

Who Are the French Women ?

Intersectionality and Gender Representation in the 2022 French Presidential Electoral Rallies

Lost & Found: Archives and Multilingualism in the (Post)Colony

CEREP symposium

12th January 2026

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Electoral rallies as archives



- How is the label “French woma·en” constructed?
- How do the structures inherited from the colonial period shape the discursive construction of “woma·en”?

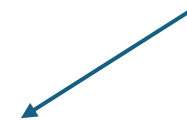
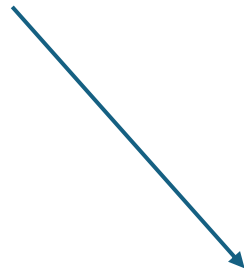
The French context

Marginalization of the colonial and intersectional historiography (Bancel, 2025)

France = country of the “Lumières” (French Enlightenment) → opposing “**universalism**” now = contributing to the fracture of society (Niang & Suaudeau, 2022)

Tendency to stand against postcolonial studies, intersectional theories → often linked to communitarianism, woke propaganda, etc. (*ibid.* ; Bancel, 2025)

Impact on discursive constructions of “French woma·en”



Electoral rallies, gender and intersectionality

- Rhetoric of “**pseudo-universalism**” (Niang & Suaudeau, 2022)
 - colourblind/genderblind/intersectionality-blind
- Essentialized and homogenous categories (*ibid.*; Bancel, 2025 ; Calabrese & Veniard, 2018)
 - E. g. “White” vs “Black” vs “Migrants” vs “Muslims”
- Identity, especially the French one, is considered as fixed, homogenous, untouchable, non-negotiable



Les Mortels sont égaux, ce n'est pas la naissance c'est la seule vertu qui fait la différence. Engraving, unknown author, 1791-1794.

Photo credit : gallica.bnf.fr / BnF.

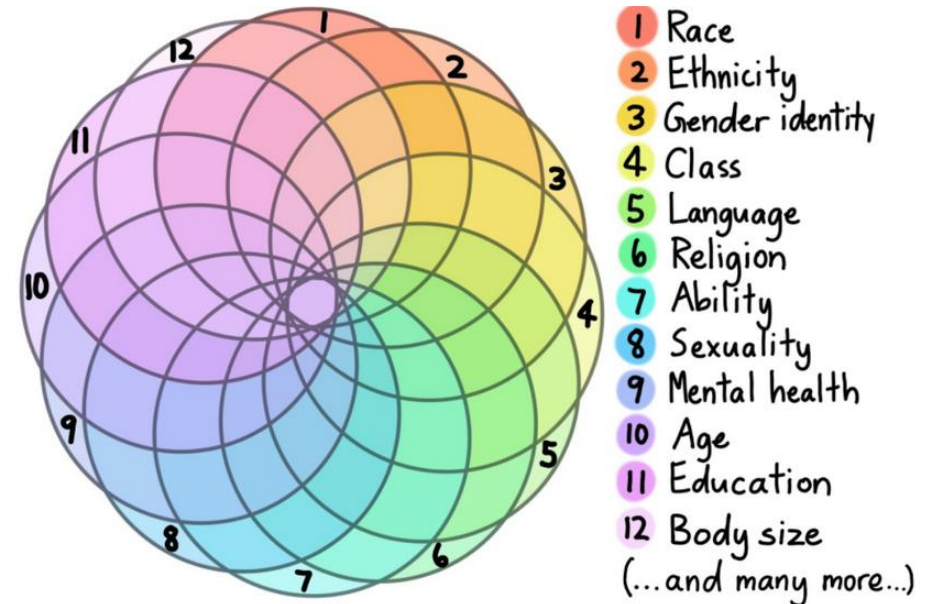
Electoral rallies, gender and intersectionality

- Empty and floating significant

E. g. the meaning of “French” or “woma·en” can vary within a candidate’s discourse

- Strategic tokenism (used in opposition, criminalization, inferiorization, victimization, generalization, etc. schemes)

- Silencing some “categories” ?



Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw -

French women ?

[...] **Assimilation** means laughing at Louis de Funès, Jean Dujardin, and Depardieu; it means crying while listening to Jacques Brel telling us that “there are apparently scorched lands... yielding more wheat than a better April...” and when evening comes, so that the sky blazes, red and black... don't they blend together? It is also being moved by the elegance of **Brigitte Bardot** and **Catherine Deneuve**. [...]

Zemmour, E. (2022). Trocadéro Meeting, 27th March 2022.

Our France has the face of **Josephine Baker**, who gave up the comforts of stardom to join the Resistance and defy death for values greater than herself! Our France has the face of **Simone Veil**, who survived the camps of Auschwitz and still found the strength within herself to advance the cause of women and devote her life to defending the **European ideal**!

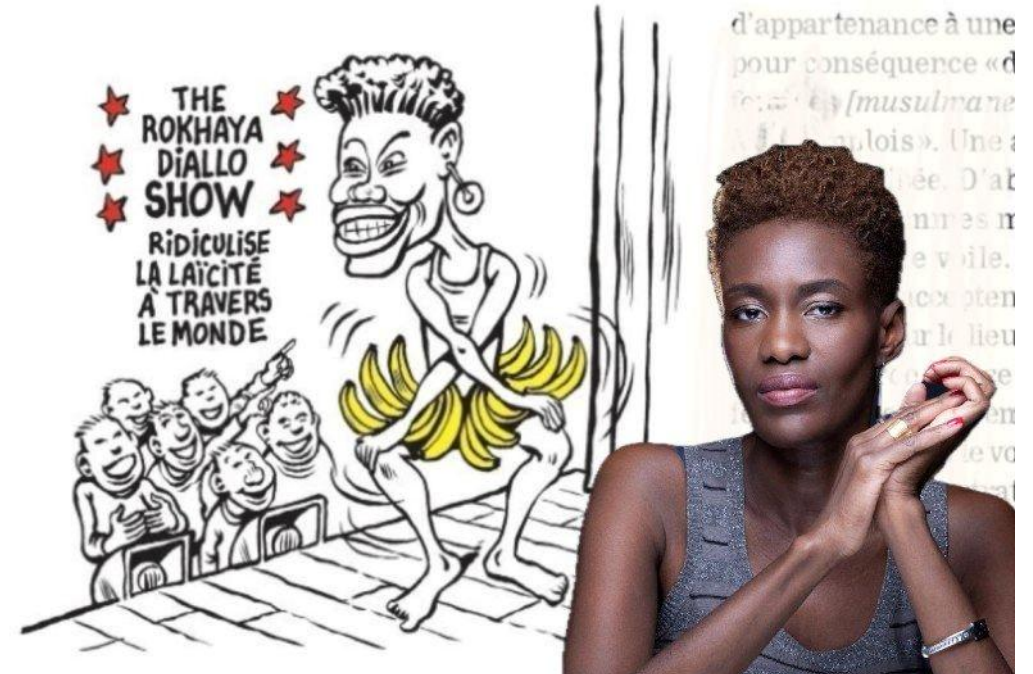
Macron, E. (2022). Meeting at the Défense Arena, 2nd April 2022.

Who are the “French women” ? Archiving electoral rallies

- Contribute to political discourses epistemic
- How we understand these political archives shapes our current views on women’s rights, etc.
- There is still an influence of the diffusion of stereotyped, racist and meaningless categories



La petite fiancée de l’Amérique



Caricature made by Charlie Hebdo « America’s little fiancée.
The Rokhaya Diallo Show »

Photo credit: <https://caraibcreolenews.com>

Selected references

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