 and the emergence of SOS Racisme for the interviewees who were slightly older. Lydia joined *Ras l'Front*[60] in 1996, considering it "the antiracist group closest to [her] opinions," whilst she was studying history at the Sorbonne. She didn't stay an activist there for

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59   Lydia went to work in a hospice in Calcutta two years later, surrounded by nuns. In some families, dispositions for political engagement (for parents) shifted towards the religious sphere (for the children). In these instances, it is often Buddhism that captured children's interest.

60   An organisation created in 1990 to fight against the National Front.

very long: "I couldn't do it. I had been steeped in this militant far-left milieu for so long that I knew all the bad sides, and I was hyper critical. Factional infighting, all the little conflicts that there are between micro-movements – I found it exasperating!"

It seemed as though the fact that they had witnessed the backstage operations of similar political organisations, as children, was detrimental to the *illusio* required to invest in them. In other words, these inheritors are faced with the following paradox: they cannot envisage their lives without activism, but they have inherited a critical perspective of political organisations that makes it more costly for them to maintain their engagement.

A job enabling activism

Lydia stopped her university studies after completing her Masters degree and became a primary school teacher. She justifies this professional decision by her desire for economic independence but also by the activist dimension of teaching "children and adolescents who are in difficulty."[61] Teaching attracts a great number of the *activist inheritors*, as we can see on the factorial plane in the proximity of the variables "middle-class, teachers" and the other variables related to activism. Rather than turning towards niches in the labour market that are adjusted to their countercultural dispositions (like many of those in profiles 1 and 2 do), they turned towards professions that allow them time to be activists, the first element in the forms of self-realisation that they inherited from their parents: "I'm not saying that I don't care about my job, of course not, but I have never had the feeling that I would fulfil myself completely in my professional activity."

It is not surprising that "career" ambitions are absent from the lifestyles inherited here, given that the parents also considered the professional sphere as being of secondary importance. The case of Gérard, who became a paid official with the LCR when he left engineering school is an archetypal example of this.

Whilst artistic professions constituted a space for the resolution of the tensions that were constitutive of the dissocialisation of *ambivalent inheritors of utopia,* activism allowed this second group of inheritors to resolve a certain number of contradictions also. Lydia thus found her place among the *Panthères Roses* (Pink Panthers), a far-left lesbian feminist group:

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61   She is a teacher at a school for children and young people with special educational needs.

> I thought it was really good that my parents' activism had given meaning to
> their lives; but of course... I obviously had a bit of trouble re-appropriating
> things [...] and at the Pink Panthers, it was the first time I had the im-
> pression that I'd found a form of engagement that was really mine, that
> corresponded exactly to what I want to say in that world.

This extract emphasises just how important parental engagement is in the
internalisation of a norm of self-realisation through activism. Yet it also
underlines the weight that this can represent for these inheritors. Many
interviewees in profiles 3 and 4 declared that they suffered from the context
which devalued the political engagements they had grown up with, as well
as from lack of collective momentum, and a feeling of powerlessness in the
face of a global capitalist system which seemed increasingly difficult to
influence. This thus begs the question, not of the costs of activism, but the
cost of a lack of militant activities. Olivier thus said:

> It's sure that we are different and that we make it hard for ourselves,
> more than others, asking all these questions, and wanting to change
> everything... Sometimes, I'd love to have a crap little job, a house, a
> car, a dog, a wife, kids, not have to think about anything, watch telly
> and football... but it's just impossible, I can't imagine my life without
> activism!

Often overqualified for the jobs they do, these activists put their university
knowledge and skills at the service of a highly qualified activism, within
hybrid activist networks that bring together activists, intellectuals, re-
searchers and people in situations of instability, and thus contribute to
(re)defining the position of an activist intellectual. Lydia thus became
a member of a collective situated on the border between academia and
activism on the question of gender. Similarly, for several years Gaël (see
Box 8 below) ran a network dedicated to Bourdieu's sociology, bringing
together students, researchers and activists to question the militant uses
of critical sociology.

Box 9   Gaël: from the factory to university via Bourdieu

Born in 1968, Gaël is Fleur's older brother. After going to primary school at Ange-
Guépin, he immediately encountered academic difficulties at secondary school
and was encouraged to do a professional certificate after middle school. He is
bitterly critical of his parents (and in particular his father François) for not having
helped him at school, and holds him responsible for his downward mobility.

Enrolled in a work-study programme, he quickly realised that factory work was not for him. He began to read philosophy "to escape from my everyday life."[62] Shortly afterwards, his autodidactic intellectual path led him to discover Pierre Bourdieu, whose work would have a radical impact on his social trajectory – indeed he wrote to the sociologist in 1998 to tell him this, after he had enrolled in a PhD in sociology. He was able to pursue his doctorate after sitting a special entry exam at age 24 and studying sociology at the University of Nantes. On the day of our interview, Gaël showed me the letter Pierre Bourdieu had sent him in reply. The physical place this letter occupied in his house (stuck to the glass door of his bookcase, in full view of the main room of his house) reflects the place of Bourdieu's work in Gaël's life. Here are some extracts from the letter he sent to the sociologist:

> In 1987, after a 'problematic' education that had involuntarily led me to a professional school, my first experiences of factory life curiously saw me turn towards cultural pleasures far removed from the kind of professional educa-tion I received in the company. A feeling of downward social mobility and disillusionment were the origin of my enthusiasm for reading during my free time and my breaks at the factory […] my experience as a manual worker (on the assembly line and other unskilled tasks) provoked a social suffering in me that put me in an awkward position with this industrial world, in which I felt condemned to stay forever. […]

