



Laura Pauchard, 1989–2022

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To her partner, to her family,
To her friends and colleagues,
The members of the research collective on the Gilets jaunes movement share your pain.

We would like to collectively honour the memory of Laura Pauchard, a bright and warm-hearted colleague, in this special issue as an expression of our appreciation for her contributions and the depth of our loss.

We met thanks to the Yellow Vests movement, in the context of an unexpected investigation that still brings us together today. Laura joined us at the very beginning of the project, and, despite her modest nature, she became a pillar for the research collective.

She knew, like no other, how to find solutions, even to the most incredible challenges. The Caennais may remember their first visit to Bordeaux in January 2019, realising upon arrival that their journey would be complicated without tickets; indeed, our manager had forgotten to book them. Laura came to the rescue and the whole group was able to make it to the Gironde, receiving confirmation of their trip on the way to the station.

Her enthusiasm made an extraordinary difference in the life of our research group—in particular the team of Caen—and in the experiences that we went through, striving to acquire brand new knowledge.

We thank Céline Quint for her translation and Amy Mazur for her support.

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Working collectively at a distance is a challenge. We had regularly exchanged e-mails. Laura had carefully and patiently reviewed our first article for the¹ and its translation into English, making very useful suggestions. Without Laura's enthusiasm, her lively wit and her precious advice, we would not have been able to find the tools to carry out our work so easily and to live extraordinary collective research experiences throughout the RnMSH Longi and ANR projects on the Gilets jaunes movement. Even before we got to the point of getting our team involved in these funded projects, Laura, with her unlimited curiosity, had worked in Caen right from the day after 17 November 2018, to make us aware of the importance of the movement and to convince us of the need to momentarily put aside our respective research work to all get out and meet the Gilets jaunes, while holding in her hand the questionnaire whose very first version she had created in Caen. The Caen collective was born, so to speak, thanks to her.

She never ceased to strive to keep the research alive, in sometimes really heated meetings, to move it forward, notably by gathering all the questionnaires and use them as a basis to perform the first statistical analyses, or even to shake its very foundations, as when she insisted that the people of Caen should express themselves in the mainstream media. She was also always ready, always prompting us to present our then local investigation to sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists working on the movement all over France at the end of 2018. We can still picture her proudly packing our bags with everything we would need for our trip to Bordeaux in January 2019 where we were to meet them. When we asked her if she wanted to come with us, she answered, with the modesty that characterised her, that she was "just" a research assistant, but also mentioned her unwavering commitment: she had so much work on the go for the other colleagues of ESO-Caen.

This was anything but a red herring: Laura was undoubtedly the real heart of this research group: she knew its foundations, having been interested in it since her Master's thesis or more recently within the ROCS collective, as well as the range of works in progress for having lent a helping hand to all of its members as a research engineer. A member of this laboratory since 2012, she also knew the personalities of its members, sometimes intimately, and had this unrivalled ability to deal with everyone for the benefit of all, which she managed to do in the Caen research collective working on the Yellow Vests movement, and would undoubtedly have done more widely at the level of the national collective Jaune vif, had her disease not taken her. With fondness, we recall a more recent event: back in March last year, a training course was organised in Caen, thanks to the tenacity of Etienne, Soline and Laura, with the aim to introduce us to cartography. It was finally an opportunity to meet, for real, after all these years working at a distance.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge her work as a researcher who had a lot of strings in her bow and who was able to produce socially useful academic work. Her article, co-authored and published in the journal *Noroi* in 2016, "L'échange parcellaire: une nouvelle étape dans l'aménagement foncier de l'Ouest français", sheds light—through cartography—on the transformations of the agricultural world in the

¹ Collectif d'enquête Jaune Vif et al., "Enquêter in situ par questionnaire sur une mobilisation," *Revue française de science politique* Vol. 69, No. 5 (17 December 2019): 869–892.



West and outlines a way out of the productivist model where state regrouping gives way to a localised approach, likely to improve land use planning (Pauchard et al. 2016). More recently, with the Caen team investigating the Gilets jaunes, she had rightly underlined the gap between the governmental response to the demands of the Gilets jaunes and the democratic expectations of the participants in the movement. The article “In Caen, the ‘great debate’ does not represent the French population, nor the ‘Yellow Vests’” provided one of the few empirical insights on this subject (Elalaoui et al. 2019). She also documented the socio-geographic composition, the relationship to politics and the modes of appropriation of space by the Gilets jaunes surveyed around Caen (Elalaoui et al. 2022a, b), again with the people of Caen and within the Atlas Social de Caen, in which she had worked so hard and which was dedicated to her (<https://atlas-social-de-caen.fr/>). On a more personal note, we would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the working group on food and collective catering. Thanks to their maps, in particular, Laura’s publications made it possible to visualise the issues at stake around food and school catering, which can be understood as a tool for social and environmental justice and for agricultural development (Preux, Beauvais, and Pauchard 2020).

Her generosity, strength of character, her joyful nature and enthusiasm are invaluable qualities to work in a research group.

All of us who have worked with her, directly or indirectly, beyond the pain that comes with her death, know how lucky we are to have known her.

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