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Urban Riots and Youth Violence:
German and French Perspectives

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Contents

The article reconstructs the almost thirty-year-old history of urban riots in France and analyses in a comparative perspective with Germany the causes for the periodic escalation of conflicts between the youth and the police in the French Banlieues. While the socio-spatial exclusion and the control-policy of the state are discerned as central causes for the French "émeutes", the transnational comparison points to further factors which are linked to history and to the republican state with its stronger realisation of formal equity than in Germany. On the other hand, the events in the outskirts are being confronted with the theoretical hypothesis of a recurrence of the social question as it was vivid in the 19th century. This hypothesis helps to distinguish the continuities and discontinuities of a social-spatial problematic already at work in the 19th century. Its characteristics at present are the specific precariousness of the young generation in general, and especially of the youth with a migration background, as well as the transformation of the welfare state now under way .

Keywords: social question, urban riots, exclusion, control-policy, French-German comparison

New dangerous classes seem to have emerged in the French urban areas in the last 30 years. Is this social group a product of racism or more generally of race? The contribution focuses on the police, one of the most important labellisation and categorisation agency at stake. With the help of second hand data on police socialisation and on the recruitment processes,

and above all of first-hand quantitative data and ethnographic data, the text shows evidence of institutionalized racism. But the observation shows that the labellisation undertaken by the police, which determines their behaviour, is a consequence of an expectancy/reaction process where race plays only a secondary role.

Keywords: Police, race, social construction, urban conflicts, socialisation

To explain why there is urban unrest in France and not in Germany, this article first of all compares the integration processes of the youth of North African and Turkish origin in both French and German societies respectively. It shows that the experiences of frustration leading to urban unrest and resulting from the discrepancy between the youth's expectations of recognition and their life situation are more intense in France than in Germany. Then the consequences of urban policy on these processes are examined against the background of the different models of integration. Finally the article analyses on the intermediary level between society and state the political mobilization of this youth and the integrative function of conflicts of recognition.

Keywords: integration, segregation, youth of immigrant descent, urban policy, conflicts of recognition

This paper deals with the social structural conditions underlying the protest of descendants of migrants whether in France and its absence in Germany. Taking three theoretical explanations as a starting point, we use representative microdata to empirically demonstrate that the French concept of integrating migrants' descendants through citizenship and the schools can be understood as a promise of integration that fails structurally at the transition to the labor market. In contrast, the exclusion of migrants' descendants in Germany already starts in school, and as a result, major feelings of disappointment do not arise. The revolts of young migrants' descendants in France can thus be regarded as an outcome of structurally disappointed expectations.

Keywords: Migration, Integration, France, Germany, SOEP

The article asks for the reasons why the riots in november 2005 found no translation into a political discourse. The explanation lies partly in the crisis of the spokesmen in the neighbourhoods : many of those who had been active following the March for Equality in 1983 left the place and contributed thus, with their exit, to a depoliticization of the neibourhoods. This militancy in crisis has to be seen in connection with a lack of recognition of the "beur" militants as well as with the divisions between the groups of young people that deepened the gap between the unqualified and those whose rather ascending life course had lead to militancy.

Keywords: suburbs, militant, neigbourhood, beur, association

351   Social Networks and Neighbourhood Relations in Difficult Neighbourhoods
        in Germany and in France [F] | Rainer Neef et Hervé Vieillard-Baron

A study of five difficult neighbourhoods in Germany and France reveals remarkable so-
cial similarities, in spite of the differences between social estates and traditional workers'
neighbourhoods. Social networks are an important resource for stable households of active
or retired persons, who make out the majority of the population. Social relations help
precarious households to keep their position, but socially isolated low-income households
are threatened with exclusion. In France institutional help can stabilise the situation of the
unemployed, in Germany the inhabitants depend more often on their own potentials. The
neighbourhood relations are less problematic than generally assumed but don't represent a
resource on their own. The young persons in trouble– better integrated in Germany than
in France – meet a certain tolerance in these neighbourhoods.

Keywords: Difficult neighbourhoods, social relations, comparative study Germany-
France

371   Social Positions and Conflicts in Everyday Cultures – a Comparative Analysis
        Between German and Turkish Adolescents [G] | Gisela Wiebke

The article focuses on the questions whether different social positions tend to threaten a
living together of young Turks and Germans. The results show that Turkish adolescents are
more likely than young Germans to live at the lower end of society. Despite these significant
status differences we found also a striking resemblance in the general attitudes and value
orientations of both groups. However, these increasing similarities do not necessarily allow
to predict a harmonious cohabilitation of Turkish and German adolescents in the future.

Keywords: Social positions, social inequalities, Turkish adolescents, cultural differences,
everyday conflicts

393   "Double Standardization of the Street Culture" – New Forms of Youth
        Sociabilities and "Incivilities" in the Geneva Context [F] | Pierre Escofet

The aim of the present contribution is to question the pertinent sociological system of
differences and oppositions between the one process of bodily socialization required by
the educational institution, and another in a number of other "social universes" where are
valued, ordered and organized a series of behaviour models where the body is at stake and
the "street culture" the ideal: Those models, in the form of "acts" or "as an united body",
put the Geneva educational system, not only its functional machinery but also its daily
regular functions through a specific test.

Keywords: Street culture, crisis phase of the educational system, development of manners
(improvement) civilization, incivilities, body space

415   The Political Dimension of the Riots in 2005 Questioned [F] | Michel Kokoreff

This article addresses the construction and political meaning of the riots that occurred in
France in the fall of 2005. The article suggests to consider this episode as a place of political
actualisation in the poor, suburban working class neighborhoods. Drawing support from
the research undertaken between 2006 and 2007 in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis
and a neighborhood in Paris, the article develops the hypothesis that the riot has its own
natural logic. The riot can be understood in terms of a double tension between the denial
of citizenship and an aspiration for equality; of a sense of injustice and a demand for
respect. The article analyzes different circles of participants that have contributed to the

production of the riot as a political event, emphasizing the role of the "facilitators," those who gave a meaning to the actions of the rioters whose voice was crushed by fashionable interpretations.

Keywords: urban riots, poor neighbourhood, politicization, depoliticization, injustice

431   Book Reviews