A little later, my personal research had helped me to understand the meaning of my social trajectory and the multiple forms of domination and resentment that I observed among my schoolmates, and later among my work colleagues. […] I did struggle to understand certain passages of *The Critique of Pure Reason* […], texts from the Frankfurt school, Foucault… Closer to my own experience, I read Simone Weil (*The Worker's Condition*), Robert Linhart (*L'établi*). I can still remem-ber all my efforts to familiarise myself – sometimes in vain – with "high" thinking. People discouraged me, 'you're not cut out for study' they told me. I remember an anecdote about my workplace (1989): dressed in my blue uniform and my hands covered in grease I had the gall to write the introduction of a philosophy essay (to give to my sister's teacher, she was in her final year) in a little note-book, right next to technicians who were busy adjusting an injection moulding machine and who naturally must have thought I was interested in their way of working. I was both there and elsewhere.

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62   Extract from the interview conducted at Gaël's house near Nantes on 6 June 2006.

> And then one day there was a little book by Ferry and Renaut, *La Pensée '68* (The Thought of '68) that I bought almost by chance. I started to read it, not without some difficulty and discovered your existence. […] For me, in spite of all the difficulty I had in reading you, it was a veritable 'revelation'. […] All the analyses that you propose in *La Distinction* helped me to reconceptualise the way I saw the social worlds I had moved in since my childhood. […] Through a kind of 'revelation' your writings led me to return to study aged 23, and to pursue a university degree without too much trouble to doctoral level.
>
> I had to be one of the dominated (I could not but be very sensitive, or even revolted, by all these miserable situations specific to the 'precarious' people who will never be understood by public policy representatives, by traditional unions, by fashionable intellectual circles) to be able to understand that a theory of the actor trapped in a scholastic vision – like for Ferry and Renaut, or for Rawls, to mention only them – stems from a cynical comfort, a profound ignorance of the conditions in which social relations are produced.
>
> […]
>
> To conclude, I wanted to tell you that my social trajectory is the product of reading your work, and, even as I continue to read, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

We have seen that the reading of the early Bourdieu's work contributed to the politicisation of many first-generation intellectuals (see Chapter 1), due to this "revelation effect," which Gaël also mentions. Similarly, we can see how this critical sociology resonates with the concerns of actors whose social trajectories are marked by social mobility (upward or downward, as is the case here) or displacement. Indeed, when Gaël says "I was here and elsewhere," he summarises what most of the interviewees from the second generation felt, and expressed over the course of the interviews: the feeling of being displaced, whether or not they move downward. There are substantial affinities between the reflexivity produced by the position of a displaced person, the sociology of revelation and social critique through various forms of activism; and the boundaries between them are often fluid and permeable. This is how Gaël came to do his Masters sociology theses on student unionism, to vote for the LCR and to become a unionist with Sud during his studies. This reflexive activist posture allows him to conceptualise the tensions due to the dissonance of the dispositions internalised in the habitually closed circles he moved in (very free education, parents considered absent, countercultural socialisation, traditional secondary school and humiliation due to academic failure, orientation into

vocational learning unsuited to his aspirations, factory work and university study, return to study as a mature student, generational gap with the other students etc.).

Gaël did not finish his doctoral thesis, for a number of reasons, particularly financial. After working as a casual teacher at university and in different social work schools (between 2001 and 2005) he retrained to become a special education teacher. Although his trajectory is unique in the corpus studied here, it nevertheless reflects the reflexive posture characteristic of many children of 68ers who became university lecturers and teachers in social and human sciences, working on subjects related to their political heritage.[63]

Conclusion

As we reach the end of this final chapter, there are several findings that may shed light on the question of the – activist – futures of the children of the '68ers we interviewed. Firstly, it is important to establish a link between the fact that only one fifth of the children interviewed went on to become activists, and the political context in which they grew up, characterised as it was by an increasing depreciation of activism.[64] It is also important to underline that these children of activists did not experience the opening of the field of possibilities that their parents went through in May '68. This was an important socialising factor for the first generation, reinforcing dispositions for contestation and functioning as a kind of proof of the fragility of a political system hitherto believed to be unshakable. The second generation thus inherited aspirations to activism that only encountered a weak echo among their peers. Moreover, they experienced no events comparable with May '68, which would have been able to confirm the validity of their aspirations and spark their passage to activism.

63   This profile combining reflexive and militant postures seems to be generalisable (beyond the few interviewees who embody it here) given the discussions I have had about the study with young researchers in social sciences and sociology who proved to be the "children of '68ers" studying politics. To cite only a few who identify (or identified) with this posture, Hélène Combes, Florence Joshua, Sandrine Garcia, Bleuwenn Lechaux, Virginie Linhart, Joël Gombin, Eve Meuret-Campfort, Bibia Pavard, Etienne Pénissat, Johanna Siméant, and of course, myself.
64   Thus, as Johanna Siméant observes, the often-cited conclusion about apolitical young people and more politicised elders is "an overly schematic image [...] that overlooks the fact that political activity, and particularly in its leftist incarnations, appears particularly highly valued during the first period, but particularly devalued during the 1980s-1990s" (Siméant, 2003, p. 187).

In order to answer the question "who are those who became activists?" the comparison of different collective profiles of inheritors (beyond the few presented here) allows us to perceive the roles played by different forms of parental activism during childhood, educational models, the intra-familial affective economy or the arrangements for responding to dissocialisation. Here we present certain conclusions as to the social conditions for the second-generation effects of May '68.

