



Framing and Blaming

A study of the role of the media in 2005 Parisian Riots

Background

- ❑ Two teenagers died in a Parisian suburb on October 27
- ❑ Deaths sparked 3 weeks of rioting mostly in Parisian suburbs
- ❑ Spread to 274 towns
- ❑ 9,000 cars torched
- ❑ Identity conflict



Role of the Media

- Media played huge role before, during, and after the riots
 - Examined role of media in identity formation during/after riots
 - How portrayed in media affects social reality and subsequent course of action
 - Looked at different sides of political spectrum, time periods, and countries
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French Media

- Political Right (Figaro)
 - Focus on social failure to integrate
 - “Delinquents”
 - Political Left (Libération)
 - Urban “youths” instead of in terms of race or religion
 - Focus on institutional exclusion, structural
 - Schools, politics, economics, police relations
 - Political Center (le Monde)
 - Both types of explanations present
 - Move towards institutional later
 - “youths”
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American Media

- Political Right (Fox)
 - “jihadists,” “terrorists,” focus on Muslim identity
 - Explained in terms of failed integration/assimilation
- Political Left (Washington Post)
 - “Muslims” “immigrants”
 - Institutional failures



Conclusions: Political Left vs. Right (Blame)

- Right: Social explanation of failure to integrate
 - Culture, religion, ethnicity, nationality
 - Failure to integrate (blames rioters—from below)
 - Left: Institutional explanation for exclusion
 - Institutional racism/discrimination from police, economic exclusion, political underrepresentation, geographic separation
 - Failure of governmental policies—from above
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Conclusions: French vs. American Media (Frame)



- French media: urban youth problem
 - Historical tradition—construction of suburbs in media/politics, history of this type of riot
 - Cultural/Political tradition— “colorblind” system
- American media: Muslim immigrant problem
 - Historical—tendency to focus on race, compared to race riots of 1960s
 - Cultural/Political tradition—record race/religion/ethnicity
 - Over time: didn’t change how portrayed
 - indicates importance of frame and power relationship between countries