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JSIA CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES PUBLIC LECTURE

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T2, Conference Hall, 3rd Floor
O.P. Jindal Global University
Sonipat Narela Road, Sonipat- 131001, Haryana



Jindal School of International Affairs
India's First Global Policy School

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“Minority Cultures of Mobility” across Three National Case Studies: France, India, and the United States



SPEAKER

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Jules Naudet is a former student of Sciences Po, Paris, and of the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Hindi) and holds a doctorate degree in Sociology. His doctoral research focused on a comparative analysis of the experience of upward social mobility in France, in India and in the United States. His book "Entrer dans l'élite : Parcours de réussite en France, aux Etats-Unis et en Inde" was published in 2012 by the Presses Universitaires de France. He carried out his postdoctoral research at the Equipe de recherche sur les inégalités sociales (ERIS) within the Centre Maurice Halbwachs (EHESS/ENS/CNRS). Jules Naudet is also member of the editorial boards of SAMAJ (<http://samaj.revues.org>) and La Vie des idées/Books and Ideas (<http://www.booksandideas.net>). He now dedicates his research to the study of the Indian business elite.

Abstract:

This presentation is based on a paper written along with Shirin Shahrokni (PhD Cambridge University, postdoc fellow at INED, France). It seeks to explore the specificity of the experience of sharp upward social mobility by people who belong to minority groups in France, in India and in the United States. The analysis presented draws on two sets of interviews. The first comprises a total of 150 semi-structured biographical interviews conducted in France, in India and in the United States with people from working-class background who achieved prominent positions in the private sector, in public service and in academia (researchers and faculty members). In each country, the people interviewed were both from minority communities as well as from non-minority communities. The second set includes 35 in-depth interviews with upwardly mobile French of North African Muslim background who graduated from Grandes écoles (i.e. France's elite higher education institutions). Members of the minority groups selected in each country have been the chief victims of ethno-racial discriminatory practices. Drawing on our interviewees' mobility narratives, we intend to grasp the specificity of minority members' accounts of mobility as compared to those of majority ethnic or caste background. Focusing on the ways in which they negotiate their status within both their group of arrival and their home environment, we show that a strictly class-based approach does not fully capture the challenges of being, for example, one of the only members of a stigmatized minority group in majority ethnic, middle-class settings. We more specifically draw on the "minority culture of mobility" theory (Neckerman et al. 1999) to appreciate our informants' multifaceted mobility experiences.

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