Firstly, and unsurprisingly, it seems necessary – but not sufficient – that the events of May '68 had an impact on the trajectories of the parents for them to have an impact on the children. Simple participation in the events is not sufficient in itself. The homogeneity of political preferences and activities between parents, as well as their stability over time, represents another essential factor in the transmission of dispositions for activism. The study thus shows that a childhood marked by the homogeneity of socialising agents (within the parental couple, but also between the school and the family environment) and a certain material – and affective – parental stability, is favourable to the transmission of dispositions for protest. Success at school also positively contributes to assimilation and the activation of countercultural dispositions, whilst failure at school and downward social mobility are often responsible for rejecting these dispositions.

The children interviewed have almost all internalised systems of dissonant dispositions, which make them young adults who are always slightly "out of step" or "on the margins." Among the *activist inheritors*, activism appears to be a position that allows resolution of tensions inherent in their dissocialisation. Indeed, through their militant activities they contribute to modifying the environment in which they live, so that it might conform to the dispositions for protest internalised during their childhoods.

The comparison of different activist trajectories among the second generation also shows that, although dispositions for activism are relatively well transmitted from parents to children, the forms and repertoires of action in which these dispositions can be actualised are much more difficult to transmit, as the political context of the time becomes a major constraining factor. We thus observe a relatively strong continuity in dispositions for protest, and a discontinuity in militant frameworks, which allows us to move beyond the sterile and overly simplistic opposition between "old" and "new" activists. Indeed, the case studies presented here show that the "new activists" can be the children of the "old," a result that partly invalidates the thesis of a clear difference in social origin between these two groups.

Finally, in order to maintain a certain intergenerational continuity of activism, the transmission of "organisational memory," "group memory"

and "collective identity," allowing younger activist to learn from their predecessors' experiences, is essential (Whittier, 1997). However, many interviewees were activists in countercultural spheres that rejected political organisations, or in non-institutionalised feminist movements that began to run out of steam in the late 1970s. They therefore had difficulty successfully transmitting a memory of activism to their children, in the absence of the institutional means (i.e. political training schools, or youth groups) established by these protest organisations to transmit a (political) collective history. The family institution thus appears necessary, but not sufficient, to transmit these dispositions for activism.

Conclusion: The Event, a frame for political resocialisation

Why and how did the trajectories of 68ers intersect, in spite of their great diversity, to create this event? Over the course of this book we have tried to demonstrate the diversity of the collective profiles subsumed by the vagueness of the term generation '68. The '68ers interviewed here experienced different frames of (political) socialisation, which can be linked to four different matrices of participation in May '68. The two first matrices emphasize the roles for the family transmission of dispositions for activism (political for some, religious for others) which become politicised through Third-Worldism in the 1960s. Structural transformations (of the school system and the condition of women) provide the backdrop for the other matrices, which bring together first-generation intellectuals on one hand, and on the other, young students who experienced an increasingly blatant gap between their personal aspirations and their objective conditions. On the eve of May '68, these young people did not share the same political, theoretical and intellectual referents – nor even the same political interests and demands. In other words, their trajectories converged at this moment because the events of May-June 68 were invested with disparate personal and political expectations. Yet this convergence was not pure circumstance, given that it did bring about the synchronisation of sectorial crises, which produced the dynamic of a political crisis (Dobry, 1986), and made May '68 a critical moment.

However, the diversity of '68ers cannot be reduced to the range of their prior socialisations. It is also due to the dynamic of the events, and to variables such as biographical availability, the place of engagement and the intensity of participation. The *short term* of the events cannot be reduced to the *long term* of trajectories (Gobille, 2008). This is why the typology of socialising effects of the events constructed in Chapter 2 took into account the forms of socialisation prior to May '68 *and* the forms of participation during the events. By combining the variables of accumulated activist resources on one hand, and the degree of exposure to the events on the other, we observe four different socialising effects. For those participants who had had several activist experiences prior to May '68, the event provided *socialisation by maintenance* of dispositions for protest (if they were only marginally exposed to the events) or *socialisation by reinforcement* (if they participated actively). For first-time activists these events entailed

socialisation by awareness-raising or *socialisation by conversion* to activism (for those who were the most involved). This typology, which can be transposed to other contexts and other eras, should therefore also contribute to the analysis of the role of events in secondary political socialisation.

What have been the biographical consequences of activism, both in the wake of the events and over the longer term? The French case of May 1968 confirms the main tendencies put forward in the American studies; ex-activists continue to maintain their political specificities (compared to their non-activist counterparts) long after the events themselves. Nearly forty years later, the impact of the events can still be seen, but above all, the biographical consequences vary according to the individual's trajectory prior to engagement, as well as their age, sex, resources, marital status and social occupation (students or workers) in May '68. The event plays out over the long term but it does not influence all participants in the same way, universally or univocally. As a result, it does not produce a single "generation '68." The articulation of statistical approaches and life histories has thus enabled us to show that "spontaneous generations" are no more likely to be found in social sciences than they are in animal biology. The revelation of a dozen micro-units of generation '68, which group trajectories according to similarities in forms of politicisation prior to May 68, registers of participation in the events, and the effects of activism, has thus made an important contribution to the social history of May 68.

If we enter more specifically into the workings and mechanics of political resocialisation, we can see that, as an event, May 68 destabilised individual trajectories by opening up the realm of possibilities, which is characteristic of a critical moment. Firstly, such an event can *enable* improbable encounters between actors who evolve in social circles that are ordinarily non-contiguous. These transgressive encounters then in turn lead to diverse incidences, and particularly to social shifts (Chapter 4). Participation in May 68 also may have *accelerated* processes of mobility or conversion to activism, *reinforced* aspirations hitherto considered not legitimate, and *amplified* or *revealed* feelings of displacement, provoking biographical shifts and political awakenings. We therefore cannot understand what the event produces without analysing what it is the product of. In other words, the event functions as a reaction to participation (according to the physical principle of action and reaction). Yet the socialising effects are not proportional to the intensity of participation; indeed, it is paradoxically among certain young participants, who were not the most active in the events, that the biographical impacts were the most substantial (see Chapter 3). Generational effects can therefore not be closely analysed without taking

into account life cycle effects and in particular the question of the impressionability of youth (Mauger, 1995).

