

Cahiers d'Études africaines

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Politics: A Family Affair?

Beyond the idea of an “electoral path” to democracy and institutional changes put in place since the 1990s, we observe that there exists a familial logic underlying access to power positions and resources that remains at the heart of socio-historical trajectories of the State, modes of transfer of power, and the renewal of political figures in African societies. This issue proposes a re-reading of the relationships between family and politics by studying the family as a political space through complementary case studies (Senegal, Guinea, Benin, Niger, Mali, Gabon, Angola, Zimbabwe) of the colonial period, post-Independence era, and the present. The twelve articles which comprise this issue explore family and kinship as a matrix of power organization in order to reflect on how kinship and heredity are invested as domains of political socialization and as resources in the competition for power. In this issue, we detail, in a reciprocal manner, how family is regulated by both social norms and codifications mandated by the political. These studies open up the field of a “politics of affects” on the African continent in order to investigate the emotional registers on which relationships of domination are expressed in African societies.

CONTENTS

- Imaginaires et pratiques de la famille et du politique en Afrique: sortir du tout néopatrimonial par un dialogue « indiscipliné » • **M. Brossier**
- Politics of Kinship: Child Fostering in Dahomey/Benin • **E. Alber**
- Affaires d'héritage à Cotonou: comment la loi a changé les familles • **S. Andreetta**
- Les conflits de proximité au Niger: de la famille à la classe politique • **J.-P. Olivier de Sardan**
- Récits du conflit entre les Ifoghas et les Imghad. (Re-)positionnement, grammaire de la parenté et compétition entre élites politiques touarègues • **A. Bencherif**
- La révolte en héritage. Militantisme en famille et fragmentation au Nord-Mali (MNLA) • **D. Chebli**
- The Dynastic Republic of Gabon • **D. Yates**
- Les « glorieuses familles ». Liens de parenté situationnels, stratégie agentielle et critique du pouvoir en Angola • **J. Schubert**
- Mise en scène familiale, usages du savoir et campagnes politiques: Djiguiba Camara (Guinée) • **M. Rodet & E. Bertho**
- Les derniers fils de chefs de canton au Sénégal: « Nous étions des sujets, nous sommes devenus des compléments d'objet direct » • **J. Ruaud**
- The Paradox of Isabel dos Santos. State Capitalism, Dynastic Politics, and Gender Hostility in a Resource-Rich, Authoritarian Country • **A. Pitcher & E. Rodrigues Sanches**
- (Dis-)Graceful Leadership: On Familial Logics and Politics in Zimbabwe • **B. Rutherford**
- Au nom du père, du fils et du Sénégal, ou comment l'héritage ne fait toujours pas l'héritier en politique • **M. Brossier**



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VOL. 50 / N°1
MARCH 2019

MAIN THEME

7. Introduction, *Anne Madelain, Frank Georgi & Igor Duda*

25. Social Inequalities from Workers' Perspective in 1960s Socialist Yugoslavia, *Josip Mihaljević*

53. The Belgrade Working Class from Tito to Milošević. New Geographies of Poverty and Evolving Expressions of Grievances in an Era of Crisis, 1979-1986, *Rory Archer & Goran Music*

81. Un épisode méconnu de la Guerre froide. Les socialistes français à la découverte de la Yougoslavie autogestionnaire, *Frank Georgi*

115. From the Cold War to the Kosovo War: Yugoslavia and the British Labour Party, *Vladimir Unkovski-Korica*

145. La Yougoslavie comme « l'autre-fantôme » (the ghost-other). L'image de la Yougoslavie dans l'enseignement de l'histoire des États successeurs, *Dubravka Stojanović*

175. La fin de la Yougoslavie dans l'histoire scolaire française, entre prisme totalitaire et géopolitique des nouvelles conflictualités, *Anne Madelain*

VARIA

207. Relevance of American Diasporas for the Post-Soviet Economic Recovery and Growth of Their Homelands: Armenia and Lithuania in Comparison, *Zenonas Norkus, Aelita Ambrulevičiūtė, Vaidas Morkevičius*

239. Book Reviews

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CENTRE
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Philippe Boissinot

Qu'est ce qu'un fait archéologique ?

