



# Next stop Stockholm?

## The role of ideas in shaping French prostitution policy 1975 – 2011

The Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France



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### Aim:

To investigate the role of ideas in shaping French prostitution policy over the last 35 years. In particular to account for the country's progression from a two-pillared abolitionist regime towards a "Swedish model" demand-side ban on prostitution.



### Background:

Since abandoning regulationism in 1960, France's approach to prostitution remained, until recently, largely unchanged. The last four decades, however, have seen a symphony in three movements: firstly, a shift from the broadly consensual abolitionist movement that had dominated; then, prostitution redefined as a law-and-order problem; and finally an important mutation of abolitionist system in the form of the proposed criminalization of clients.



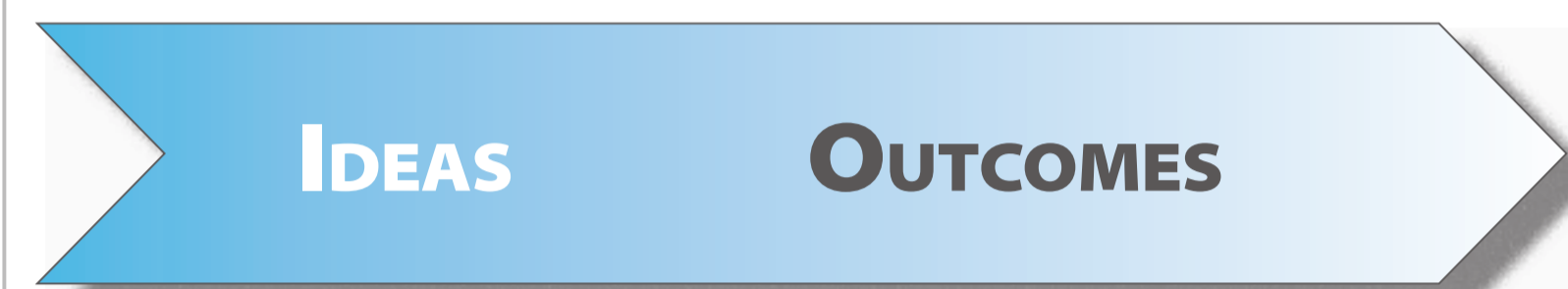
### The Cases:

- This project is a comparison of three policy debates.
- 1975-1992: This period begins in 1975 with the reintroduction of the problem of prostitution into the political agenda with the mediated protests by sex workers, and ends in 1992 with the subsequent reform of the Penal Code.
- 1994-2002: This debate begins in 1994 with the implementation of the Penal Code reforms and ends in 2002 with the tabling of Nicolas Sarkozy's proposal for a domestic security bill (DSB) in 2002.
- 2003-2011: This debate begins with the implementation of the Loi du 18 mars 2003 pour la sécurité intérieure (DSB) and ends with the release of the Parliamentary information commission on prostitution on the 13th of April 2011.

### Theoretical framework:

#### 1. Ideation:

Within which the independent variables, ideas, affect policy outcomes.



#### 2. Mechanism:

But ideas do not float freely and are ontologically incapable of influencing the real world unless they are translated by actors who act as mediators (Berman, 1998). Consequently, we must investigate the causal mechanisms that articulate the effect of ideation on the policy process (Salmon, 1990; Yeas, 1996).



The three main types of causal mechanisms are: actors (especially in the form of experts or epistemic communities), institutional filters/embeddedness, and discourse (Campbell, 2002).

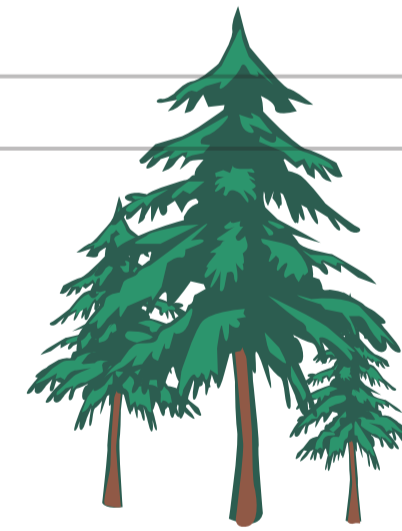
### Methodology:

#### 1. Document analysis.

#### 2. Process tracing:

Evidence of the causality of ideational factors on the policy process can be found by assessing the congruence between the substance of the idea and the substance of the policy choice, and/or by evaluating the incorporation of ideas into the policy process by breaking down this process into its various stages and tracing its evolution (George, 1979).

#### 3. Semi-structured elite interview.



### References

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- George, Alexander L. (1979) "The causal nexus between cognitive beliefs and decision making behaviour: the "operational code" belief system" in Lawrence S. Falkowski (ed) *Psychological Models in International Politics*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview.
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	1975 – 1992			1994 – 2002		2003 – 2011
<b>Main actors</b>	Sex workers' protest groups	State feminists	Community health groups	Dinah Derycke	Nicolas Sarkozy	Danielle Bousquet (socialist), Guy Geoffroy (UMP center-right), Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin (Minister of solidarity and social cohesion)
<b>Main ideas</b>	Unfair police harassment. Refusal to see their bodies regulated by the state	Prostitution as exploitation, sex workers as victims	Stigmatised/vulnerable group in need of assistance	Gap between abolitionist theory and praxis	Prostitution as linked with issues of security, public order and immigration	Ineffectiveness and misguidedness of domestic security bill All prostitutes are victims Clients must be punished and sensitized to the harm they cause
<b>Frames used</b>	Illegitimacy of police and state intervention	Women's rights, patriarchal exploitation, gender inequality, incompatibility with dignity	Medico-social "neutrality"	French abolitionism ineffectively implemented	Law and order. Pragmatic humanitarianism	Gender inequality and the oppression of women
<b>Outcome(s) of policy debate</b>	Prostitution problematized in government and by feminist groups	Proposal by Ministry of Women's Rights to increase penalties for <i>proxénétisme</i> .	Pinot report (1976)	—	Derycke Report (2002)	Domestic Security Bill Parliamentary report calling for criminalization of clients
<b>Substantive changes</b>	✓ Influenced changes to the Penal Code: penalties for large-scale pimping, leniency towards male clients and individual pimps, penalties for violence against sex workers.	✗ None. Ideas from report were not acted on.	—	—	✗ None. Ideas from report were not acted on.	✓ Passive soliciting reintroduced as an offense. Penalisation of foreigners guilty of prostitution. Residency as an incentive to curb pimping and trafficking. ? [Awaiting results of legislative proposal] Proposed measures include client criminalisation and sensitization, and reforms to the provision of social aid to "victims"



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