Finally, this social deregulation, specific to political crises, leads (to varying degrees) to an *upheaval of the sense of limits.* Political engagements produce new aspirations, but the opening up of what is imaginable does not necessarily mean an opening up of what is actually possible, once the conjuncture of the crisis has passed. Some – a very few – did see their objective conditions also evolve towards greater possibilities after May '68. The University of Vincennes accepting students with no formal qualifications is a good example of this. The effects observed included social mobility accompanied by a perpetuation of activism and the reinforcement of a belief in the alterability of the social world (see Chapter 4). For the most part however, ex-'68ers had to confront the closure of the realm of possibilities, even though their aspirations had been permanently altered. We thus observe situations of political frustration and disappointed hopes. These factors are responsible for the various forms of individual escape observed here – despair, depression, evasion (travel or drugs), even suicide, when no other form of continuity is conceivable, and when it is impossible to maintain personal integrity. Political frustrations can also be resolved by shifting dispositions for protest into different spheres of social life. This gave rise to a large movement of critical renovation within professions (creation of new union branches, redefining professional practices etc.). Professions that were previously not very codified, such as community work, social work, journalism or research in social sciences, were also redefined at this point. This process of reconverting critical dispositions also impacted on professional roles (teacher, social worker, journalist etc.) which then in turn reshaped '68ers, in a movement that both enabled and accompanied their task of mourning for past political beliefs. Finally, the various communautarian utopias that developed in the 1970s (back-to-the-land, communal living, communal pedagogy etc.) also represent other ways of expressing aspirations and activating unsatisfied dispositions in counter-cultural micro-societies. They can also be analysed as strategies for reconversion, or more specifically as the social conversion of political frustration. They indeed allow for the restauration of "wounded identities" and mean participants can continue to consider themselves activists through counter-cultural practices.

The spheres of everyday life and family were not exempt from these transfers, and the result was the critical renewal of everyday life. This took the form of experiments with new forms of parenting, new gender and educational norms that contributed to redefining the roles of parents, partners, and children. This is the source of the question that piqued my curiosity as

researcher: can a political event like May '68 have an impact on the children of '68ers, whose generation was not directly exposed to the events? What did these parents – who sought to break away from the mechanisms of social reproduction and traditional relations between generations – ultimately transmit to their children regarding May '68?

Counter cultural educational practices (characterised by importing dispositions for protest into the family and school spheres) constitute the primary vector for family transmission of inheritance from May '68. Overall, the children of 68ers internalised (more or less) dissonant systems of dispositions (Lahire, 1998). These tensions are due to the discord between primary (counter cultural) socialisation and (more conventional) secondary socialisation; and thus to the contradictory imperatives to adapt to society in which they live, whilst still "inheriting their inheritance" (Bourdieu, 1975). Yet the interviewees of the "second generation" are not equally affected by this double bind. This raises the (vast) question of dissonant socialisations and their differentiated effects, knowing that downward mobility is often responsible for a rejection of political inheritance.

Having internalised heterogeneous and potentially contradictory systems of dispositions meant that members of the second generation shared a sense of a quest for their own "place," frequently feeling "displaced" or "marginal." In this respect we might say that they are indeed their parents' children, replaying the indeterminacy of possibilities that the latter also tried to perpetuate in their own way and their own time. The key difference being, of course, that for the parents there was an intentional political aspect in investing in counter cultural educational strategies, whereas for the children social alterity is their heritage.

The trajectories studied here, of both parents and children, are made up of biographical breaking points, redirections, and social shifts. Within two family generations, many of them "detached" from their original groups and encountered secondary socialisation head-on (through the events of May-June '68 for the parents, and through the traditional secondary school for the children), which was more or less contradictory with the circumstances of their primary socialisation. More specifically, both the two family generations interviewed here posed the dual question of the *political conversions of social frustration* and *the social conversion of political frustrations*.[1] Both May '68 and the alternative education experience (understood as reflecting

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1   On this point, Johanna Simeant wrote: "the question of the political investment of social frustrations is indeed only one of the aspects of the way in which we must envisage the link between what people are politically and what they are socially. It is just as important to identify

both family and school education), fed hopes of change and the broadening of possibilities. They played out on the level of the protagonists' expectations (on their sense of limits), without necessarily durably altering the means to satisfy them. Having studied two family generations allows us to shed light on the permanence and the changes observed here.

Utopian strategies constitute one way of resolving these tensions. Characteristic of both generations, and more generally of groups subject to social mobility (upward or downward), they are however more present among the parents (due to the effect of context and the differential offer of salvation goods).

The reflexive attitude adopted in response to this dissonance is also shared by both generations, and it takes similar forms (social sciences researcher, journalist, psychologist etc.). The same is true for the posture based on sublimation by art (Pagis, 2015), although it is more developed among the second generation. But perhaps these less codified positions in the artistic sector are today's equivalent of social and community work in the 1970s. The difference would be that these low-bureaucracy spheres left more room for *staging the self* as well as the latitude to work on professional roles. On this point, Luc Boltanski writes that

> It is therefore more and more difficult to find niches [...] The most frequent alternative is that of belonging at the cost of conformity, or non-conformity but at the cost of marginality [...]. Yet we, the spoilt children of the generation after May '68, we are lucky enough to still be marginal within the system [...] But the confidence we had in ourselves, not as individuals but as a collective, and, though that, our audacity, also came from something else, which also had a generational nature, we were born out of a victory. (Boltanski, 2008, p. 83-85).