[What Constitutes an Archaeological Object?]

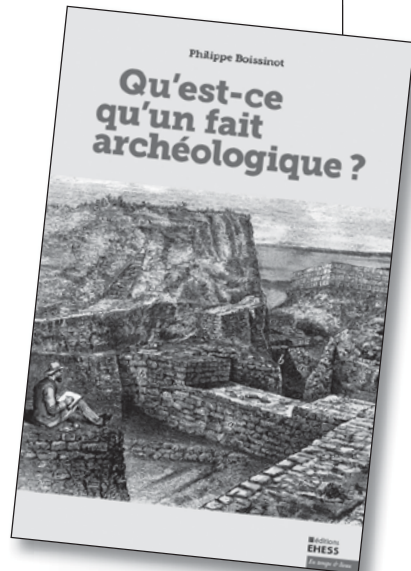
It seems that every object and concept now has its own archaeology. Moving away from its traditional image among the general public, archaeology has become a fashionable discipline capable of taking in the most cutting-edge ideas from philosophy, the social sciences and even artistic performances. But do we know why one object can be deemed archaeological, and not another? To better understand the specificity of the archaeological undertaking, Philippe Boissinot explores how the basic entities of our world are brought into the universe of the archaeological dig, with its tools, features, sediment, stones, strata, skeletal remains and so forth. The role of archaeologists is to excavate and meticulously inventory so that a new question—ultimately the only one that matters—can be asked: what happened here?

2015

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Philippe Cordez

Trésors, mémoire, merveilles

Les objets des églises au Moyen Âge

*[Treasure, Memory, Wonder:
Church Objects in the Middle Ages]*

Ecclesiastical objects have not always been considered works of art. While they feature in exhibitions as *ars sacra*, in reality this notion dates back only to the 19th and 20th centuries and the development of museums. As manifestations of a Christian view of the world during the Middle Ages, they became historical and museum objects in the contemporary era. How did this shift occur and under what circumstances? How have medieval ecclesiastical objects themselves contributed to determining later scientific and museological practices? While offering a history of the notion of “treasure” in Western Christianity and presenting the memorial aspect of ecclesiastical objects in the Middle Ages, this study provides readers with a veritable archaeology of current museographical practices.

2016

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Michel Naepels

Dans la détresse

Une anthropologie de la vulnérabilité

[In Distress: An Anthropology of Vulnerability]

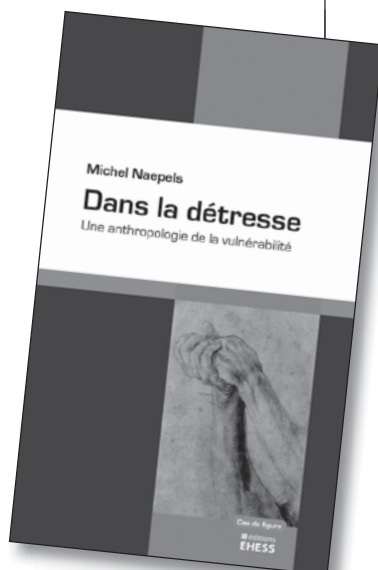
Can the social sciences describe vulnerability? To answer this question, Michel Naepels adopts a pragmatic approach. Drawing on studies conducted in conflict zones (especially in Congo and New Caledonia) and providing anthropological, philosophical and literary interpretations, he examines the role of researchers and the nature of the accounts elicited by them. For readers wondering about the position of those who carry out research in situations of distress, this essay offers a new political anthropology of violence, predation and capitalism. It seeks to connect the exploitation of humans and the natural world with self-construction, and to reflect sensitively, with pain, despite it all.

February 2019

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