

Title: The category of "probable class" to go beyond a Kanak/non-Kanak dichotomy

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In the last decades, South Pacific countries have witnessed the emergence of a certain sociological category of people comparable to one of new elites. New Caledonia is no exception to this phenomenon as the Kanak's political struggle for Independence led to deep change regarding political, economical and educational capital of Kanak people in the sense intended by Bourdieu. Different programs which financially supported over a thousand Kanak's various trainings played a big part in this process and while still being a minority, Kanak doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc. are more and more numerous throughout the territory. This presentation will first try to understand how this emerging sociological category of Kanak elite can be considered as a "probable class" in the sense of Bourdieu's work (1984: 4). Given that achievements of people belonging to this class often allow them to bypass what is commonly named as customary authority, it will then investigate to which extent what is observed for practices can also apply to a more theoretical approach. In other words, can we consider that "class" intersects with social status or rank when it comes to studying political practices in New Caledonia?

Based on various case studies from the loyalty Islands, this presentation finally aims at introducing how in bypassing ethnicity, the use of class when studying political practices and social inequalities in New Caledonia can somewhat help go beyond a Kanak/non-Kanak dichotomy.