These generational differences therefore stem from different socio-economic conjunctures, but also from political situations that are fundamentally incomparable, marked by the substantial collective struggles and activist victories of May '68 and the early 1970s. The significant place of activism in the trajectories of '68ers compared to the trajectories of their children can thus be explained not by the alleged individualism of "young people today," but rather by sharp decline in prestige associated with political activism (particularly on the far left), and the weakness of political youth groups

the effects of certain political frustrations [...] as the social effects of certain political engagements, in terms of both downward and upward social mobility." (Siméant, 1998, p. 63-64).

(associated with the PCF in particular) in the 1980s and 1990s, compared with their equivalents in the 1960s. We must also look to the role of increasing insecurity in the labour market, the weakening of trade unions, and the structural downward mobility of cohorts born after the 1960s. These are so many factors that contribute to the intergenerational discontinuities and transformations of activism.

I would like to conclude on a more personal note. These years of research and writing have left my rose-coloured vision of the social world torn and tattered (yet still tenacious – it is not so easy to discard one's heritage), to the benefit of the sometimes bitter taste of lucidity. I hope that this book may convince readers that between a hagiographic vision and the denigration of '68ers, the reality of their futures is more complex. If utopia saw many suffer, it was also the lifeblood of paths less travelled that were happily taken. Accounting for the social conditions of their (dis)illusions by no means implies succumbing to disenchantment, and I remain persuaded that if we stopped everything, and thought about it, we'd have a blast!

Appendix 1

List of interviews conducted with the ex-'68ers cited

Note: this table presents the interviewees who were interviewed and cited in the text. They are presented in alphabetical order so that the reader can locate them easily.

	Year of birth	Social, religious and political background	Matrix of participation	Register of participation in May 68	Trajectory post-1968	Profession	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Agnès	1945	Parents working-class, secular Jews, Communist sympathisers	Family transmission, first generation intellectual	Active (Action committees, barricades, union general assemblies)	Unionism, Lip, commune, support for undocumented migrants	Primary school teacher	January and March 2007 (2 hours 45 mins, and then 2 hours)	93, 97-100, 125, 228
Alain	1947	Father worker who became a manager, mother at home, both right-wing Catholics	Politicised through the occupation of the factory during May '68	Occupation of a factory in Nantes	CFDT (for a few years)	Skilled worker (patisserie)	March 2008 (1 hour by telephone)	101-03
Alexandre	1944	Russian bourgeoisie, right-wing Orthodox	Rejection of the family order	Active, member of the PSU	Ceased activism in 1969	Administrative management (Education department)	June 2005 (1 hour 45 mins)	230
Aline	1946	Parents employees, not very politicised	First generation intellectual	Very active FGEL (Sorbonne)	Primary school teacher at Vitruve, teachers' union	Primary school teacher	January and May 2005 (2 hours 45mins, 2 hours)	69-70, 72-74
André	1941	Parents employees, Trotskyist atheists	Family transmission	Active (FGERI, CGT)	Communes, Larzac, SGEN-CFDT	Vocational education teacher	January and March 2007 (2 hours 45 mins, 2 hours)	97-100, 228

	Year of birth	Social, religious and political background	Matrix of participation	Register of participation in May 68	Trajectory post-1968	Profession	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Annick	1949	Teachers (popular education)	Family transmission and statutory incoherencies	Very active, student, situationist	Feminism (numerous organisational roles)	Midwife	May 2006 (2 hours 30 mins)	158, 217, 219, 221
Christiane	1941	Parents working class Catholics, centre-right	Politicisation of religious engagements	Very active (JCR)	LCR, unionism, feminism, undocumented migrants, DAL	Primary school teacher	November 2005 (2 hours 30 mins)	53-57, 62, 67, 226, 249, 254, 263
Claude	1939	Parents upper class non-practicing Jews, left-wing	Feeling of belonging to a persecuted minority	Very active (anarchist, Sorbonne)	Anarchist activist, resigned from CNRS in 1980	Independent researcher	April 2008, (1 hour 45 mins by telephone)	227
Colette	1946	Catholic, right-wing bourgeoisie	Politicisation of religious engagements	*Etablie* in a factory	*Etablie* (left the factory in 1974), depression	High-school teacher	November 2005 (2 interviews: 4 hours 30 mins, 2 hours 45 mins)	58, 60-61, 135, 137-48, 156-57, 175, 201
Denise	1928	Parents Protestant, workers, not very politicised	Politicisation of religious engagements	Occupation of the Montreuil Protestant Temple	Community activism, support for undocumented immigrants	Accounting assistant, seamstress	April 2005 (3 hours 20 mins)	
Doris	1950	Parents practicing Jews, bourgeoisie	Statutory incoherencies	Observer in Paris	Communal living, anti-authoritarian circles	Journalist	January 2006 (1 hour 40 mins)	180-81, 183

