

# Urban life in French large suburban housing estates: the failure of modernity 1955-1975 ?

Annie Fourcaut

Professeur d'histoire contemporaine Université Paris 1 Panthéon -Sorbonne  
Centre d'histoire sociale du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle /UMR 8058 CNRS.

During the economic growth post World War II period, usually called "Trente Glorieuses" in France, main French towns were surrounded by new large housing estates built in their suburbs. These new buildings were the response of the state to the large housing crisis France was confronted to after World War II. 80% of the 8 millions of new housing units built in this period moved into the new suburban neighbourhoods. They were coming from slums, old flats in the city period were social housing. Millions of young working and middle class French families moved to new centers or moving from French countryside. After a short period of enthusiasm, most of them refused the new dwelling and tried to move towards single family houses in far suburbs. We will try to understand the failure of this attempt to settle French working class families in modern large housing estates.