	Year of birth	Social, religious and political background	Matrix of participation	Register of participation in May 68	Trajectory post-1968	Profession	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Elise	1948	Police officer and mother at home, right wing Catholic	Rejection of the family order	Not very actively involved (Nantes)	Unionism	Childcare assistant	February 2006 (1 hour 20)	265
François	1945	Father manager, left-wing atheist (absent mother)	Algerian war (lived in Algeria as a child)	Active in Toulouse, (close to anarchists and the JCR)	Francas, PCF, CGT	Community youth worker	February 2005 (2 hours, 30 mins)	126, 159-71, 174-75, 265-66, 269, 277
Gégé	1951	Working class communist atheist parents	Family transmission and first generation intellectuals	CAL, Occupation of *Lycée*	Anarchist activist	Primary teacher at Vitruve (1976-2013)	June 2004 (1 hour 45 mins and 2 hours 30 mins)	33-34, 158
Geneviève	1944	Shopkeepers, Communists, Jews	Transmission through family memory (parents and older brother)	Active in Paris (LO)	LO, unionism, CGT, CFDT, FSU	Employee, research assistant	January 2004 (1 hour 50 mins)	50, 112, 144
Gérard	1948	Parents engineers, left-wing, Protestants	Transmission through family memory (Resistance)	Active in Toulouse (occupation of *Lycée*)	Paid organizer at the LCR (1969-1984)	Political organizer then teacher	March 2006 (2 hours 50mins)	109-10, 113, 126, 232, 272-74, 276

	Year of birth	Social, religious and political background	Matrix of participation	Register of participation in May 68	Trajectory post-1968	Profession	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Gilles	1943	Parents employees, atheist, not very politicised	Algerian war, CGT unionism	Striker at the PTT and in the Latin Quarter (close to the Maoists)	GP, environmentalism, unionism, Greens	Worker, social studies teacher	July 2008 (2 hours 45 mins by telephone, then email exchanges)	136, 149–58, 174, 189, 229, 247–48, 250–51
Hélène	1941	Left-wing catholic bourgeoisie	Conjugal politicisation (by her husband, Simon)	Grenoble, quite active	Feminism	Teacher in a technical college	July 2005 (2 hours 45 mins)	193
Jacques	1941	Right-wing protestant bourgeoisie	Politicisation of religious engagements	Very active (national leader of the UJCml)	GP, professional involvement	Social sciences researcher	August 2005 (3 hours 15 mins)	58–62, 90–91, 137, 171, 173
Jean	1939	Parents right wing catholic farmers	First generation intellectual	Very active (JCR)	LCR and unionism	Secondary school teacher, then university lecturer	January 2006 (1 hour 45 mins)	54, 56, 65–67, 70, 226, 249, 254, 263
Jeanne	1943	Left wing working class parents	First generation intellectuals	Return from Spain	Unionism (*Ecole emancipée* movement), Larzac, Lipp, feminism	Primary teacher at Vitruve	January 2006 and December 2007 (3 hours and 15 mins, and 1 hour 30 minutes, filmed)	68, 70

	Year of birth	Social, religious and political background	Matrix of participation	Register of participation in May 68	Trajectory post-1968	Profession	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Josette	1945	Employees, mother Catholic, not very political		Observer in Paris, close to the PSU	Feminism, counter cultural leftism	Restaurant owner, receptionist	November 2004 (3 hours 30 mins)	224
Katia	1951	Shopkeepers, left-wing, atheists	Family transmission, statutory incoherencies	Observer (still at high school)	Anti-nuclear movement, feminism, Greens	Art teacher	March 2004, 2 hours 15 mins	217
Louis	1947	Parents atheist working class communist activists	Family transmission	Occupation of *Lycée*, PSU sympathiser	Community and union activism	Community worker	February 2006 (3 hours)	51-52, 108, 159, 161-71, 175, 239
Maëlle	1948	Father in the military, mother employee, left-wing, Catholic	Statutory incoherencies	Demonstrations (Nantes), occupation of the *Lycée*	Stopped studying, primary school teacher, unionism	Primary school teacher, Director of Community Centre, raised donkeys	February 2006 (2 hours)	74-77, 106
Marc	1937	Upper class, right-wing, Catholic	Rejection of family and school order	Active, photographer	UCMLF (Maoist), back to the land	Photographer	February 2006 (2 hours 15 mins)	229
Marie-Madeleine	1946	Lower middle class, left-wing, Catholic	Politicisation of religious engagements	In Dakar in 1968	Feminism (MLAC Dijon) unionism	Social sciences teacher at *lycée*	April 2008 (2 hours 15 mins by telephone)	231
Mathieu	1944	Parents right wing Catholic farmers	Politicisation of religious engagements	Observer (teacher in a private school)	PSU sympathiser, Vie Nouvelle, CFDT	Electrical technician	February 2006 (1 hour 45 mins)	55, 57

	Year of birth	Social, religious and political background	Matrix of participation	Register of participation in May 68	Trajectory post-1968	Profession	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Mathilde	1946	Parents artisans, right-wing Catholics	Statutory incoherencies	Not very active (pregnant)	Feminism, anarchism, communes, Greens	Research assistant	January 2004 (3 hours 10 mins)	74-77, 127, 179-81, 186, 190-91, 208, 221, 249
Michèle	1927	No father; mother typist, apolitical	Politicisation of religious engagements, first generation intellectual	Active, Maoism (UCMLF)	Community and professional activism	Researcher at the EHESS university	Handwritten letter and telephone interview	57-58, 62
Paul	1947	Employees, Communists, Resistants, atheists	Family transmission, first generation intellectual	UNEF leader in Grenoble, UJCml	*Etablie* in a factory	Journalist	July 2008 (1 hour on the telephone, then 2 hours 40)	93-96, 100, 124, 137-48, 156-57, 175, 201, 204, 207, 227
Paulette	1946	Father in the military and mother at home, right-wing Catholics		Observer (in hospital)	Unionism	Childcare assistant	February 2006 (1 hour 40 mins)	101, 103-06, 222-23
Pierre	1943	Parents tailors, practicing Jews, Communist sympathisers	Family transmission	Close to the CGT and Latin Quarter	Unionism	Fitter and turner, political and cultural tourism	March 2008 (1hour 40 mins and 2 hours 20 mins by telephone)	85, 117, 124, 153

	Year of birth	Social, religious and political background	Matrix of participation	Register of participation in May 68	Trajectory post-1968	Profession	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Robert	1947	Parents employees, Catholics, Communists	Family transmission	Active at university (Jussieu)	Teachers unions	Teacher, instructor, manager	March 2007 (1 hour 30 and filmed)	52
Simon	1942	Upper classes, Jewish Communists	Family transmission	Very active, Maoist	PLR (Maoist) unionism	Researcher, Lecturer	August 2005 (3 hours 30)	48-51, 192
Simone	1936	Upper classes, father Communist Jew, mother Protestant	Family transmission	Very active (Fine Arts school)	MLF, groups around art and politics	Artist	November 2005 (3 hours 15 mins)	88, 252

Appendix 2

List of interviews conducted with the "children of ex-'68ers" cited

	Year of birth	Child of (father/mother)	Parents' profession	School trajectory and qualification	Professional trajectory	Activist activities	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Chloé	1965	Martine	Mother an actor, father assistant director and then producer	Left school in 9th grade (before *Lycée*)	Model, actor, camera operator, dancer, painter	Everyday activism	October 2005 and December 2007 (4 hours + filmed ITV)	252-54
Corinne	1968	Mathilde	Research fellow, father audio-visual producer (Technical Certificate)	Studied cinema at university (Masters in Multimedia)	Floor manager (TV), casual multimedia technician	Union member	September 2004 (1 hour 45 mins)	77, 249
Fleur	1971	François and Elise, sister of Gaël	Father community worker, mother childcare assistant	Baccalaureate (completed 3 years of university without graduating)	Educational assistant in vocational school	Casual workers collective, local social forum "cyber-neo-rurals"	April 2006 (3 hours)	160, 265-71, 277
Gaël	1968	François and Elise, brother of Fleur	Father community worker, mother childcare assistant	Research Masters in sociology (PhD unfinished)	Special education teacher	Student demonstrations in 1986, SUD	February 2006 (2 hours 45 mins)	160, 265, 277-80
Johanna	1967	Simon and Helen	Father researcher and lecturer, mother teacher (middle school)	Studied law (undergraduate), Masters in Health	Assistant director of medical clinic, retrained as a primary school teacher	Everyday environmentalism	July 2005 and December 2007 (4 hours and 30 mins, and 1 hour 45mins, filmed)	191, 193

	Year of birth	Child of (father/mother)	Parents' profession	School trajectory and qualification	Professional trajectory	Activist activities	Date and duration of interview	Pages cited
Loïc	1964	Jean and Christiane, brother of Sebastian	Father university lecturer, mother primary teacher	Studied literature at university (undergraduate)	Primary teacher	SOS-Racism, LCR, DAL, FSU	October 2005 (2 hours 30 mins)	263
Lydia	1975	Gérard	Father teacher (architecture), mother press agent	Studied history (undergraduate)	Primary teacher in special education	Ras l'Front, the Pink Panthers	March 2006 (2 hours)	265, 271-77
Mikaël	1972	Anne and Fab	Mother writer-journalist, father in the social sector	Left school in 9th grade after repeating 3 years	Socio-cultural community worker, graphic novel artist	SOS-Racism (sympathiser), anti-fascist groups	October 2008, (2 hours 30 mins)	200-03, 253
Olivier	1975	Lisette	Mother aged care worker, father parking attendant	Studied physics and mechanics (Masters)	Casual jobs, teacher, IT technician	1995 Movement, SCALP, Reflex (anti-G8 summits)	June 2005 (2 hours 15)	265-71, 277
Sarah	1965	Denise	Parents artists	Studied theatre (PhD), also sat the exam to teach literature (CAPES)	Radio assistant, screen writer, and teacher at lycée		October 2005 (3 hours 30 mins + filmed ITV)	89, 252-54
Sébastien	1965	Jean and Christian, brother of Loïc	Father university lecturer, mother primary teacher	PhD in Psychology	Psychologist (hospital) and then lecturer in psychology	Student movement in 1986, unionist	November 2005 (3 hours)	254

Appendix 3

Micro-units of Generation '68

Micro-generational unit	Sub-profiles	Age	Matrix of politicisation	Activism prior to 1968	Occupation in 1968	Participation in 1968	Activism post-1968	Professional impact	Personal impact	Vote in 2002
I. First generational unit: Interviewees politicised during the Algerian war (born between 1936-1944)										
I.1 First generation intellectuals, from Catholic right-wing working-classes	Profile: PSU	1940-1944	First generation intellectuals + politicisation of religious engagements with the Algerian war	(Seminary)/JAC/ JEC → UNEF/ PSU (→ JCR)	Employees (engineers, teachers)	Close to PSU, not very active	(PSU)/CFDT	Unionism	None	PS/ LCR
	Profile: far-left					Members of JCR, active	LCR+ feminism		Feminism	
I.2 First generation intellectuals, from communist working-class backgrounds	Profile: far-left	1938-1942	First generation intellectuals+ Family transmission	UNEF/UEC → far-left	Employees (teachers)	Far left – very active	GP/PCMLF	Etablis → journalism, research	None	Far-left/ PS
	Profile: Critical of educational relations	1942-1945		Community work → (close to PCF)		Unionism	CFDT, Larzac, school activism	Unionism, community work	Communes	
I.3 Workers and employees, no high school diploma, unionists in 1968	Profile: without professional impacts	1930-1938	Politicisation through working conditions (unionism) +family transmission	CGT (+PSU or PCF)	Employees (white and blue collar)	CGT/PCF or PSU	PCF/PSU +unionism	None	None	PCF/PS
	Profiles: far-left and breaking down social barriers	1938-1943				Far-left	GP + feminism → environmentalism	Return to study/ social mobility	Separation Hyper-gamy	Far left

Micro-generational unit	Sub-profiles	Age	Matrix of politicisation	Activism prior to 1968	Occupation in 1968	Participation in 1968	Activism post-1968	Professional impact	Personal impact	Vote in 2002
I.4 Politicisation of upper class students through the Algerian war	Profiles: religious minority, far-left	1939-1942	Student and Algerian war milieus (Third Worldism)	UNEF/UEC →UJCml	Employees (teachers)	Maoists, very active	GP/PLR	Short-term disengagement	Feminism, separations	Far-left/PS/Greens
	Profile: Catholic left-wing parents, PSU	1936-1939		1958-1962: UGE/UNEF →PSU		Close to the PSU, not very active		Unionism	None	
I.5 Children of upper classes rejecting educational authority	Profile: mainly male, communautarian utopias	1938-1945	Refusal of parental and school authority	Activism against the Algerian War →Vietnam committees (early hippies)	Employees (+ students)	Maoists, anarchists, UNEF	Non-institutional activism: anti-nuclear, feminism etc.	Stopped working, back to the land, artists	Communal living	Far-left/PS/Greens
	Profile: mainly female, new professions							Psychology, community work, journalism		

Micro-generational unit	Sub-profiles	Age	Matrix of politicisation	Activism prior to 1968	Occupation in 1968	Participation in 1968	Activism post-1968	Professional impact	Personal impact	Vote in 2002
II. Second generational unit: Micro units politicised between 1963-1968										
II.1 Children from right-wing, middle and upper-class families, politicised with the Vietnam War		1945-1948	Student milieu/ Vietnam War (+ religious engagement)	(JEC) → UNEF (1965-1967)	Students	Close to the PSU	Feminism, Larzac + student unionism	Oriented towards teaching, special education	Feminism	Greens
II.2 Interviewees from upper class left-wing families, politicised with the Vietnam War	Profile: paid political organisers	1948-1950	Transmission of family memory marked by the Second World War (Resistance)	CVN/JCR (1966-1967)	Students at senior school (Lycée)	JCR, very active	Political party officials (LCR)	Professional activists	Feminism	Far-left
	Profile: mainly female, retraining in the social sector			JC (1966-1967)		Close to the PCF	PCF → back to the land, unionism	Social work / refuse to be employed	Communes (depression)	
II.3 Feminists from middle class left-wing families, politicised with Vietnam War		1946-1948	Vietnam War (+ politicisation of religious engagements)	UNEF (1966-1967)	Young students	22 March Movement/ UNEF/Maoist sympathisers, active	Feminism, (MLF/MLAC), Larzac	Reflexive profile (research on feminism), midwife	Communes, alternative crèches	Greens/ PS/ Far-left
II.4 Politicisation of first generation intellectuals with the Vietnam War	First generation intellectuals (+ family transmission)	1944-1948		UNEF/CVN/JCR	Students (employed)	JCR/PSU, active	LCR/PSU +student unionism	Teachers' unions, (social sciences research)	Little (communal living)	Far left/ PC

Micro-generational unit	Sub-profiles	Age	Schema of politicisation	Activism prior to 1968	Occupation in 1968	Participation in 1968	Activism post-1968	Professional impact	Personal impact	Vote in 2002
III. Third generational unit: interviewees politicised through May '68										
III.1 Children of middle classes, engaged in communitarian utopias	Politicised pole	1947-1950	Statutory incoherencies, family transmission, student milieu in 1968		Students at senior school (Lycée), young university students	Close to the far left	GP/student movements	Refusal to be employees, reintegrated in new professions		Far left/PS
	"Apolitical" pole	1947-1954				Close to "student" spectators	Crèches, feminism, environmentalism, back to the land	Stopped studies, communautarian utopias, downgrading	Communal living (drugs)	Greens
III.2 Trotskyism and counter culture among the younger generation	Left-wing working class	1949-1954	Family transmission + senior school (Lycée) action committees		High school and senior school students	Active: CAL/occupation of school buildings, close to Trotskyists	LCR/OCI + feminism → unionism	New professions: youth workers, special education teachers, artists	Communal living	Far left/PS
	Right-wing middle and upper class Catholics		Peer group socialisation (senior school students) in 1968				LCR → "Revolution!" + feminism, unionism	Downward mobility due to active militancy	Little impact	

Micro-generational unit	Sub-profiles	Age	Schema of politicisation	Activism prior to 1968	Occupation in 1968	Participation in 1968	Activism post-1968	Professional impact	Personal impact	Vote in 2002
	III.3 Professional reconversion of critical dispositions among children from left-wing working classes	1947-1954	Family transmission + youth training		Senior school students	Active: close to the PSU	Unionism, anti-nuclear, Larzac	Oriented towards popular education and community work	Little impact	Greens, Far left
	III.4 Union participation of workers from working class	1944-1948	Participation in occupying factories (+ family transmissions)		Workers	Participation in occupying factories	CGT union-ism (+PCF) or CFDT (for a few years)	None	None	PS/PC
	III.5 Single women, down-graded and depressed	1946-1950	Through partner/ husband		Senior school/ university students	Not very active	Non-institutional, feminism (back to the land)	Teaching/ Social+ downward mobility	Separations and depressions	PS (or right wing)

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